

## **ILOHI Interview with Ray Richardson**

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Indianapolis, Indiana

Interview by Ben Baumann

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MP3 File, Sony

Ray Richardson =RR

Ben Baumann=BB

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BB: [0:00] So before we begin, I would like to state for the record that today is February 11 2020. And my name is Ben Bauman, and I'm here with Ray Richardson in Indianapolis, Indiana, and we are doing an interview for the Indiana oral history initiative. So, to begin, when and where were you born?

RR: 1937 in Logansport, Indiana.

BB: Okay. And what were your parents' names?

RR: Robert and Francis.

BB: Okay. Where's your family from originally?

RR: They were from Logansport.

BB:

Okay. And before that,

RR: I have no idea on that much on okay. I don't pay money to ancestors. That's fine. Although my mother did, on her side of the family didn't fix up about a three foot long history. Which I rolled up and I put someplace. [1:00]

BB: Interesting. Okay. All right. And what were your parents' occupations?

RR: Well, my father was the owner and manager of the dry cleaners and Logansport. And my mother assisted him with the paperwork and publicity, that kind of stuff.

BB: Nice. Interesting. Do you have any siblings?

RR: One sister.

BB: And what's her name?

RR: Carol.

BB: Okay. How would you describe your childhood?

RR: Probably average for the time. A little different today because my grandparents never babysat for me. My parents were happy if I went out the door and played basketball, baseball, and football. Not like today where as a grandfather, I'm constantly with my kids. [2:00]

BB: Yeah. Okay. Interesting. Who would you say was most influential on your childhood?

RR: Give you an odd answer. Dwight Eisenhower.

BB: Okay that's interesting. Now, why was that?

RR: I first became interested in politics in 1952, when he was first running for office and had a primary contest against Bob Taft. My parents were moderate Republicans. And so, they followed and rooted for Eisenhower. And I remember we were traveling in Boston when the Republican National Convention was on. And there was a roll call vote on who's going to represent, which delegation was going to represent the state of Texas and whoever won that was going to win the nomination. And so, we pulled over on the side of the street in Boston as my parents. Listen to that. And I overheard it. So later on, I started wearing "I like Ike" t-shirts to the school as a sophomore.

BB: Okay, interesting. [3:00] Wow. So, he was kind of your hero. I guess growing up?

RR: Well, yeah. Heroes too strong. You got to be first interestingly.

BB: Okay. Role model kind of. Yeah. Interesting. What? And you already mentioned that your parents were moderate Republicans? Did they have a big impact on your political beliefs? As a child? Did you talk politics with them a lot growing up or?

RR: No, but my father ran for who was requested by the mayor to run for city council in Logansport. Okay, he did. He served there several years until he strongly disagreed with mayor, the mayor on some policy. And to emphasize his point, he resigned from the city council. That was very important to me to know. You need to stick to your principles. [4:00]

BB: That's interesting. Yeah, that's great. Wow. I guess going towards your education here. What schools did you attend as a child and teenager?

RR: Well, that was Logansport. Daniel Webster grade school and Lincoln Middle School and Logansport High School. We were a member the North Central Conference, which at the time was the most powerful Athletic Conference in the state of Indiana, we think, but it's all broken up.

BB: Wow. Okay. And how would you describe your educational experiences there?

RR: I don't know if it was just me, but I didn't do any homework. I was able to do what was required. Without any homework, which is not the case today as I write watch my grandkids bring home and their smart, bring homework home all the time.

BB: Yes. Tons of homework now.

RR: And yet I finished in the top 10% of my class. Doing that just getting by.

BB: Wow. Did you have any favorite subjects? [5:00]

RR: Math. And that's, that's what guided me towards university. My guidance counselor pulled me aside and said, "Well, you know, you love math. You need to become not just an engineer, but an electrical engineer, which is math heavy." Which is how I ended up at Purdue.

BB: Okay. And did you have any extracurricular activities in high school or?

RR: Tennis. Yeah, there was no way. I listen to kids nowadays really pile on the extracurricular activities. And I say whoa, they're really preparing to get into a good university. But I played a whole lot of tennis. And my extracurricular activities came more in college, where I became the President of the Student United Nations Association. [6:00] And pretty (Unintelligible) at that time. I don't know if they still do it. Put on a political convention. Every year except one the student United Nations put on a United Nations assembly, where all the students would represent a state and in the case of the United Nations, they'd represent a country and have a real session. Which was kind of interesting, which got me interested in politics. But then, I discovered at my sophomore year that math was taking me someplace that I wasn't interested in. So then I had a long confab with my parents. And I suddenly realized that it was politics that I was interested in. More specifically, the governance part of politics. So, I switched over to the Purdue School of Political Science. [7:00] Because I couldn't transfer my credit I had planned to go to law school. Because if you're, if you want to be good in politics, particularly government, you need to have a law degree. But I couldn't transfer to IU because I couldn't take my electrical engineering credits. So, I had to finish up and did finish up at IU. One of my toughest so I had to, once you get out of engineering, you have to take a foreign language. Well, I've never done very well in foreign language. I didn't do well with Latin in high school. And the only class I was I switched over to political science after the junior year started the only thing left for me was Russian. And I did not do well in Russian, but I did well enough to pass.

BB: Interesting. Okay. And was there so Russia was just the only class leftover then? [8:00] Must be an interesting time, though, to study the Russian language right?

RR: Well, it was because obviously, the was involved with Russia. So, I said, well, this is not going to be a waste. But learning the Cyrillic language with that was as bad as learning Latin.

BB: (Both laugh) Yeah. I can understand. Let's see, as a child, what were your views about the state of Indiana or being a Hoosier?

RR: Didn't have any other just enjoying childhood. Playing football, basketball, baseball, not in much of an organized fashion because I wasn't athletic enough. And then I saw one time there was a put alongside a state (Unintelligible) was, there was a line of cars pulled over to the side looked like they were having a flat tire or something. They were dark cars with darkened windows. And my mother and my father said, "Oh, that's the Governor of the state of Indiana." I said "Oh", [9:00] that's as close as oh, and Leland Smith who was Secretary of the State back in the 50s lived across the street from me. I never got to meet him. But my sister was good friends of his daughter. So, I knew it's possible to get to a state office when the Secretary of State was living across the street. Only way you could tell he got special license plates. I saw what are those? (Both laugh)

BB: That is interesting. Wow. Okay. Let's see. Did you so when you were studying math in college, when you first started studying math, did you have an idea of what you would do with a degree or?

RR: No. Well, some kind of engineering school. The jobs were plentiful for engineers back then. And I guess they are today. [10:00] And yet some of my friends in college who were taking Engineering figured away you get a big salary when you come out, but it doesn't go up after that. So, they were already planning to, to move to a different part of a company. And then when I finally took calculus by the way, they say today's kids aren't as smart. But I wasn't even allowed to take calculus until I was assigned an engineering until I was a sophomore at Purdue. And now my grandkids are taking calculus or maybe some pre-calculus in high school. And I am thinking, today's kids are way ahead of where I was.

BB: That's right. Yeah. precalculus and calculus are both being taught in high school today. Yeah.

RR: The highest I got was what they call college algebra. But when I got to calculus was when I realized that was leading me down a path in which I was not interested. [11:00]

BB: Okay. Sure. I think calculus can I change a lot of people's minds about math. Let's see. Were you involved in any clubs and caught I think you miss the United Nations. Are there any other organizations?

RR: I was a member of a fraternity, Kappa Sigma. That wasn't very helpful to my education. It took up a lot of time. So, I'm not sure whether I do it again. If I had the choice. It's socialized me.

BB: Yeah, sure. Sure. So how did you view your college experiences at the time?

RR: Never just like kind of like high school. I was never made the work. So I just kind of floated through. And until I got to law school that is.

BB: Okay. Law school was a little bit different.

RR: You had to study there. And law school was a little it was quite different back then. I went down to the Law School of Bloomington, and asked how I got in. And they said to me, you sign here. [12:00] You sign here and you're in. I said, "No test." And they said, "Well, we'd like you to take the LSAT test. We don't require it. But we want to know if it really is a predictor as to how your people are going to do in law school." So, I took it as a courtesy. They never told me my score or anything. But I assumed they tracked me to decide whether they should give LSAT test. The trick, though, in law school back then was it was easy to get in. But it was also easy to get yourself out. Anywhere from a third to a half of this freshman class was gone by the sophomore year. But I think that's the best way to do it. Because there were some poor students who had an aptitude for law and some really smart students who didn't. So, I really prefer that. Now what's keeping them out is the cost.

BB: Yeah, yeah.

RR: And the fact that it's very difficult to get a job once you leave law school. [13:00] So if anybody asked me, if you should attend law school, I said, "Probably not." I will have to go again. Because I was going to law school, not because I wanted to practice law, but because I wanted to use it in government and extremely helpful in politics and government. I couldn't have gotten by without it. So, I would do it again. But if somebody just wants to go to law school and make a lot of money as a lawyer. Forget about it.

BB: Sure. Interesting.

RR: And that subject came up when I was on the IU Board of Trustees was tuition. I don't mean to skip around. But I brought the head of the Law School in and ask why their tuition was going up so much each year, like double the cost of inflation. And Miles Brand who was President at the time, and the board was consisted of majority of lawyers. Nobody was interested. I said, "Somethings gonna catch up with you." Miles said "Well", he said, "Ray, we let them and the graduate students [14:00] we let the schools charge what the freight will bear." Well, suddenly the freight caught up. And now there's a whole lot fewer applying to law school, law schools are closing right now. Valparaiso's law schools closed. And other schools are closing and missing some students so they could get the money at the time. But it hurt in the long run.

BB: Wow. And what ways did your awareness of politics evolve as you mature and as you went through law school?

RR: I was still a, a chalkboard waiting to be written on. Till I got way out of school. Closest I came to politics at IU was I went down and volunteered to the local Republican Party. And they

asked me to pick up people take them to the polls on voting day and that was about it. So I never had, never really had [15:00] any more experience in politics till I ran for prosecutor immediately out of law school.

BB: Interesting. Okay. And did you have any conversations while you're in law school about politics with your family at all or anything else?

RR: No, I was married at the time. So we talked about it, but that was about it. And I just didn't, I just didn't know anything except that I wanted to get into government and find problems and solve them. And that's remained my guiding light throughout my whole career find problems and solve them.

BB: Yeah, that's great.

RR: Isn't that go over well on the IU Board of Trustees. (Both laugh) Where after about two months of asking probing questions about how does this work? He approached me and said, this was Tom Early, [16:00] he approached me and said, Richardson, why don't you let me run the university and if you don't like the way I run it, you can fire me. 10 months later, he was gone. Replaced by Miles Brand. He didn't know how to handle me.

BB: I guess not. Yeah. So, what was your first job out of law school?

RR: Well, it was running for prosecutor there was an opening in Hancock County. I knew I wanted to locate someplace closer than Indianapolis and Logansport. I didn't want to live in Indianapolis. But I wanted to live nearby Hancock County had an opening for prosecutor. So, I said, "Well why don't I run for prosecutors here and see what happens." Well, it turned out that I was running in slightly Democrat County back then. I came really close. But I lost. But that's the best thing that ever happened to me. Because that's if I'd have won prosecutor and started the real app on the salary. I probably would never been free to run for the General Assembly. [17:00] So how sometimes it's lucky when you...I was a lucky loser, as they call them tennis.

BB: Yeah, it's interesting how those things work out. So, did you have career aspirations at the time to get involved in politics?

RR: I didn't think I had the right personality to ever go really high up in government, like Governor or anything like that. So, I was never, that was never a goal, realistic goal. So, I just, again, I didn't know where all the levers were in government and where I could be, where I could go, I could get done what I wanted to do that is solve problems. And so, then an opening came up for in the general assembly because we had redistricting. And that was back in the time when the Supreme Court was first saying one man, one vote. And so, a whole lot of districts were [18:00] no longer legal. Oh, and we had just finished the 1964 vote where Goldwater was a Republican candidate. And Republicans were on the wrong end of the ballots all up and down. And the state is represented House of Representatives only had 22 Republicans out of 100 seats,

following the 64' elections. And of course, we all knew that that was going to swing back the next year. So, I happened to be in a district where after moving around all the lines, there was a vacancy where I figured I could beat the incumbent Democrat, but somebody else wanted that, some other Republican would have that seat. And that was a son of Wendell Wilkie. I don't know if that rings a bell with you, but he ran he ran for President of the United States [19:00] against FDR. 1940 or 44'. So, people kept telling me you can't win this one. But I ran anyway and won it turned out that he had hit irritated some people so. So, again, kind of fortuitous that I got to the seat. So that was just a matter of holding on to for the next 24 years.

BB: Yeah. Interesting. Okay, cool. So, you mentioned that you got married, when did you get married?

RR: Immediately after I graduated from Purdue, which was 1959.

BB: Okay. And how many children did you have?

RR: Two.

BB: And what were their names?

RR: Rob and Diana.

BB: And what was your wife's name?

RR: Well, Rosalie. Okay, but I'm on wife number two now.

BB: Okay. What is your second wife's name? [20:00]

RR: I thought she'd never pull that out again. So, Diana had the common sense to move to Florida. She said she was too darn cold in Indiana. So they moved. Okay.

BB: How did your family influence your career?

RR: Well, my first wife was a very much actually in the beginning. My first wife was in the school of Education at Purdue. She still had a couple of years to go. But we got married, she was moved down or transferred to IU and was able to graduate in three years and started teaching while I was in law school. So, she supported the family for a couple of years while I was in law school, and then for several years afterwards until I was able to make a living [21:00] as a lawyer. Oh, you asked earlier, and I forgot activities. I was in the Student Senate.

BB: Oh, okay. Yeah.

RR: The representative, student housing or family housing. I ran the first time. And I put the campaign signs out everything. And I lost something like 25 to 15 with 1000s of people eligible to vote. So, the next year, I ran again. And I called 25 people that I knew, and I said, "You will come to the polls and vote for me." And I called him the day before, and I said, "You're still gonna do that. Right." And they did. And I won with 25 votes.

BB: Oh, wow. That's amazing. Right.

RR: So, I did have a year's worth of experience in the IU student senate.

BB: Interesting, okay. But do you feel that your experience in the student senate kind of helped [22:00] propel you forward towards being interested in being a part of another legislative body later on in life?

RR: Oh a little bit. They mostly discussed student issues. But there was one student senator who wanted to steer the student senate to more national topics, like there was something called the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, which he considered to be a communist. And he wanted his student, the student senate to divert their activities to something like that. So, the vote has always been the candidates has always been put up by either from fraternities, sororities, or houses student housing. He changed that he put up a candidate himself and hope that it will be the only candidate who ran the rest of us who didn't want the student senate to turn to national issues [23:00] found somebody else and he and he actually won, and that one to who we defeated, you probably will be interviewing later. His name was Steve Moberly. And I became really good lifelong friends with him when he got to the, to the State Representative position. Very ironic. Well, luckily, he never mentioned that anymore. And that one student senator who caused that big upheaval, who later went on to work for Richard Nixon. On the same issues, he was interested in how, I guess, communists, the students' activities were on college campus. He was Nixon's guy on college campuses. He went on later to testify before Sam Merlin, who was a senator United States Senator who conducted the Watergate hearings. So, he gave testimony, I watched him on TV, and I said "Oh I know him." [24:00]

BB: That must have been pretty wild to see.

RR: So that was kind of an introduction to politics later on.

BB: Interesting. Okay. Wow. Let's see, what impact did your career have on your family?

RR: Probably little. Now during the legislative session, I was gone came home late for dinner. Sure. But was probably left early in the morning. That was probably about it. And I was earning enough as a lawyer to take over the family. Which wasn't easy because I was a sole practitioner. Wish mean I didn't have anybody to help me figure things out. How do you file your first divorce case? The most the most anxious getting to (Unintelligible) was filing my last divorce case.

[25:00] The more money you make as a lawyer, the more you slim down the field that you cover. And I didn't want to cover a lot of things. So that was the so the divorce went out the window.

BB: Yeah. Okay. Interesting. Let's see. As you initially became involved in politics, what were the key issues or legislation and you want to fight against, or champion,

RR: There wasn't any. When I went into the General Assembly, I really didn't know what I was getting into. Really, honestly didn't. And in my first legislative session, I always sponsored a very few bills, one of which was a local issue. There was a school corporation in my county that was trying to issue bonds to this building. And there was one person who was opposed to that.

[26:00] And as soon as they got to near the end of the bond issuance process, he would file a lawsuit. And by the time the lawsuit got heard, the bond issuance time had passed. So, they gave me a bill that said, "Well, if you lose that lawsuit, you pay a big penalty, so I got to get that passed. And by the way, back then. And my first session was 1967, elected in 66'. I did find this out. Sessions went fast. In we started meeting in January, and 61' running days later, we were adjourned sine die. And I've never come back to the General Assembly again till I've gone through the reelection process in 1968. I said, "Where'd it go, where that go?" That was also back when they were so [27:00] quick, the final bills got pasted and passed together. No computers obvious, right. But they released scotch tape and. And that's back when they actually literally stopped the clock near the end. And we did have everything pasted together. That physically I mean, they go up, they stop the clock. It was really horrible. And we weren't getting any, anything done. I was lucky to be a part of changing that. And I don't know why I was selected. But one state representative me who had very little seniority in the late 60s. And the leader from the Senate went to the National Conference of State Legislatures in Wisconsin, I don't know if that was a regional meeting or a national meeting. [28:00] But the main topic, the only topic really, that meeting was why the Federal Reserve was eating our lunch. Because they got together, they pass back in those days, they actually passed laws. This was the 1960s with all the voting rights and civil rights legislation that Congress was getting things done. And we weren't because we didn't have time. And that was true all across the country. So, we resolved that we'd all go back to our legislatures and tell them that we needed to change whatever rules laws or constitutions that we needed to and start meeting more often. And so, I went back in the leader from the settlement back, Jim Gardner, I believe. And we got it change in Indiana. And today, there's only four legislatures that don't have annual sessions. Now, in my opinion, we have overdone it. It was nice to have we had a longer time than the first year to get things done properly, [29:00] didn't have to stop the clock anymore, didn't have to paste and patch things together. And then computers came along, which made that easier. But then the second session, it was supposed to be for correcting things and touching up things and, but it's been turned into an almost a full-fledged session. Which nobody likes but they don't do anything about it.

BB: Do you have any state political heroes or people you look up to?

RR: There's three people that should have been governor. There are people who didn't? Well, excuse me, Otis Bowen, great governor, and he was immediately followed by Bob Orr another

great governor. Those were two outstanding governors. We made a lot of progress. And Bowen came aboard just after we amended the Constitution that allowed governors to serve two terms instead of just one and out. [30:00] So, Bowen was the first governor to serve eight years and Bob Orr was the next one to serve eight years. And during those 16 years, they were very, very productive. So those were the guys back then. They were really good people to have as governor. But there were a couple people that should have been governor, like Ned Lamkin, and John Mutz, and Dick Verstein who goes way back and didn't become governors. So, we had a big surplus of people to become governor.

BB: Sounds like it, yeah. Wow. So, let's see. So, when you're running your political campaign to be a part of the General Assembly, what did your campaign emphasize?

RR: You didn't do much back then. Politics wasn't what it was. I was the first one in my county to put up any political sign at all. And I was also the first one in my county to have a mailer. [31:00] Now, you don't have I mean, it's just basic to put up signs and have a mailer. And I financed it all my out of my own pocket didn't cost that much. And I continued to do that. And then it got really, really expensive. And towards the end, I know a state representative from Indianapolis, who told me that his last campaign cost him \$500,000 for state representative.

BB: Oh, my God. That is unbelievable.

RR: At some point, I did want to be a congressman. Okay. So, I talked to the two congressmen that I knew. As I said, "I'm not gonna run against you, but tell me how much it cost so I have an idea later on." And both of them told me \$10,000. This was back in the late in the late 60s. And then we went over [32:00] this \$500,000 for state representative. It's just incredible. All for the worst by the way. It should never been allowed to happen.

BB: Wow, that's incredible.

RR: In a bad way.

BB: Yeah, exactly. Yeah. Oh, my gosh, yeah 500,000. That's, that's, that is crazy to think about.

RR: Now, my last year 1990 when I was up for reelection, the labor unions wanted to take...they didn't have anything against me. But they wanted to take over control over the general assembly, because that was a reapportionment year, next year in 91'. And so, they put in \$100,000, which was a staggering amount at the time, because I was spending 3 or \$4,000. And she got time on Indianapolis radio, which was unheard of in Greenfield three radio stations. And so money, that was when I knew that money was the future, unfortunately.

BB: Interesting. [33:00] That's makes me one think of another question later on. Okay. So you said that you really didn't really campaigns and the way that we think of them today, and I guess

your campaign strategy was just trying to reach out to people through mailing and, and doing that sort of basic things today. Now, who's your main opponent?

RR: Well, as I mentioned, I had to get past the primary first and that was Philip Wilkie. The son of Wendell Wilkie and the state, the state Republican chairman, who lives in the same housing unit, as my mother did at that time, my father died, she moved in Indianapolis. She told me Ray, "I hope you'll be Philip Wilkie, but you're not going to." But later on, [34:00] I found that the people he knew best, apparently voted for me.

BB: Interesting. Wow. Did you have a certain thing that was most important to you as a candidate?

RR: Not at the beginning. As I mentioned earlier, I didn't have a platform I didn't. I didn't know what needed to be changed. So, I spent the rest of my legislative life and my IU trustee life searching for problems, searching for problems and then solving them. Back then, in the 60s and 70s. You used to be able to get together with a few other legislators and discuss what the really big problems are and discuss how to solve them. And then you put a bill in and you'd pass it and the problem would be solved, can't do that anymore. Now you can't pass a bill without the permission of the people or the lobbyists in the hall. [35:00] Because they're the ones that are paying you to get reelected and making campaign contributions, and it's just a horrible, horrible system that needs to be regulated. But since the United States Supreme Court has basically said, "You can't stop that, you can't stop those contributions." Why it is very hard to, to stop, but back then in the 60s and 70s, we found the problem, we solved it. And that's what eventually the sunset evaluation came along, that helped us locate problems. We got together, we decided that it was kind of sweeping the country back then, except very few states really did it. But it was a way to evaluate every single state agency that we had to see if they were doing the best that they could, and that they were given the proper tools to do the best that they could. [36:00] So, in 1977, we passed the sunset evaluation law, which put all the state agencies into living groupings, you know, like transportation and occupational licensing, and gave them a sunset date. That is, if they weren't renewed by that date, they died. That was to give us an edge. So, they couldn't out lobby us. So, they had to put up with our very annoying must be to them inquiries about how we could do things better with our agency. And it worked. We got through 11 years. The Department of Transportation was the first one that's now has eventually become INDOT.

RR: The I will get the bill. The Legislative Services Agency did a study for the year before. Then there was a study committee of legislators that want to and we decided what we wanted to put into bill form. [37:00] And then we passed it. Well, I got the department transportation bill past the House, and then it went over the Senate, and the Department of Transportation, who was run by commission. Didn't really like it. So, they talked to the chairman of the committee in the Senate, and he killed it. So that was our first test either we passed that first one or we were dead. But we didn't have the sunset date to help us. But at that time, the Department of Transportation also wanted to issue a big large sum of bonds to do some projects in the highway. And I was also the sponsor of that bill that gave them the money and bonding authority. So, when the bonding

authority came back from the Senate, I put it in conference committee and said to the Department of Transportation, “You got a choice? Either two bills or zero bills.” [38:00] And so between really wanting the bonding, and there's going to be a disappointed governor, if they didn't get it, who appointed into their position. Between that, and then the sunset, they finally consented so I dumped all of the sunset stuff into the bonding bill. And it all passed without any consideration by the Senate committee at all. It wasn't the right way to do it, but when they when they killed it. Why I had to do that. By the way, that was one of the big things we changed throughout the whole process. Almost every state agency was run by a commission, a commission appointed by the governor. But the Governor did not run anything back then. It was all run by commission. Somewhere some legislators got the idea. They didn't trust their governor. I had no idea when that was, but they put a commission State Highway Commission was solely in charge. If you want something done on the highway, you got to go see the highway commission. I'm sure they checked in occasionally with the governor. [39:00] But our thought was, if you're going to have the governor responsible to the people, they hold him responsible for the condition of the highways and mental health and everything else. That he needed to be the one to appoint somebody who would do what he wanted to have done. So consistently throughout that 11-year process we changed we eliminated commissions and made the department head appointed by the governor in charge. We restored... The Department of Natural Resources was really super resistance to that we got a guy who was the basically the secretary for a couple of commissions they had, he didn't want the responsibility. So he kept fighting and fighting and fighting he just wanted to be this secretary general or whatever the other commission's he, when we passed it in the house he fought and he lost or the Senate he fought and he won it came back to conference committee. And we said, “It's your you're gonna step up [40:00] and take charge of this, or we're gonna eliminate ya, the whole thing. So, we finally had to take charge. But that was very interesting to find that. That's one thing I didn't know that all the all state agencies were run by commissions, mental health, education, you name it all commissions.

BB: That is interesting. Now, you mentioned the role of lobbying, and especially it today being much larger than your time in the General Assembly. Did you see that increase in the in the influence of lobbyists over time, while you're in the general assembly?

RR: Yes, it really came on heavy towards the nearly got to 1990 my last year. When I first went there, there were four or five really important lobby groups. One of them was the Indiana State Teachers Association, The Farm Bureau. I'm trying to think who else but there were only four or five [41:00] that really had any clout. But today, you give your legislator some money, and you got clout. Oh, here's how bad it got on one of those sunset evaluation bills. There was a, I don't think I'll name him. There was a he always had a Republican and a Democrat on it, I was obviously, the Republican and I had a guy very interested in the process a Democrat who always sponsored the bills with me. And we introduced that I forget what year it was, we introduced the bill. And he came up to me and afterwards and he said, “Ray”, he said, “You're not going to believe this, but I'm going to have not only get off of this bill, but I'm gonna have to vote against it.” And I said, “Well, why?” And he said, “Because the person who collects my money for me

raises my money for me. There's one session in the bill that he hates." And he said, "So I'm gonna get off. [42:00] He provides my money for me." That's how that's how bad it got one guy could do that to one very committed legislator, just completely changing 180 degrees.

BB: Wow. Yeah, that is that just really does just show all the power that they had.

RR: He was just one guy. He wasn't even the IFTA. Was a lot of peep members too I mean, that was the real powerhouse. If the Farm Bureau had a lot of members, ISTA had a lot of members, in addition to money, but it was primarily the Manufacturers Association came along, they had a lot of authority. But, but it was all for the worse, because then you could no longer get together. I said earlier, we used to get together and decide what will be good for the state. And we had to fight our way through lobbyists to do that later. So it wasn't that much fun. I got updates on how bad it got because I had a very good friend, [43:00] Senator Beverly Gard for my first 22 years, as in my 22nd year, she decided to run for the state senate. And she ran and won. So, we had two overlapping years. So, between us, that's 20 by 24. She had 22. That's 46 years that we covered of the General Assembly. She kept me posted about what was going on. Her news was always bad about the influence of lobbyists and money.

BB: Oh my gosh. Wow. Interesting. Let's see. So, focusing now on more I guess of your political campaigns What was your first election day like?

RR: Well, the primary election [44:00] I just went down to where they counted the vote and figured I was gonna lose. So that was very celebratory to do that. And then I even the general election I could have lost it was still a republican district, which became more and more Republican by the way, I'm I kind of accidentally moved into a slightly Democrat County, Hancock County after law school. But it became more and more Republican, for instance, there was one precinct around New Palestine. That was it was a single precinct for a whole township (Unintelligible) Township, and within a very few years, it was and it was Democrat. Within a very few years, it'll become 10 precincts all Republican. That's how fast people are coming to the all the don't have counties surrounding Hancock they just and almost instantly we were Republican, and now we win our races by two to one. [45:00] And if you're President running in Hancock County, you win closer to three to one. But enough people bother to vote for local offices that they win by two to one.

BB: Interesting. When how did it feel when you figured out that you want the election to be in the General Assembly?

RR: Well, then I had to figure out what was the next step?

NN: Yeah. Okay. Yeah. What do I do now.

RR: I went down to visit the staff and asked him what was up and how it was handled. And when we met and where we met, they had just changed the chambers. Just completely modernize what

you see today was what I walked in on 1960 Well, early 67 and saw for the first time anybody whose new chambers to everyone, I've got a photograph of the old and it really looked like it was a loungy type area. [46:00] Which it doesn't today. And so, it's been unchanged. And, but they the Clerk of the House, was kind enough to show me around. And when we met, however, how the committee system works. But I've still only had like four bills to, to introduce and so I didn't amount to much until I found out what some problems were that needed to be solved.

BB: Right kind of a figuring out process.

RR: I can tell you about one of those problems, and that was back then we had that you found the law that you wanted as a lawyer as the legislator, what was called burns Indiana statute. All the legislature did was every year at the end of the session, they put out the Acts of Indiana, the 1937 Acts of Indiana, in a bound book, but that was useless as far as finding out what the current law was. So, Burns, Bob's Marrow, I believe, was the publisher of what was [47:00] it probably used to be called Burns Indiana Statute and they never changed it. It was a mess. It was a mess, they would put things together, they put part of the bill here and part of the bill in another chapter, until finally we looked at it and said, "We don't know what's going on here." And so, it was decided by a leadership that we would look at doing something better than that. And again, kind of like the looking at the question of whether we ought to be changing from one session every other year, they turned to me and said, "Hey, how would you like to be the House Representative on a committee that looked at the Burns and decided what ought to happen?" So, I was in on the ground level, and that we looked at it, we said that, "Yeah, Burns is a mess." So, we hired a company out of Pittsburgh, computerization was not much back then in 19- that was 1970. Well, it is by 1970. But we hired this company in Pittsburgh. [48:00] And between us, we put together what is now known as the Indiana code, where we put things more logically, you know, criminal law together all the city and town all together, state law. Until we were satisfied, and then once we were happy, we took it back to the General Assembly in 1971 and passed it, but that wasn't the end. Somebody sued and said, "We don't think you have the right to do that." And the Indiana Supreme Court agreed with them, they said, "Well, there's a section of the Indiana Constitution that says regulates how you codify things. And we don't think you follow that." So, they said, "All you did in 1971 is void." So, we didn't give up. We came back and started going through the constitutional amendment route, which you have to go through two separate sessions after with an election in between. And then it goes out to the voters. We get that done in time [49:00] for 1975 session when we put the Indiana Code through again, and that's when it became permanent. One of the things I'm proudest about there is the table of contents. The index, I think, is a mess. And hard to look things up. So ever since as a practicing lawyer. If I wanted to find a law, I'd look at the table of contents, which is beautifully put together. And so, so now we can find the laws we can easily imagine. Oh, and then perhaps there was still by the way, the Indiana code still was messy because we didn't make any substantive changes. And things that have been scattered around us. It's kind of like the sunset evaluation process. But the Legislative Council then took a section of the law each year, a chapter, a title, and change it around to so you would at least know where things logically should be placed [50:00] so that it was easier to amend the law. Because you can find things with a table of contents, you can find things. And you can

amend. So, we've ended up with the Indiana code today. If you went back and compared the Burns Indiana statutes you would you wouldn't believe that we were even able to operate with. With Burns Indiana statute, by the way. The Legislative Council was another area that was greatly changed. When I arrived in 1967. I believe there were three people I know that were two because I remember them. (Unintelligible) and Arden (Unintelligible) are there and they staff everything. Everything. And I ended up there wasn't enough. I ended up when I became chairman of the committee. I as because I was a lawyer I was able to write there was a lot more lawyers than legislator back then than there are today. [51:00] Started to write the bills that came out of my committee and help other legislators. Man, it was a big fat mess. Over the years, there were a lot of people had and partisan staff was added as well. Partisan staff instead of two, as I mentioned earlier, we went from 22 Republicans to 66 Republicans in the 1967 session doesn't happen anymore system its a landslide change a three or four seats are changed instead of what was that 44 seats being changed, because of the partisan staff and partisan staffs sent out newsletters, and news releases. And they basically helped you get reelected. I didn't have the benefit of any of that so what happened to me was, since I didn't have any publicity between the sessions, or during the sessions, the news media wasn't interested in one legislator. [52:00] And I didn't have any partisan staff putting out releases. I have a contest in the primary and general election almost every single time I had 24 contested elections, because people will look at go should I run against Richardson? Well, I've seen his name around. So I can bump him off. So they all ran and tried to do it. But now, people don't run against incumbents, because two things have happened. Number one, they've gotten their names played around with all this publicity. And they've raised a lot of money from all the people who want to influence the results of the legislation. So, things have vastly changed, all for the worse.

BB: Wow. Geez so how did it feel after each election when you found out you got reelected? Did your feelings change? Or?

RR: [53:00] No, it was just a lot of work. I mean, yeah, because I had that scared anybody away it was it was a two elections every two years. Because House members have had to come up every two years. And it was just a lot of darn work that's all. I got accustomed to that I got into the pattern. I was prepared to at least put up my newsletters or not newsletters, but mailers that we call them today and put up the signs. So I knew what to do. And so, it's got to be fairly routine. But still, the president of the local Farm Bureau, I'm told by a mutual friend really wanted to be in the legislature. So, he decided to run against me. But he went down to the clerk's office and came back he told us mutual friends. He said, "Ah Richardson does too well against primary candidates. I'm not gonna run against him." But the fever got into him that he went and on the last day he filed he just couldn't. He couldn't resist that I hadn't skipped. [54:00] He was the head of the President's County Council and president of a local Farm Bureau. And I couldn't I didn't scare him off. I had to prove it at the polls. Oh, back then. There were no electronic names. Right now. I'm running for county council this time I'm deescalating my office. So, I just filed for county council. But there's an electronic list I'm going to be able to use, to send out my mailers. And we didn't have that back then. So, my wife and I went to the clerk's office in two counties, Hancock County in rush County, which was part of my district. And we would flip

through every page of voter registration to evaluate whether somebody was worth sending a postcard and flip and if he had been voting in Republican primary lately, we sent him one and we hand wrote it I addressed it right there. Preprinted hand arrest. And they got to be old. [55:00] So the party's decided to make it easier to have these electronically addressed to us. So, I missed that. I missed the (Unintelligible) of that.

BB: So, for these other elections after your first election, obviously, was pretty new for you. What campaign strategies did you have over the course of your political career?

RR: Oh, that's too fancy of a name to put on. Again, I just put out the mailers and, and the particularly in the beginning I knocked on doors. That's how back then you really got people registered, particularly a county where people were moving into at a great rate. All the candidates would get together and we'd knock on doors. And are you ready? Are you you know, what party are you? And if the answer was Republican. Are you registered. And we'd register him. So, it was a real between addressing all those postcards, and knocking on doors. It was a real [56:00] pain to run a campaign. That's probably why I was able to win, though, because I was able to go, I was willing to go through all that trouble. Knocking on doors, and addressing postcards and putting up signs ads in the paper. But today, the ads in the paper aren't relevant. If you can't afford a TV ad. If you're not running for that office. You send out a mailer. Or two or three. So so yeah, times have changed.

BB: Yeah. Okay. When you were knocking on doors, when you came across a Democrat, did you ever, were you ever able to convince them to vote for you or?

RR: Well, depends on how they said it. (Laughs)

BB: Okay. Yeah, that's true.

RR: If they said, "I'm a Democrat!" (Both laugh) But if they said, "Well, I often vote Democrat." Then I did this myself and said, well, maybe one time as a Republican. That's dependent on whether their registered. If they said their a Democrat I never asked the question about whether they were registered or not. [57:00]

BB: Interesting. Okay.

RR: But it was the time, the times have changed.

BB: Yeah, sure. Sure. So, what were you thinking as you walked into the state house the first time?

RR: Well, because I visited beforehand. And talk to the clerk. It'll be just a matter of finding out were still finding out where everything was. Where's the restroom? You know. And how do you get a bill passed? I mean, how do you get how do you introduce a bill? And how do you get it

prepared? I prepared a lot of my own bills in the beginning. When do you have to have it introduced? How do you get it once you get it past the House? How do you get it passed from the Senate? Well, it turns out you have to go over and find a Senator who will help you out here. And best off if a Senator who is really interested in what you want. But you did a lot of training. [58:00] You know, well, you take my bill, and I'll take care of your bill. But it was harder to be in the House to get bills passed for two reasons. Number one, the budget started, always started in the House and took up a lot of time in the House. And then went over, which hurt us hearing and passing our own bill because it was in the House. Where our House bills were and then it went over to the Senate at the same time. Our regular House bills, went over to the Senate and caused them to take a lot of time on the budget over in the Senate when we wanted them to be paying attention to our House bills that we went over that we sent over to the Senate. And then there were 100 members of the House and only 50 members of the Senate, which means it was easy for them to find somebody in the House they had a choice of 100. Whereas we had to go over and scrape around and find the senator who wasn't already be seized by a bunch of House members. [59:00] So that was a probably, those are the things I had to whether, had to find out how to get to know some senators. To do that.

BB: Interesting. Okay. And did you...What were your expectations going in about the legislative process? Did you have any thoughts about what it might be like before you started? Or?

RR: I was pretty much ignorant on the process as well, as I said earlier. Not that knowledgeable in the issues. I'd read things in the newspaper, but I didn't know what was gonna happen the next session. So, I pretty much watched and then as I told you earlier, the 61' money days were over. And I was out of there. So, wait a minute what happened. But that's all the better prepared to have more issues to work on in the 1969 session.

BB: Sure. Okay. Did you have any political mentors and the General Assembly?

RR: Not really, we were stationed [1:00:00] in the back of the, we were all grouped together. We didn't have any seniority. So we got to choose our seats last. So you had these 44 freshmen. And by the way, there were more than 44 Republican rookie because some of the Republicans had decided not to run they were replaced by Republicans. So we're just a whole bunch of people who didn't know what we were doing. 44 of us who are just trying to make our, our way. Oh, one momentous decision on entering the General Assembly for the first time in the 67th session was because we're changing from a democrat majority to Republican. The speaker position of the House was open. We had two people running for Billy Howard of somewhere in Hamilton County, Noblesville perhaps was running against Otis Bowen. And I didn't know any one of them. [1:01:00] So they'd come down. This would have been a horrible job for him visiting 44 rookie trying to get their votes. So he came down and talked to me a couple times. And Billy Howard had Bill Ruckelshaus become with him a few times. You may not have heard that name.

BB: Yeah, I have.

RR: But you know who, you know. You trace it all the way back to Watergate?

BB: Yes. Yes.

RR: Where he fired himself, but he left the office.. Okay. Yeah. So he came around with Billy Hauer, and talked to us. Then Doc Bowen drove down from Bremen, Indiana. And then talked with me, I had no idea who was the better person. Oh, there's both seem like good people to me. So I went down to the day before the caucus where we were going to vote. He voted in caucus before and later on, you formalized it in the House session. I said, "If I don't decide who to vote for here, both of them are going to assume that I voted for the other guy." [1:02:00] So if I want any credit. I might have to make a decision to call him and tell him and I did. And I decided I'd vote for Otis Bowen. We went into the caucus. And the vote was 33 to 33. I picked my teeth up off the floor. And I said, "What the." Then in the second round, some people who had promised to vote for Billy Howard or three people actually switched and so Bowen won by six votes in the second round. But if I had a vote voted for Billy Howard, Otis Bowen would never have been heard of. And he was never gonna become governor. Never because obviously, they're only to become governor never would have become the National Secretary for Health and Human Services. And a whole lot of things would be changed. And I'm thinking, wow, how does something like that happened. (Laughs) Dumb luck. [1:03:00] It was, it was the right choice, because Billy Howard had to leave for Arizona because I think his son had bad allergies or something, something like that. He had to change to climate. And so I understand. So anyway, just dumb luck I got a guy who turned out to be really sensational.

BB: Yeah, that's a pretty influential vote then there.

RR: Accidental. Just accidental. So many things were accidental, just running for the legislature at all. And in 1966, was I just happen to accidentally, accidentally be available. And looking for that kind of position as I told you earlier. I ran for prosecutor right out of law school. And it was a good thing that I lost, because otherwise I've been dependent upon the salary of prosecuting attorney in 1966. And I probably would not have won because I wouldn't have I wouldn't have any other salary. You can't go out and practice on the side. [1:04:00] And so that was an accident that a whole lot of accidental things, going all the way back to my choice of engineering and Purdue and then changing my mind and so many accidental things happen to me in my life that turned out off for the better.

BB: Yeah, that's really neat. Wow. So in which ways did you communicate interact with your constituents on a regular basis?

RR: Almost never. Particularly in the beginning, because as I said earlier, there was no partisan staff to do it, and I just didn't I was too busy. After the first couple of years I got so so busy, oh, I ended up by the way, passing 600 bills into law or 200 bills into law [1:05:00] eligibility, I just know that it just became law, there were some that were unsuccessful. So I was a really busy guy, 200 bills. So I just didn't I literally didn't have time to write and didn't want to make time here to go out there and oh, we were the local Chamber of Commerce would hold an annual

meeting, to which the public was invited to come and meet with us. And we'd give a little talk to him. And they could ask questions. So that was really my only way of communicating. Which today would be laughed at. I think the chamber still do that. But still, you gotta get I receive newsletters, frequently from my legislators. They don't even write staff rights it for them. Staff mails them.

BB: Let's see. What was the regular interaction like amongst General Assembly members, formal and informal? [1:06:00]

RR: Well, you had your friends, people you really liked for two reasons. Number one, you really liked them. And number two, they were on the same wavelength politically. And then you have people that you knew weren't on the same wavelength. But you have to get along with them. By the way, I, I learned never, I never had an enemies list. You know, Dick Gibson was famous for that. You just couldn't have an enemies list. Because today, you and I were together, supporting a bill. And the next day, we were opposite each other one was voting for the other against it. And lobbying, trying to get people to vote. So you couldn't have an enemy just couldn't have. Maybe some people did. Now, I did have people that I was suspicious of who I didn't count on to carry through. But that was a tiny, tiny number. And so you just got along with everybody [1:07:00] or pretended that you got along with everybody that you didn't match up with well. So it was a pretty collegial group. On the other hand, let me tell you a story about Senator Gartner. She was trying to figure out if she oughta run, and 1988 for the state senate. And she wasn't sure of her qualifications. She had a doctorate in chemistry, I believe it was. And she'd been on the city council locally and was really into politics and knew everybody was smart. And she came to me said, "Ray am I smart enough, am I knowledgeable enough to be in the General Assembly?" And I said, "Beth, if you go out on the street, and took the first 150 people that you saw and put them in the General Assembly, the quality of the General Assembly would not go down. (Both laugh) Because these are just regular turned out regular, for the most part regular there were some really outstanding people. [1:08:00] But there for the most part, they were just regular people. Door to Door salesmen. I had a bill that regulated door to door sales. And he was like no, no, no. (Both laugh) So it was just a mix, really just a mix of people. None of them, very few of them are super smart. I mean you wouldn't feel intimidated, the few that you would feel intimidated with in their presence, were the ones who became, went on to become the leaders, the speaker, President Pro Tem, etc. Oh, one of the thing I told her, I said, "You got to make up your mind early if you're going to become if you want to become a leader in the General Assembly, or whether you want to be an activist and get bills passed, and substantive matters, because you can't do both. Because if you go out there and you fight and yell or scream, to get your way on a substantive matter, you're gonna make people mad at you. Because a lot of those bills are really important to some people and if you are opposing them. They do remember that. [1:09:00] And so you're never going to become a leader. But on the other hand, if you want to become a leader, you just have to go and be friends with everybody and not make anybody unhappy. Just quietly cast your vote, and then get to know people and get them to like you. And so, that I give that advice subsequently to several other people.

BB: So who would you say had more influence than the people that are very active and trying to get legislation passed or leaders?

RR: Well, let's put it this way? Division of responsibility. The leaders could stop you or help you. But they didn't do that on very many bills. I almost no bills stopped by leadership. They, they, for the most part helped me gave me committees that I wanted. Assigned bills where I wanted to be assigned to, because I didn't make the man right. But I'm sure there was. They were in charge of that. Even though we had a budget committee [1:10:00] membership, it all really came down to the leadership. So, they pretty much ran the budget, but we had to choose. You can either be a committee chairman or you can be on the Budget Committee. That was not a hard choice for me. I didn't want to be one of 20 people on the Budget Committee. I wanted to control legislation, through my committee as much as I can. And so, the speaker on the big issues, the Speaker of the House was in charge. And he couldn't influence any friends I had. I wanted to make some charitable donations to Indiana University, are kept private and quiet. And no one ever knew what happens if you could write a check to Indiana University and you don't know what happened. I wanted to make that open to the public. The person could scratch...the donor could if they wanted to scratch their name out, but the money if you gave \$1,000, \$1,000 is gonna be there. And what happened to it was gonna be there open to the public, so we can at least see [1:11:00] what happened to your money. And IU and Perdue both hated that. They wanted to spend the money the way they wanted to spend it. And so, they got all my bills killed. Because they gave out football and basketball tickets.

BB: Oh no. I guess that would do it (Both laugh)

RR: So, the speaker killed my...every time I introduced this open record bill the Speaker would kill that. That's about the only time I can remember when a Speaker killed, killed a bill of mine. So, so the most influential people were the hard workers who don't hold up position, unless you want to influence a really make a really big decisions, or you want to run a later for governor or something. That's a stepping stone.

BB: Interesting. Okay. What were the interactions like between Democrats or Republicans?

RR: Partly depends on the Speaker [1:12:00] and the Minority Leader. How well we got along. I always made a point when I was a committee chairman, to hear a couple of Democrat bills first, just spit them out early. I picked the ones I like, I'm gonna get to these anyway. I spit them out early. So, Democrats couldn't just complain, well, you're holding up our bills. But a lot of committee chairmen held up the Democrat bills. They service their Republican committee members mostly first and took care of them. But I knew what I could get to eventually. But there were a lot of bad feelings, particularly in the first 50-50 legislative session, where there were two of them, where there were 50 Republicans and 50 Democrats that caused a lot of bad feelings. Partly because of the personalities involved, though. It depends on the personality. You could get along if the personalities, if the leadership personalities, worked well together. But that didn't happen a lot of time. [1:13:00] So, there were a lot of some bad feelings. But it wasn't like it

wasn't like Congress today. By any means. You still talk to them. You went over to Democrats in charge you walked over to I really got to have this bill. Here's why. And I get it passed. I never had I never personally had any political problems getting those passed. So, I even had help one time. You speak from the microphone in front of everybody. And the minority leader sits right in front of you. And they see right in front of you. And I was getting there was a bill up sponsored by Democrats that would create a kind of an all-star high school for kids from across the state of Indiana, in Muncie, Indiana. And I was saying, "Hey, some of these really smart, super, super smart kids sometimes don't have a personality that can handle that being yanked out and put in a strange place. [1:14:00] And what happens if they, you know, what happens if they are made worse mentally being shipped down to Muncie, Indiana." And immediately I realized what I done, I said something negative about Muncie. And just almost instantly, the Democratic Leader of the House said, "Or Greenfield." To me quietly. And I said, what if their shipped to Muncie." And he said, "Or Greenfield." And I said, "Or Greenfield." And that got me off the hook. Thank you, Mike Phillips. (Both laugh)

BB: Oh, my gosh, okay. What about the relationship between members of the House and Senate? Were there any differences?

RR: In my case, it was the leaders of the senate. president pro tem the technical leader was the lieutenant governor who technically [1:15:00] ran hand down bills, that kind of thing, but was really done by the president pro tem. So, they were generally pretty authoritative. And that was a problem, luckily one of them represented Hancock County. So, he thought he had it all with me. The other one, however was from Fort Wayne. And I was interested to see later on that he got convicted of bribery, bribery or some other equivalent. My senator, there was, I don't know if anybody's talked about this before, but there was a railroad had gone from steam, coal, and steam to diesel, a few years. And yet the state law required that they have a fireman. And so, the railroad lobbyists came in and tried to get that eliminated. Who need the firemen. [1:16:00] So, towards the end of the session, the bill passed both houses, but it was being waited on to repeal that it had been waited on for the speaker and the president pro tem of the senate to senate through the process and the senate wasn't doing that. Later on, it turned out that apparently that I read the paper that they had asked for money. And that was later revealed. And they went to prison. One of them committed suicide and the other two went to prison. But that's the only time I've ever expected any. I never suspected that anybody was being bribed about anything. Except that they were in I think in my terms they were being bribed when they received the campaign contributions.

BB: Right. Right. Okay. Yeah. Interesting. [1:17:00] Let's see, did you have a sense of how people would vote prior to actual voting?

RR: No, I was always worried. Even though it was pretty clear, it's gonna be a republican year. I was in a republican district. I still ran a little bit about it. We did get some clue because there was one voting precinct in Greenfield, whose machine would break down in the middle of the afternoon. Always. No exceptions. (Both laugh) So back when they had the big huge metal

machines, and they will break down, they have to open it up and, quote, fix it. And they will notice the votes. And so, we all found out about midafternoon, and that precinct was voted in anyway, and we knew half precinct that was generally a democratic precinct. So that was our only (Unintelligible). [1:18:00] And then they went for the metal machines. And you couldn't do that anymore so it stopped.

BB: Interesting that's funny. And what about when you're working in the house of representatives and stuff did you ever have any idea of what like your seatmate would vote or how other people you knew would vote?

RR: Depends on whether you needed to lobby for your bill or not. Most bills I tried. I tried to believe that I could get up in front of it when speaking to them to convince them this was a good bill. And here's why. Now, some of the bills, particularly the sensitive bills were always big and complicated and contain a lot of bills within bills. There was always trouble getting votes for them. One time one came to conference committee, went to conference committee, and the speaker of the house didn't normally vote. And it came out and I handed it down. I spoke to and [1:19:00] those 49 to 49. I made a point of being stationary myself right next to the speaker. And when he announced the vote on the conference committee report is 49 to 49. He was he was a rookie speaker. I stand next to him I said, "The chair votes aye, the conference committee report is adopted." And he said, "The chair votes aye, the conference committee report is adopted." So I said, whoa, that was close 50-49. And then there was a sunset bill that I lost by about 10 votes. And I had the remainder of that day, that was the last day to go around and find some votes. That was a day when the Democrats decided to embarrass us by killing some of our bills just by voting against him. So, I had to contend against that. There was one Republican who always voted against sunset bill because he didn't like the idea of putting 10 or 20 subject matters into one bill, [1:20:00] I said to him, "You know, I don't have any problem with your line of thinking. I don't have any objections to that." But that day, I went to him and I said, "Hey, democrats trying to embarrass that I would not normally ask you for your vote, but I gotta have it. Don't let the democrats do that to us." So, he said, "Okay." So it was that kind of thing. But I didn't do very much lobbying for my bills, because I tried. You got a pretty good idea of what was happening when they came out of committee. This committee killed a lot of bills. So, I think an occasional lobby, I made sure everybody, I like everybody. I've talked to people. And so, they didn't have any reason to vote against me because they didn't like me.

BB: That's fair. Okay. What was the time where you had to work with democrats to get legislation done?

RR: Well, that was sunset evaluation. Because it had to be there were an equal number of people in the committee [1:21:00] that gets a report from the staff about what they thought would be done, there'd be an equal number of us on the Summer Study Committee really lasted longer than a summer who decided what was going to be in the final bill, and there'll be a republican sponsor and a democrat sponsor and to go, we're in the senate the same way. And so that required the acceptance one case, I told you, for hours. That would be a case where you had to work together.

But I didn't pay much attention to the politics of it, but I've been pretty neutral on the on the politics, because I was, I wasn't a diehard I remember I killed a Republican bill once. It was really, there was a limit. And there still is today on the amount of money that corporations and unions can give to political candidates and parties. And the Republicans said "Well, we got an advantage on that, because a lot more corporations giving money than there are to unions."

[1:22:00] So, they put in a bill that said that increase the amount, I don't know what it was from 1000 to 4000, or something like that. And he came to me said, "You vote for this, right?" And I said "Wrong." I said, "I don't want more money in politics. I don't care if we get the republican party gets a greater majority of it. I don't want to increase what it costs to run for state representative among other offices." So, I said "No", and they said, "Ahhhh" I honestly, don't remember if that bill passed or not. But he was gonna have to go convince somebody else to vote for it. Apparently I wasn't I may have been the 51st vote the way he wouldn't believe me very often.

BB: Yeah, I guess they were surprised. Yeah. Interesting. And how important do you think it was to work with the other side?

RR: Well, I just couldn't tell. I mean, I didn't place an importance on it. I just did it. There's votes over there. And people over there that I need to convince I want them. [1:23:00] I don't want them to vote against me because of politics. And I want them to feel as if they're been able to treat as a matter of fact, I tried my best to treat them equal another way. There were two microphones at the front of the house. And the Republicans sat on one side and they always spoke on one side. But there was a you could ask a the author of a bill questions. So, you raise your hand, say question. And Speaker recognizes you, so you go up and ask the author the question, and depends on whether they're republican or democrat bill I was always with republican, whether it was my bill, and when they were asking me a question. No. When it was not my bill. I would go up to the democrats side and ask the republican who was on the republican side, ask him a question. And then after I'd had an answer, got an answer from my question. Normally, the person asking the question would move over to his republican side. I just stayed on the democrat side. So that was not an accident. I said, [1:24:00] "I didn't want them to think that I was being standoffish. I can only speak for the republican side. So that was one of the things that I did to make them feel more comfortable that plus get some of their bills out of my committee. I don't think they consider me to be standoffish or anti democrat at all. I killed a lot of bills but they were equally republican as committee chairman. They were equally republicans as well as democrat.

BB: Okay. Interesting. What would you say the public doesn't know about how the Indiana General Assembly operates?

RR: Some of them know about the money. Some of them don't. And the lobbying the money passed by the lobbyists to the campaign committees of the legislator. A lot of them do. I think that [1:25:00] I think people are becoming more nationally people becoming more and more. And the people, I don't want to mention any names nationally. But there are people who are

speaking collecting more and more of the money, people as instead of big lump sums, and so people become more educated because they're being told by these candidates for president, give me a few bucks. And I won't go to the billionaires to get my money. So, I think there are more and more educated about that. But they don't know what to do about it. I mean, the one thing they can do is vote for the people who say that. But I don't know that they're gonna, they're gonna do that. But that's the that's the one thing that they don't know that they should know. They will not be shocked or surprised about anything else about the process that I've described by going through committees and getting other people to vote for you and explain it. They would say, oh, yeah, I guess that's what I would have expected. But I think some of them will be surprised by the money. [1:26:00] Again, I don't think anybody's been bribed. Unless you call campaign donations bribery. Which I do.

BB: Yeah, depends on the person's definition. But yeah, I get what you're saying. Yeah. It's, yeah. Okay. Let's see. Moving on to I guess, talking about more now on legislative working and committee work. What would you say was the most controversial legislative issue during your time in the assembly?

RR: Probably the lottery and the para mutual. That's most that's got the most interest from the people. And eventually, somebody said, "Well, we're gonna put this out this question out to the people about whether we ought to have a lottery. And that occurred, I think, the voter that occurred in 1988. And the people favored it, including the people in, [1:27:00] the voters in my district, I'd always opposed it, because it's what I call a regressive tax is paid for by people with a smaller amount of money. I don't buy lottery tickets, because I know that I know only on average I'm gonna get half my money back. I have \$10 bet. I'm gonna get \$5 back on average. And so, I don't do that. And the people that I see a gas stations buying them. I figure. I know, they're looking for a lucky break. But I know that, with very few exceptions, it's not coming. So anyway, the people, so I'd always oppose I said, "No, I'm not gonna go for the lottery." And then there was a space. And then it got approved by the people that a smart move on the pro lottery side. So, I had no choice but to support he was going through my vote, but I have vote for that. And then there was a state senator who, who loved horses and the horsing industry. [1:28:00] That was Larry Borst, a good guy. I mean, he was the Senate Finance Committee Chairman, forever, and he did a really great job. He died recently, I believe. A good guy, a good legislator. But we diverged on the interests of gambling. He had to have para mutual betting to support the horse racing industry. And I didn't want that part of it. So, he'd sent over bills before and I'd always found a way to defeat them in the house. Well, the lottery bill came over from the senate, which I had to vote for and he had attached to it. His para mutual bill. So I'm thinking, ah, can I still vote? What do I do now? I knew it was gonna pass anyway. As I voted for it, but that was the most controversial one. My hardest vote where I voted for something I didn't really want either of them no para mutual in the lottery. But I have people that spoken. That was my hardest vote that I ever had there. [1:29:00] Oh, the second hardest was Doc Bowens property tax reform. As soon as he got to be governor, which was a few years after I'd voted for him for speaker. He says "That property taxes are too high, we need to shift some of the burden from property taxes to income taxes and sales taxes." That was hard to get through because there was

a conservative group who didn't believe the property taxes would go down. We were increasing income and sales tax, and they fought like hell against it. So that was a really, really hard vote to cast on. Oh, Doc, even though republican majorities. Doc had to get two democrats in the senate to vote for it. Or else it wasn't gonna pass. So, he convinced two of them to vote for it. And the next time they ran for the reelection to the senate, they lost. [1:30:00] They both lost. So he ended up getting both state jobs. (Laughs) He took care of them. And so, he had to have their vote. They voted for it. And in politics, you generally, you generally take care of people that just the way it was everybody expected him to take care of them. And he did this is a little bit of the seamy side, and you get some unqualified people. I mean, if you're gonna, if you really want to reward somebody, you gotta get them a salary that pays something, in the state government or even local government. That means you get a higher up job. And when you get a higher up job, and you don't have any qualifications for it that can be a problem. You can survive in that position. If you're really, if you really just if you take advice from... If you get some knowledgeable people around to help you and you and you just saw want to impose something on you on somebody, and you just say to somebody whose knowledgeable, hey is this a good idea. Or is this not a good idea. And you take the [1:31:00] there are directions, but yeah, that's the way it was, there wasn't a lot of that. But you did tend to put your friends, if you trusted somebody. There was a very good member of the house, named Dick Boehning from, from Lafayette. And he dropped out after a few years to run for Congress and he lost. Well, Doc Bowen recognized talent when he saw so he made him the state of the head of the State Highway Commission. And I was happy with him. He didn't know anything about state highways, he couldn't build a road if you'd given a shovel. But he was really smart. He learned from other people. So, I was very happy. That was one case where rewarding somebody for being a good person. Being knowledgeable and smart. [1:32:00] Was the right thing to do.

BB: What legislation? Did you work hardest on you feel like which one took up most of your time? Or?

RR: Well, I made a laundry list just in case you asked that question. I picked out about a dozen of the bills that I really wasn't... There about 200 that I got passed into law. There were about a dozen that I was really in love with. One of them occurred in 1971. That was called the deceptive consumer sales act. And that's the one anybody could use it. But that's one that the attorney general uses all the time, you'll occasionally see where he files a big lawsuit. If you've been deceived, if somebody deceived you in buying something. So basically, what it says, you can be sued for that civilly, that wasn't criminal law. And but a lot of those cases is just a small sale, and not one person can't afford to go at it and sue for 100 dollars. And so, the attorney general, can gather people up and bring a big lawsuit against them. [1:33:00] And really, they offer a lot of money and stop that from happening. So, I was the most pleased. I wrote that bill. And there used to be a uniform code commission, national uniform code commission, and they would come up with these ideas on a national basis, and then send them out to the legislature to look at. So, I got that one. And I said, hey, this is what I'm interested in. So, I looked at it and looked at it looked at it, I said, this won't work. This will not work. And so, I rewrote it and made it so it would work got it passed. About a year later, the Uniform Commission on State laws withdrew

that proposal, but I did get that right. It works. And I'm really proud of that one. Then there was the Uniform Arbitration Act, which I had become, which I passed in 1969. I did pretty quickly get into some of the bigger bills. It was only my second session. I became less proud of that over the years. [1:34:00] It seemed like a really great idea at the time, because you could instead of suing somebody, you could agree to arbitrate it. And there was a National Uniform Arbitration Association that you can get, hire somebody to arbitrate the answer for you. And that's a good idea. But what's been happening recently is a corporation's had been putting that on the fine print of your business deals with consumers, that you won't sue them if you'll, you'll go to arbitration, where they have a big advantage. And you can't get anybody. You can't get anybody that's necessary number of people together for a class action, where somebody's just been damaged for 100 hours. You can't afford to sue, you can still sue for arbitration and negative stuff. But if you can always sue for 100 hours you're not gonna do that. No lawyer would take your, take your case. But now the big companies like the credit card companies, you look at the fine print, you'll see that you have agreed to arbitrate any dispute [1:35:00] you have with your credit card company or your bank or anybody else. And they use that you can't basically you can't sue them anymore. Even individually, as I said, it's hard to sue for \$100. And so, I become less proud of that one maybe I shouldn't have even mention it. But that's part of my history. In 1975 I created what I called the county court. We adjust abolish justices of the peace. I don't know if you've even heard of them. But they used to be a small town justices. If you got a traffic ticket, you go to your local JP, or if you want to sue somebody for 100 dollars, you could you could afford to sue them for a hundred dollars back then go to JP, but these are these are not lawyers. These were just (Unintelligible) across the street from me. Oh, used to been I think the dry cleaning business was became a JP. So, we said, so the legislature agreed to abolish them. But we didn't know what to do with these [1:36:00] more criminal and civil cases. So, I spent a whole summer writing big, thick bill to create a new court, which I called the county court, which will handle small claims. No lawyers, you didn't have to have a lawyer. Eliminate almost all the rules of evidence. That's how it was done. You can just put anything in evidence that you wanted to and if the other lawyer objected to that he was not out of luck. And that works pretty well. And then, and there are probably I don't know how many of those were created 50 or 60, around the state to take the place of the JPs. And then the judges the House Ways and Means Committee made a mistake. They pay them less than they paid the judges of the circuit and superior courts. I don't know what it was \$20,000 less. And that was noticed by the judges of course. So, [1:37:00] what they did was they went to their local legislator, and they said, "Why don't you change our county court into a superior court?" And the local legislator said, "I don't care." So slowly, they were being eliminated, changed, and disappeared, of course. Well, and that's why you've never heard him because they're all gone now, they all became Superior Courts. But what I made sure happened on the way was that they retained a small claims calendar with the same rules the person could just walk in and sue for small amount of money. I wouldn't recommend suing a credit card company. You're gonna have a big, expensive lawyer coming in and squish you. But on the other hand, if you want to sue a local grocery or something, you could do that. And vice versa. And the county, that also makes sure to keep the misdemeanor jurisdiction with the new superior court. There's still there's the old [1:38:00] superior courts who have full jurisdiction, civil, circuit, and those superior courts, who handle all misdemeanors, and all civil and all

probation and things like that, but the ones who switch from county court, to superior court just have the small civil claims and the criminal, small criminal claims like misdemeanors. And I think they take one low level of felons. So that remains in a different form without the county court.

BB: Interesting. Yeah.

RR: Then I passed with 1977, I pass one bill, save cities from bankruptcy. Now what happened with involving police and fire pension programs. They had really super generous pension programs. After 20 years, you can retire and begin immediately receiving a very, very good [1:39:00] pension benefit. So, you can retire at age 40. And for the rest of your life, you will be receiving pension, very generous pension contributions on a monthly basis. And then the city never planned for that. None of them ever started funding it from the beginning, which goes way back to a bad system about 30 or 40 years where the legislature just told the cities here's this here's what you're gonna pay to the policemen firemen because the city policemen firemen had a lot of leverage with the with the legislators. And so, it came down then. Then that pension program that up with Doc Bowens, property tax reform bill came to a bad end because that pension, property tax reform bill prohibited increasing property taxes, it allowed a minimal increase each year for cost of living that type of thing. But the mayor's were no longer able to take on they still coming online pension benefits. [1:40:00] And they said to hell, we can increase the property tax. We used to...they used to go in and increase the property tax to pay the policemen and firemen pension benefits couldn't do that anymore. So, they were they were screwing other programs, you know, they were killing them. And they couldn't start new ones. And they were pulling their hair out. And I immediately drew up a bill to resolve that, by the way, I was doing my own pension engineering back then. With one of the first calculators ever put out. It was by Texas Instruments. The head of Texas Instruments was a semi crazy guy who ran for president, I can't think of his name, you know the one who took that pretty well.

BB: Yeah, a little bit. Yeah, ok.

RR: Anyway, I use that and it did not have a folding decimal point. But I'd figure the pension costs and how they're going to reform that finally using that really rudimentary calculator to do that. [1:41:00] And I introduced it and the policemen and firemen immediately killed it, of course. And I kept introducing introducing it year after year after year, until and I kept telling I said, "You're breaking the cities." They said "I don't see that". And they didn't see at the time. Finally in 1977, they came to me after I introduced they came to me and said, "Okay, we understand what you're talking about when the city don't have any money. And he said, "If you exempt the people who are currently policemen and firemen. We'll let you get it through, we will support you. But will you actually get it through?" And I got through that on. And so that literally saved cities, from bankruptcy, and I'm really today happy with that bill. I was in 1975, I was the author of the G Lau code. I didn't have much to do with writing that. But I was happy to carry that. [1:42:00] In 1984, I came up with the thoughts that, you know, we ought to be doing more remediation of our kids in public schools who weren't doing well. And there was no way

they weren't doing it. They just simply weren't doing it was either holding them back a year or more, more than likely passing them forward. And so, I came up with a bill that I called testing and remediation, which did that it tested everybody and find out who the worst kids were, who were doing the worst. And I talked to superintendent of public-school instruction to get the number off. And he said, "Well, it ought to be about the bottom 10 or 15%. And then the state would provide money for remediation. Usually in the summer, you have to go to school. I get caught up. And that was just a great law. And that's what was intended to do. And then Bob Orr, discovered it and he said, in fact, he ran on it for reelection, as if it was his own bill. And I didn't mind him. I liked him. [1:43:00] But then he changed. He came on, he changed and he started calling out, I Step. And that's the one that become infamous. And I don't tell people that anymore. That I started I Step. Because they still legislature after my time started using that to grade not just students, but teachers and whole school systems and individual schools. And that's still in the headlines today. There still fighting over that. Because the last, they call it call a different name now than I Step, just changed, because the last round of testing showed that a lot of schools failed. And suddenly, whoa, a lot of schools failed, including schools in my district, I can't have that. So just this last, they're in the process right now, of changing that to say, wait a minute, we're not gonna fail any school systems, or any teacher because of the results of that test. We're going to look at it for a year or two. But anyway, I was [1:44:00] really proud of my initial effort and still in use for that this can still be the lower part of the kids are still being taken aside. And the state gives him some money to do remediation. And so, I'm still happy with that part of it.

BB: Sure.

RR: I was the 1973. I was the sponsor of the Endangered Species law. Frank O'Bannon sent that over to me. He was governor. He was governor for quite a while he went on to become governor. But when he was a state senator, he said, "Ray, I got this interesting bill." And I said, "Let me read it." And I said, "Okay, that sounds like a good thing to do. It kind of matches up with" you might not even know that there was a there's a state endangered species law as well as a federal endangered species. So, I didn't write that one either. But I read it carefully. And I liked it. Then in 1974 I'm kind of jumping around here. In 1974 I carried [1:45:00] the ethics law that didn't work so well. Because we couldn't regulate money and campaign contributions. It was never going to work until we can. But the Supreme Court, as you know, has put a big huge obstacle in front of it. But I passed it and we did. We require them to report that was the reporting law. They had the report where they got money and who they got it from that type of thing. So at least people could look and see where they were getting money from. Then in 1978, I passed a plea-bargaining law, prosecutors used to take cases in most cases, in most jurisdictions, a plea bargain now, maybe 90% of them, less than 10% actually go to trial that almost all plea bargains. And they would just reach a deal with the defendant. And, and that was the go to the judge and say we got to work out and the defendant would have to pay the agreed upon he'd go to jail for a year, [1:46:00] instead of the five years that he was worried about. The victims. Were never consulted. And they were mad. So, I passed a law that said the prosecutor has notified the victim and talk with them. The victim could never just make the final disposition. The prosecutor still has the

authority. And it has to make the final, but he had to listen to the, and see what they had to say that before the plea bargain was put into effect. Then let me just throw out one more. That's the. In 1984 this was a part of the sunset evaluation process. We had a fire marshal's office. And then we had the ABC office Administrative Building Council. And both of them, among other things, had a building code, fire marshal had a building code and the Administrative Building Council [1:47:00] had a building code they didn't always match. And so, you can either follow one or the other. In some cases, they worked together a lot. So, when the sunset committee went through that area, I said, "Well, we got to do something about that. There's no point. There's no point having a separate, each has their own separate commission." There was the Fire Marshall Commission and the Administrative Building Council Commission. And so, what I finally decided ought to be done is that you abolish both and combine them into one commission to serve both the fire marshal and the building people. And then to top it off, abolished all the rules. All of them. Effective in two years. So, they had a two-year period to get together to get to know each other, and work on new rules, and therefore failure to get one joint commission, they would get together and they wouldn't make rules that contradicted each other, or at least [1:48:00] if they did they'd catch it, and then they change it. So, they did that it worked. And I got a great big plaque for that I got a huge plaque with a piece of the USS Indianapolis from, from the people from the administrator after that. And so that solved a lot of problems. And I was really happy with that one. So that's the top 10 or 12.

BB: That's good. That's very useful and interesting. So that's great. Thanks for bringing that. Let's see I'm seeing here what we haven't covered yet. Is there? Was there a moment for you where you had overcome, I guess, a really big hurdle or something during your time in legislature? Maybe you already mentioned a little bit about that? I'm not sure but.

RR: Well, several conditions. Well, there was a time I had to decide if I wanted to go to this. This ain't gonna sound right. To the senate. [1:49:00] Our state senator wasn't gonna run again. And I had to decide whether I wanted to be a senator. And I explained earlier, there was a lot of advantages. That way, because of the directions lets the bill pass and there's fewer senators than there are house members. But I had a long talk with some senators about that. And they said, "Well, you know, you lose your entire seniority." Its like, you're a real rookie. If you come over to the senate. And you don't you know, you get to choose your see last. It's nothing, some necessarily big things, but committee chairmanships the senate has been really sticklers about observing seniority for committee chairmanships the house never has they just picked the best people for em and so they said, "You're not going to have a committee chairmanship for a while and the seniority hurts in a lot of ways." So, I decided not to not to do it just I thought I was able to be effective. In the house. I had been there a long time. I knew I knew how the system worked. I knew the people I knew senators and [1:50:00] so I figured out I was getting along ok where I was. So, I stayed. But there wasn't any big. Weren't any really highs or lows or anything where I thought I changed drastically changed directions or anything.

BB: Okay. Sure. In your opinion, what is the most important work of the Indiana General Assembly?

RR: Well, it's changed over the years that's gonna sound put downish and it is. It's to stay out of trouble and not do something that people we're sorry about later. Because they seem to be doing more things that people disapprove of, than approve of. I really shouldn't say that. Because there are some good they there's some there's a lot of necessary things they do like the budget. But they people were and I think as unhappy with them as they are happy. [1:51:00] And that opinion is held by a lot of people. Politicians aren't there been ups and downs in the lives of politicians. There have been some years where they were greatly disrespected. As a matter of fact, I lost in one of those years. I lost in 1990. Back in the days when term limits were a really big deal. And almost passed. They did pass in some places. But I've been there 24 years and my opponent ran solely on the platform of he's been there too long. And she won. Because that was, that was the \$100,000 to push it. He'd been there so long. Not a single substantive issue. She was not able to point to the single thing that she thought that I had done wrong. I've been there too long. 24 years. So, the way people think about their government depends a little bit of what year you're in. It was Ronald Reagan was one of those who turned people against [1:52:00] government. You know, the old saying, I'm from government. I'm here to help you. People ask the punch line. He helped. That spread widespread, but then there's been years and people will feel better about their government. Right now well, people don't respect their government at the moment because of the mess that Congress has gotten themselves in. The lack of cooperation and that spoils the that spoils the interaction between the public and politicians at the very top of government, people notice that I mean, they know that all they're out to do is defeat the other one, and to retain control. Hope, and that's one way people look at government. In fact, I think that's the way many congressmen look at their job. It's not to come to Washington and solve the problems. It's come to Washington and be part of the process and continue to be [1:53:00] part of the process. They look at it as a process, instead of going to Washington and solving things and getting out. And I've read that, that's really the way they think of it. That's why not at all how I thought about the legislature. Now, it turned out, I became part of the process. But it was only because I kept finding new problems to solve. I didn't, there was gonna be a day when I was gonna quit on my own. It was actually going to end with the sunset. I had felt I had become less and less interested in what was going on. So, when the last sunset bill passed, I was going to retire. And that would have been only two more years. one more term who would have been the end. So, I was going to quit in two years anyway. So, I was not totally upset to lose in 1990, because I was going to retire in 1992. I thought I'd cured as many problems as I could. And I was tired of it. And that was the end. [1:54:00]

BB: Okay. Interesting. So, I guess going into some legislative issues from your time in the general assembly that I came across, in some old newspapers. I was trying to find some things that look like they're being debated and kept coming up again, in the papers, let's see. One of them was I think we already covered the ethics one requiring financial actually not sure if we talked about this one. Do you remember anything about an ethics bill requiring the financial disclosures by members of the General Assembly?

RR: That was the one I was talking about.

BB: Okay, you were talking about?

RR: I was the sponsor of that.

BB: Okay that's right.

RR: To make sure it's understood. They developed this form. Fill in the names of companies and people that you've received contributions from that account, fill in the name where your spouse has received [1:55:00] it and places where you and you work. And your spouse works. And it covered tried to cover all of the relevant areas. And that, and that instance did a good job. You have to disclose all that. And that has been of some help. But still the money keeps coming in and influencing legislation. Was there's as much disclosure, as you can begin. After the disclosure, the next step is changing. What happens. And that hasn't occurred. And that's because of the Supreme Court.

BB: Okay. All right. Let's see. I know you talked about education and some of the programs there for evaluating students. Did you could you elaborate more about the renewal of teaching licenses?

RR: Yeah, I was part of that. [1:56:00] Bob Orr came in one year Governor Bob Orr with what he called the A+ Program. He wanted by accident that was by only two years on the Education Committee. And so, I got to be a part of that. And we looked at teacher licensing, and we said, "Well, the because you got your license 30 years ago, doesn't mean that you'd kept up to date. And, and that's what was happening. If you got a license 30 years ago, you were never looked at again. And you might be a really good teacher today, or you might not be. So, we decided that we ought to impose some up to date requirements by going back and get a little. My cases as a lawyer, continuingly I have to go back to school two days a week. Two days a year. And we decided that would be a good thing for teachers to do would be to go back and get some continuing education. And many professions are doing [1:57:00] that now. But it's become I think, overall, I haven't kept up to date on what's happened since then I, my children are all educators and their spouses, I have two children. And two, they're both of their spouses who are teachers. One, once set up in Florida, and they have the same problem. They're always complaining about new things being put upon them by the legislature. The legislature gets complaints, oh or not, our kids are learning enough in school legislator do something about it. So, my daughter in Florida is particularly outstanding about that, and my son here in Indiana says the same thing to me. They just keep putting more and more things on the teachers. And it's not just the license renewal, but that's part of it. And as things change, they want us to do more work, and therefore we get less teaching done. So, it is true that there's a lot of resentment by teacher. And since it's my own kids complaining. [1:58:00] But I've asked him to be more detailed. I believe them. For instance, they think just a year ago, they put on a teacher's requirements, that part of your continuing education, that you have to go back, you have to work for a corporation to find a company to find out what happens in the real world and that company. And you're basically free work for that company. And the teachers have risen up against that.

And this very year, the legislature, I think, is in the process of repealing that or doing something about it anyway. So yeah, there's been problems with the licensing. The continued education is good. But the question is, when do you overdo it? You know, my two my two days a year. I think that's about right.

BB: So, finding the balance.

RR: Finding the proper balance.

BB: I came across another bill, it looked like you sponsor this one to fight littering and try to promote recycling in the city. Can you tell me about that. [1:59:00]

RR: If that's the one from let's see I think 84' I think that was the one solid, no, 1990. That was the one where if I've got to were on the same one is a solid waste district bill. We created a solid waste district to deal with the problem of recycling and they're supposed to go out and make sure that there was recycling. And that worked for quite a while and I think it's still working to some extent. They were given a couple of years later they're given the additional burden of poisonous chemicals. And batteries and other things, which isn't recite exactly recycling to get rid of and collect. They do that more, in my county they're doing more of that than anything. [2:00:00] But then recycling has become a problem in recent years, because there's fewer and fewer companies that want the end product, the glass and plastic that were being successfully collected. I've had several people in the business who tell me, there's not much of a market anymore, but we set up a system for the counties to deal with an encourage them to do the recycling. And that's great. But now we have to now that China has stepped in and refuse to accept some of our end result recycling its become even more of a problem to properly use materials, there's gotta be a solution that somebody's gotta come up with some kind of way, not just to collect recycling, but to do something useful with them.

BB: Sure. One bill that seemed like it was pretty controversial in your time, I saw a lot of articles about this. [2:01:00] There's a bill that was about I guess it would impose no restrictions during the first three months in regard to abortion. And do you remember much about that or so the debates going on?

RR: I give you the history, I was here for the complete history of abortion, the Supreme Court, and Roe vs. Wade decided that in most cases, they were not going to be any limit on abortion, and all laws in every state if any degree of having to do anything with abortion were void. So, there was no restrictions on abortion. I wish I could remember the year of Roe versus Wade. Maybe it's 1973. There so I had a bill in conference committee, my fellow conferees were making clear to me wasn't going any place. [2:02:00] So, we all decided that we you wouldn't have nobody would say unlimited on that. At the end of the six months, you can still have an abortion. Nobody wanted that. So, a bunch of us, several of us were conference committee members on this now dead bill said, "Hey, why don't we put in what restrictions we're allowed to do? And everybody would be semi happy with it." And we did that. So, I sponsored the first

abortion bill, ever following the Supreme Court following Roe vs. Wade. And it has been, there's some people who got in mind every year recently, to make it more and more restrictive. That was after my time. And so, this reached a point where it appears as if they're passing things that they know, are unconstitutional on purpose, and go into court with it. And I don't understand that part of it. But, but it was less, [2:03:00] less controversial back in my day, we just, we looked at Supreme Court decision. And we said, here's what they're gonna allow us to restrict. And we put in the bill, and I think it may have passed unanimously.

BB: Okay. So it was pretty much a nonpartisan issue then.

RR: Yeah. Everybody agreed there had to be some kind of restriction, as I said, the 9 months thing. We didn't nobody wanted that. So yeah, and there was one that I was on the same committee with a couple really well, one with a Catholic and with another really strong republican. And they didn't want to do this. But they realized that it was gone. There was nothing. And so, we all reached agreement across all this spectrum in the general assembly, something needed to be done. Here's what the Supreme Court's made clear we can do. Since then the Supreme Court had been tested, and allowed more and more restrictions. [2:04:00]

BB: Yeah. Okay. Let's see. What about the creation of the White River State Park, I saw there was a debate about whether to create the park or not and what was your role in that?

RR: Fairly big. I was on the WFYI, channel 20 myself and Senator Mike Young were asked by WFYI, to have a debate about the future of White River State Park. And we did it just been sitting there. There was a proposal to put the equivalent of it's got a bunch of name changes now. The Deer Creek, I think call it now Deer Creek down there. And the commissioner of the White River State Commission that looked at it and looked at it and looked at it, looked at it and never said yes or no. So, some of us came along and said, "Do whatever the right thing but so something, don't just sit there." [2:05:00] You got some very developable land the city of Indianapolis needs something that there's a lot of good projects that could go into it do something. So, we had this debate the one thing that they did was they tore down an architecturally significant grade school there in the middle of the night, basically. And now received the letter, because they knew that we're going to have to clear that at some point. But then Deer Creek, if that's the right name relocated in Hamilton County, which where it is today, so it was gone. And but then they I think they put in something down there, and I don't keep up on that. That's where the zoo is now. Zoo had moved there. And oh, there was the what's that Indian question this there now.

BB: Yeah, there's one of the museums.

RR: Well, there was this fellow nationally who collected a lot of Indian I wish I could think of his name again, give him a little credit. After we've been through, [2:06:00] he wanted to donate his Indian collection to the state. And Bob Orr call me up, say, "Ray would you come down." Said you've posted or I've had problems with the Indiana State Museum, which they wanted to

build. And I was opposed to the way they wanted to do it. And he said, "Ray, we got this free, this free museums going to be built by somebody else on this land." They said, "Do you have any objections to that?" I said, I think he expected me to object. I said, "No, as long as somebody else is paying for it we'll give them the land." So, he said, "Oh, thanks." But yeah, I fought Larry Borst on that he wanted not only para mutual betting, but he wanted this in this State Museum. And I looked at what was in the current State Museum, which was an old city hall. And I said, "Where are you, you walk in that state museum building, and you go ooh and ah, but you're doing it at the building. It's a significant architectural building. And I said [2:07:00] "If you look at the exhibits themselves, they're nothing. They're nothing." I said, "I'm not going to agree to put lots of millions of dollars into a new building that didn't have much in it." But then as soon as I left, the legislature already got the bill passed. And they've got better exhibits in it now. So, it was good that it was delayed.

BB: Things have changed. Yeah, circumstances. Let's see. I guess another legislative issue that it looked like was going on at the time was regarding I guess, the busing legislation? Do you remember much about that, or?

RR: Well, that was not the legislature couldn't do anything about that really.

BB: I guess there's mostly like a recommendation to Congress. It looked like.

RR: Well, there was a judge here a federal judge, whose name should popped in my mind, who decided that children should be bused to equalize race and schools. [2:08:00] And people didn't a lot of people didn't like that. And so, the legislature couldn't do anything about that. But a lot of those people were the ones who ended up moving into my county, Hancock County. Which I explained to you earlier. So, they had a lot of people. So that's how they get around the bussing. And people on both sides. Someone said it was a good thing to integrate. And other people said, that's fine, but taking the bus to school is a long way away. So that was a problem that was never addressed by general assembly. Because we couldn't. A federal judge was saying there was constitutional federal constitutional right. The people had to be bused to attend integrated schools.

BB: So, the state was what could only just offer their recommendation.

RR: Yeah, there were some individual legislators who spoke out but.

BB: [2:09:00] So now turning towards life after the Indiana General Assembly. How would you overall summarize your time as a state legislator?

RR: Well, back then really a hard time, lots and lots of work, but I was pleased with the results. So, I was happy. But I knew that I couldn't sit there and do nothing for the rest of my life. So, I said, what would I like to do now and I found one of the things that was available was you could you could be a citizen and run for a graduate of Indiana University and run for the IU Board of

Trustees. So, I did. And I ran on issues. I listed 10 things that I thought could be looked at and approved by the Board of Trustees about IU. And I ran against an incumbent who just said, you know, IU's a great place. I'm proud to be an incumbent trustee. Please reelect me. [2:10:00] Well, I won. And I want several more times spending nine years there. My interest really was an undergraduate education because the one thing that I knew was that the graduate education was strongly favored by the administration, and not just at IU, but everywhere all universities, graduate education, and therefore the professor's spent their time teaching graduate students, and professional schools like law school and medicine. And the undergraduates were being shorted. Then we got the leftover, then we get into the graduate, they were getting graduate students who had to earn a living in graduate school, they were teaching the undergraduates, or in some cases, a full professor would teach a class of 200. And then they would break up into smaller classes with graduate students, explaining to them what they were just told, like the full professor. And so that's what I was interested in. [2:11:00] And that's what I worked on. And I was successful. One thing I did after I get to know people, and after I was able to get a new president of the university who was sympathetic, and I was able to go to the individual chancellors of all of IU's campuses in different cities, and we were spread all over everywhere. From New Albany, to Gary to Richmond to Kokomo to Fort Wayne and IUPUI of course. I was able to go to it for the big deal. I found their graduation rates and on every campus in every case, their graduation rate was in the low 20 percentiles. And I said to them, [2:12:00] "Look, why do we even have this IU campus? Why are you even in existence? Why don't we get rid of you all together, you're not doing a good 20 Some percent are graduating." And they just sat back and look at me and looked at me and said, "Well, maybe you have a point." So, what they did not me, be I didn't come up with any programs. I just inspired them to come up with mostly tuition. The remediation program, and they did that I did it in lots of ways. They was particularly the freshmen math, which at IU everybody has passed, they said to me, that's where most of the students even the Bloomington failed, who dropped out of school, it couldn't do the math. So, they did a couple of things. Number one, they took a one semester course. [2:13:00] And then at the student's choice, they could enlarge it to a year, there would be a student who take that course who would sit in. And at the end of the class, he raised his hand and he would say, "Hey, if you have any questions, I'm that's why I'm here for come see me." There was. Kids were being taught in by in their dorms, there were things on TV screens that would teach them.

RR: And the main courses of residence hall, there were lots and lots of things that there's these are the Chancellors. Not me that came up with idea, but they were forced, I forced them to come up with answers. And they did. And the IUPUI graduation rate, which wasn't much about 20%. Went to 40%. It worked. And it's gone up since then, after I left, but it worked. And I could not be more proud of having [2:14:00] 1000s of kids getting their degree, that would not have otherwise gotten their degree if they hadn't been for all of these efforts by the by the chancellors. So, I'm really happy about that. Then by the very end of my nine year career. I got in on the Bob Knight fiasco.

BB: Oh, okay really. All right. That's interesting.

RR: Don't know if this is a relevant point to talk about.

BB: It's okay. So, what exactly happened?

RR: Well, he did. He was accused of choking the kid in practice. And it came to the trustees and did a couple of things. Number one, we, somebody went through...share with you and they found a videotape of the practice at which it occurred, because we could see it wasn't some basketball player saying I got choked, and Knight said, no, I didn't do it. We can see it. It was a very mild and he just kind of grabbed him around the shoulder [2:15:00] neckish area and said, "Hey, you need to do this differently." But that encouraged us to look into other problems that Knight was having. I don't know if you're aware of the throwing the chair across the gym floor?

BB: Yes, I've heard of it.

RR: And there was more, it got to the point where Tom Early, who was president of IU at that time called Bob Knight into his office and said, "Bob, he doesn't have anything too strong I'm told. You've got to change some of the, you got to be a little more gentlemanly about it. And Bob Knight said to him, "I quit." He said, "I got an offer from (It's either New Mexico or New Mexico State) I quit." And the trustees at the time, that wasn't me. The trustees at the time caved. They deserted their president, I'm told. And they, they gave him a long long term contract. They gave him complete control of assembly hall. [2:16:00] And made but had to make Bob Knight think he was basically in charge and couldn't be fired. And that was a problem because the two members of the IU Board of Trustees after the complaint about the neck, went out and went back and found all sorts of problems that Bob Knight was having over the years. And so, our public relations guy said, "Why don't we put him on probation. And I think I think the way he put it was, there's about a third of the people out there who hate Knight, would be thrilled if you fired him, and there's a third that love him and are gonna dislike you for firing him. And there's a third of them who look at it favorably. He did lots of good things. He followed the rules for one thing." He said, "Why don't we put on probation?" And so, we did. And then he did a lot of nasty, stupid things. [2:17:00] Like he canceled his alumni meetings in Chicago, Indianapolis, and Bloomington and blamed them. He said "Oh I may say something that the Board of Trustee might dislike. And then they said violated probation." So, he really ended up getting fired because of those things like that than actually doing anything wrong. So, he did go up and he grabbed some kid by the arm and some kid said, "Hey, Knight, what do you think of and Knight grabbed him by the arm and said "You can call me coach or Mr. Knight." So anyway, the next time I ran for election, I don't know if it had anything to do with it, but I did not get reelected. (Both Laugh)

BB: Okay. Fair enough. Wow. Okay.

RR: We want to stray.

BB: Let's see, what is your favorite story or anecdote from your time as a legislator?

RR: [2:18:00] That's asking me to be too thoughtful and not giving me a way to think it over. It was the scares at the end. I told you a couple stories about getting conference committee adopted. And there was a couple more that I didn't tell you about. But it was getting bills. It was getting bills passed. Oh, and it was a 50. It was a 50-50 session, which I think occurred in 1986 or 88'. I'm gonna say 88'. And getting that result was a problem. Because there was 50 votes each. Nobody could control who was going to be speaker or a committee chairman. And finally, we did the only thing that it was possible to do. [2:19:00] If you're going to do something as the last choice, you do it. Had two speakers that would alternate days. And we had, we had joint committee chairman. The Democrats got a lot of laughs about that, because there was one. It was a Democrat who had made my joint committee chairman, who everybody laughed they came to and said, "Oh Ray, you're gonna really love this." Because he was the kind of guy who did his own thing. And was kind of hard on other people. And but I ended up getting along with him really well, because I wanted to do some things that he wanted to do. So that was...then there was another 50-50 session a few years later, they could have resolved that the constitution requires that there be no more than 100 house members. They could have gone down to 99 house members. And solve that problem, but no, they didn't. So, it happened a second time and they still don't do it today, and I'll never understand why. But yeah, we had a there was a lot of there's a lot of getting along [2:20:00] in that session because you had to get along with everybody. So that that was forced, but it worked. It worked. I guess that's my story.

BB: All right. Yeah, that's fine. Yeah. Okay. Do you have any regrets as a legislator?

RR: I wish I would have found a way to defeat the lottery and para mutual betting is all but that was a steamroller coming down the pipe after the voters approved the referendum.

BB: Okay. What lessons, if any, did you learn from your experiences?

RR: Not to have an enemy's list. That's paid dividends everywhere, I survived 50 years as county attorney afterwards, because I tried to get [2:21:00] all with everybody even though I had some strong opinions. And so, so that was the biggest, the biggest thing I learned out of the whole process, don't become don't be Nixon.

BB: Yeah. Okay. What advice would you give to future legislators or even current legislators?

RR: They can't follow my advice because it means reducing the amount of money that it takes...My choice would be to have public funding that's hard to do. But you have to give people...you can't have a billionaire or even a billionaire come in and buy a seat or even worse, you can't have lobbyists come in give money to a legislator who buys a seat, and then gives lobbyists, [2:22:00] what they want. So, the only way out of that is to either amend the Constitution, which isn't going to happen. Or is to give public funding to congressmen, legislators, other people, to make put them on equal footing with the people who are given money by lobbyists or guests, millionaires and billionaires, and let them have the amount of

money needed to make it a true contest. The other thing that hurts. partisanship is the control of legislative districts. And they're making most seats in the legislature and the Congress are one party seats. There's very few who changed hands as I mentioned earlier, 44 house seats changed hands in the 1966 General Assembly. That doesn't happen now. Because the seats are because of the money, [2:23:00] the seats are designed for either Republicans or Democrats. There are people working against that my wife who is a past member, past state president of the League of Women Voters had been working for years now to change that. And I have told her that it can't be done. The legislators aren't going to give up the control over what seat they occupy on and then the fact that they can make a seat fit their politics, but she doesn't give up and she's still working as a league of women voters number to this day.

BB: Yeah. Interesting. Okay. How has the state of Indiana changed over the course of your lifetime?

RR: The whole state?

BB: Yeah.

RR: Well there's a whole lot fewer farmers, whole lot fewer were producing more grain because we farm better. [2:24:00] But I know high percentage of farmers sold out to other people it just accumulated and fewer people more and more land. Government has been many ways is one of the things that hasn't changed. There was an effort made here a few years ago to eliminate township trustees which didn't go any place because all the township trustees and there's a little over 1000 of them, came to their legislators and said don't eliminate my position. And the legislator didn't really much care either way got more than one person beating on him and a bunch of local township trustees, saying don't eliminate my job and the township trustees used to be more important. [2:25:00] than they are now they do little poor relief, they put up a fence between neighbors if the neighbors can't agree that doesn't happen very often. The general assembly changed in the way we discussed before that they'd meet every year. The governor can be reelected one time. Transportation has changed, but not as much as it should that's a big problem because of pollution problems. And that needs to change. But it hasn't changed. It's hard to change. We're changing more and more from coal electric plants to gas electric plants, but [2:26:00] that isn't the end solution. Gas still produces h<sub>2</sub>o (CO<sub>2</sub>). So, I find a lot of things very much the same as they were when, when I was young, it's warmer. It really is warmer. As I said earlier, I was born and raised in Logansport, which is a little farther north. I remember spending my winters in snow and all ice. And that didn't happen now. That didn't happen. I spent...we would grab on to the rear fenders of cars and pull us down streets on our sleds. And I remember driving on ice and snow, there was just so much more snow back then. Winters are really light now. And of course, everybody knows there's reason for that. But it's not being [2:27:00] properly addressed. And I think we're going to come to a bad end because we're not addressing that problem.

BB: Yeah. How has politics changed in the state of Indiana?

RR: Money, it's just it's just, it's all money. There's about the same level of competence in the legislature. And then all doing about the same thing. But they're so reliant on money that something could get done only if the lobbyists are won over.

BB: Yeah. Okay. What if any enduring qualities do Hoosiers still have or hold dear?

RR: [2:28:00] One of the things that I noticed more when I went to the state level is that Hoosiers are involved more locally than they are at state or national levels. And they know what's going on locally. And a small number follow what's happening at the state level. And at the national level. And at the at the world level. And I think that's about the same as it used to be people in some sense, people used to be more wide read than they are now. So many people are getting their information over Facebook. And newspapers are hurting. In my county, there used to be two newspapers. One of them called the Hancock Democrat and one of them called the Hancock Republican. Well, there's one today [2:29:00] and this neutral as they would have to be. But information used to be spread locally, through the newspapers, which my impression is if they were much more widely read back then the news was flavored by politics. But at least it was news, I think my impression is you'd read about something that happened in Washington DC, in your local partisan newspapers, but now, the newspaper circulation is shrinking. I looked at the circulation figures of our local newspaper. I was shocked at how low the circulation was. But and so I asked people how do you get your news and they do get it over Facebook. And that causes a lot of their news to be not true. And there's more opinions. And that's disturbing. [2:30:00] Now, things were not any more true back in the days older days, when you got your information from the Hancock Republican and the Hancock Democrat, it was all flavored back then, in much the same way that Facebook is flavored now. So, I don't know if anything's or if that's better or worse than necessarily a different way of receiving your news. And it's a lack of and national politics has been spoiled by opinions that are believed by people to be facts. And that is very disturbing. At least if we could all agree on facts. We could go our own ways on opinions about what to do about the facts. But people are mistaking opinions for facts.

BB: Yeah, yeah. So, one last question for you. [2:31:00] What do you want Hoosiers to know about their role in relation to the function of the Indiana General Assembly?

RR: Oh, they're things have really changed. In my day, you had to call and you could there was I didn't have a personal phone. But there was a switchboard. And so, people could call and could ask for me. But it almost never happened. They could call and leave a message for me. And there were a half a dozen, the general assembly's work workers on the phone, and they would write down and they would say Sam Smith called. And here's what he wants you to know and they would pass that along to me. But that did not happen a lot. There was no email back then, there was a letter. If I got one letter a month, it was high. If I got one phone call, every couple of weeks. That was a high number. Now, the email [2:32:00] has changed. Everything has changed. In fact, it's changed people's email addresses. Some legislators have an email address that is well known. But a lot of them change to an odd number, a different email address that only their staff

reads. And the staff reads, not just emails, but letters, the staff tries to figure out what it is important and should be passed along to the legislator. And that's not bad that has some sorting. But it's not the same thing as everybody being able to communicate to the legislator. What they'll get now is an email going into legislator. And my impression is that they'll get a response back, but not a lot of attention from the legislator. Now, in my day, there was one bill that had stirred people up [2:33:00] some teeny, tiny bill, and somebody that stirred people up, and I got eight or eight or nine calls on it. And that was a landslide. We just didn't get that. So, if you heard from your constituents, it was a landslide, you really miss something because they went through a lot of trouble. Nowadays with emails. It's so easy. Once you find out how to do it and where to send it. It's so easy for one person to send an email a couple emails every week, it's become too easy to contact your legislator. And as opposed to too difficult back in my day.

BB: Interesting. Okay. Is there anything that you want to add or did we cover pretty much everything or.

RR: I think you discovered everything possible that I could anyway know. You've done a good job. Now the question is, is anybody in the future going to be listening to you and me talking? And I'm betting No. [2:34:00] (Both Laugh)

BB: Well, I guess we'll see. Yeah. That's to be determined. All right.