

ILOHI Interview with Robert DuComb

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Indianapolis, Indiana

Interview by Ben Baumann

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai> and Ben Baumann

MP3 File, Sony

Robert DuComb=RD

Ben Baumann=BB

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BB:

All right. Well, before we begin, I would just like to state for the record that today is August 2, 2022. And my name is Ben Baumann and I'm in Indianapolis, Indiana speaking with Robert DuComb, and we're doing an interview for the Indiana Legislative Oral History Initiative. So just starting off when and where were you born?

RD

I was born on September 3, 1943 in South Bend, Indiana.

BB:

Okay. And what were your parents names?

RD

My father I'm JR. Robert James DuComb, Jr. So my dad was Robert James DuComb Sr. And my mother was Lucy Azalea DuComb. Her maiden name was Cotter. And she was, they were both raised in South Bend. They were a high school romance that turned into marriage during World War Two.

BB:

Yeah. Wow. Okay. And when did your family first get to Indiana?

RD

I don't really know the answer that question I have reached I have researched back. My great grandfather was a farmer in Lakeville. [0:01:00] And he and his one of his brothers served in the Civil War. And I haven't, and I've been going through, you know, family pictures and stuff. And I found a little tiny, I guess you'd call it tinel type of four Civil War soldiers. And I know, one of them must be my great grandfather, because nobody else who would have kept it you know, except your family, but I can't identify you know which one he is. But so they were here before that. But that's really as far back as I have traced the family. There is another member of the family found that the first DuCombs came in, like 1803 in the Baltimore. And but it's not a very big family. I mean, nationwide, you know, there might be six or eight or ten families that we've been able, I've been able to find. You know, that came, you know, probably all came over from France in the early 1800s.

BB:

Yeah, that's neat. Okay. What were your parents occupations?

RD

[0:02:00] My father was a, an attorney. And his my mother basically did she worked in manufacturing jobs before they got married, worked for Singer Sewing, and a couple of other companies like that. And then while you know, you know, while my dad was practicing law, occasionally she would go in, you know, and be an office assistant and work in the office, but she did not really work out of the outside of the home very much during most of my life.

BB:

Okay. And did you have any siblings?

RD

I had one brother named Dale. When I was a senior in high school, we moved up to Cassopolis, Michigan where I still have a home. And he went to the Cassopolis high school. He was in the army. He got sick in the army, and during training, but still was, you know, [0:03:00] recovered enough to spend his two years and then he became a Mishawaka police officer in Mishawaka, Indiana, where he served for 25 or 30 years. And unfortunately, he had a health condition and he passed away at age 50, which was a big blow to my mother at that time, and anyway, she was, you know, I guess, so unhappy. And you know, about him passing at such a young age, that she had kind of a small stroke, and then she came to live with us, the last three years of her life. And so I was grateful to be able to take care of her in the home and, you know, she actually, you know, I kept her out of the hospital pretty much. You know, till near the end, when we had hospice then come to the house and help it was, it was a very big learning experience for me and very emotional.

BB:

Yeah, definitely. [0:04:00] How would you describe your childhood?

RD

Blessed, I had a really good childhood. In Cassopolis, Michigan there's a lake called Diamond Lake. And my grandparents owned a cottage there I spent every summer as a kid up at the lake. On the lake, you know, had a boat and boating and all those kinds of activities. I was the paperboy for two or three years and then my brother was, the lake has an island and the ferry that goes from the mainland to the island and I worked the ferry for a couple of summers, you know, before college. And then my brother did. He was four years younger than I am. And he worked and it was just really a blessing to be at the lake in the summers and went to a good high school and had a lot of friends and some of whom I see still see regularly. So I think that was really very [0:05:00] good for my life. And, you know, so I was very, you know, I feel very happy and good, you know, not that there weren't ups and downs, you know, because there always are. But it was, uh, looking back on it. It was a very lucky childhood and being at the lake having my grandparents and I had a great aunt involved in my life, you know, from a very young age, as my dad said, "I was spoiled by all these women while he was off at war." So I was expecting to be treated like that the rest of my life, which didn't quite work out.

BB:

Naturally. Now, what did you know about your family's politics growing up?

RD

Well, I knew that my grandfather, my grandfather had three brothers. So there were four brothers in that family all raised in Lakeville. And of the three of the four brothers became lawyers and practicing in South Bend. And I've learned just recently that one of my [0:06:00] great uncle's, my uncle Clifford, actually ran as a Republican for the Court of Appeals sometime back and I didn't get the exact date, but I found a poster showing that he was running. But what I first knew about was my grandfather, who was elected the city judge in South Bend. And then he ran unsuccessfully for mayor, and had been very active in politics. That, you know, and then from, you know, the days I can remember, my dad was always involved in politics, more on the organizational side. He was campaign manager for candidates. He became a district chairman, for the state, which for Republican District Chairman for the Third District, Third Congressional District, and served on the state committee for a number of years, and was very involved in the organizational side. [0:07:00] When I was 15, my father ran for prosecutor in St. Joe County, which was, you know, it was about a two to one or more democrat majority, of course, running as a Republican. It was a very nasty campaign because of the allegations of the misconduct by the prosecutor at that time. You know, I remember getting phone calls at home from people threatening us, you know, my father was raising these allegations, and unfortunately, he did lose the election. Two years before that, in 1956, he had been the campaign manager for his law partner, FJ Nimtz, who also became my law partner when I got out of law school, and FJ was successfully elected to Congress in 56. But unfortunately, and you know, this six year of Eisenhower's presidency in 1958, he got swept out in a big Democrat, you know, kind of landslide and [0:08:00] never returned to Congress. I think he did run once. One more time, but still, but still lost. So I grew up in a political environment, there's no question about that. And we talked about politics we had in the house. You know, obviously, when I first I went to law school at IU, and when I joined my dad and FDA to practice law, that was in 1969. I mean, the place was full of politics. I mean, politicians would come and talk to my dad, you know, we were looking to run for statewide office, you know, they would come in, and you know, you know, try to get his support. And I followed him down to a state convention when they were, you know, still pick, you know, everything was, there was no primaries, everybody was being picked, you know, in the convention and watched, you know, how that all worked. So, you know, I had a lot of politics, I really, you know, [0:09:00] and I enjoyed it, that's one of the reasons that I did run for the legislature.

BB:

So yeah, your family was pretty politically involved there.

RD

Yes. Very much. So.

BB:

Now, before law school, where did you go to school?

RD

I went to Indiana University. And I graduated in three years, I went to summer school, and my degree was in liberal arts and what they call the government, which was political science. It was great. That's what I was drawn to. And then I went to law school, you know, right after that.

BB:

Okay. And where did you go to high school?

RD

South Bend Central High School, which is now an apartment project and the school is gone. And closed. It was closed in the early 80s, I think or late 70s or sometime now. We still have reunions.

BB:

Won't be many reunions I guess.

RD

[0:10:00] But no, well they're starting to diminish. That's, it's like an all school reunion now. Ah, yeah. We haven't had one just for our class in a while. An all school reunion.

BB:

Yeah, probably strange to hear schools that close.

RD

Well, you know, they started building them in the suburbs and people started living to move into the suburbs. So that's, you know, they built the schools and eventually closed Central. And they actually were going to tear it down. But it had been built in the early 1900s. And it was so well built, that it would cost more to tear it down than it was to renovate it. So they just turn it into apartments.

BB:

That's interesting. Did you have any favorite subjects in high school or?

RD

Well, I actually took a lot of math and really enjoyed math. I would say that the, you know, I liked history, but it was not as well taught as the math. We had a very good math faculty in South Bend, and English also, my great aunt, had been a high school teacher [0:11:00] at Central. She had retired by the time I got there. But you know, some of the people on the English faculty still remembered her. She taught me a lot of English in the summers, she taught me phonics and which wasn't being taught then in schools, you know, it kind of comes and goes, I read, you know, I mean, I read a lot growing up, and I loved English, I love stories. I love books. So I liked all that. And but, you know, math was, you know, was a draw, just because the faculty was so good. And a lot of my friends were taking higher math. And I just, you know, I mean, I ended up taking calculus, maybe even differential equations in high school. And I continued a little bit in college, but then, you know, when I got really good teachers and politics and history, and government, you know, I was drawn much more to that and kind of gave up math. At that point.

BB:

[0:12:00] Were you part of any clubs or sports teams in high school or college?

RD

No, well, I was in a fraternity. And, you know, we had a lot of activities, I was in the senior play, and not a very glorious role. And, but, you know, I can't remember, you know, always active, but I can't really remember the specifics that I was, you know, of clubs and stuff, I had friends, we, you know, we played basketball together. But my basketball career ended in junior high, when I realized that there were people who could run faster backwards, than I could forwards and jump up and grab the rim, and I'd be lucky to jump up and grab the underside of the net. So after that, it was just kind of what you'd call it intramural. I enjoyed it a lot. But, you know, it's never good enough to be on the team. I went to the games and, cheer them on.

BB:

Okay. [0:13:00] How'd you view Indiana growing up?

RD

I thought it was, you know, a farmer state. I mean, there were farms everywhere. I mean, it was home, you know, I really liked it. I liked South Bend. You know, I like Southern Michigan, where we went in the summers. You know, I viewed it as kind of a solid Midwestern state. We didn't travel a lot, because we spent our summers at the lake. So I didn't have a lot of experience with other states. But, you know, farming was big, also I knew it was a very important part of the landscape. And, you know, I think while I was in high school, Studebakers closed, which was a big economic calamity for the whole city. And, you know, a lot of businesses subsidiary businesses, that made parts for Studebaker, Bendix was in Southben made the making brakes. [0:14:00] You know, a lot of those people suffered tremendously when Studebaker did close. But I think that when I got back to practicing law, I, you know, after 10 years or so, after Studebaker closed, the city was, you know, improving substantially, there was a good friend, you know, there were financial institutions... associated finance was very big at that time, you know, which subsequently got sold and, you know, left town, you know, like a lot of the crew. But, you know, smaller businesses were picking up and, you know, began to look more prosperous by the time I was, you know, I got out of law school, but that the closing wiht Studebakers, and that was tough on the town.

BB:

Yeah, I bet. Now, what were your goals after you graduated from college? What was your plan?

RD

Well after graduating from college, my plan was to go to law school. [0:15:00] During my college I went through ROTC. So I went, I immediately went into the service after I graduated. I mean, I graduated from law school in June, I took the bar exam and in early July and you know, by the end of July, I was in the army. And I served for two years as a military policeman.

BB:

And how do you view your college experiences?

RD

They were good experiences. I you know, I made friends. Some good friends still have till this day. You know, academics were good. They weren't, you know, nobody was looking to me to be valedictorian. But I, you know, I did well in college, did well in law school. So, you know, mostly it was positive met my wife and in college as a, as an undergraduate. We got married in 1966. You know, so I had a, we had a year or so a year or two dating before. [0:16:00] You know, we got before we got married, we got married before my last year of law school. So I had five years as a bachelor, and one year as a married man on campus. But you know, it's very positive, very loyal to IU. You know, to this day, I, you know, I feel like it was a very, very good experience. It was a great place to go to college. We went back there. This summer. We went to a family reunion down in McCormick's Creek, and we already spent a couple of days in Bloomington had dinner with Steve Moberly. I don't know, if you've interviewed him. He's remained a good friend from those days. I mean, I knew him in college, but got to know him a lot better in the legislature and remain friends with him. So it was very, it was very positive. And, you know, the further you are away from it, the more positive it looks.

BB:

Understandable. Yeah. Did your awareness of politics change when you were in college and in law school?

RD

[0:17:00] Not really, I mean, one of the things you learn in law school, you know, they taught a little differently than they do now, I think, is how things work in the world, you know, you study contracts, you know, how contracts guide the business world. And you study the legal system, the criminal law, and the, you know, the procedures and everything, and you really learn how things work. And a lot of, you know, a couple of people that I went to law school with, you know, went into, you know, became lawyers and went into business as opposed to being, you know, remaining in the, in the practice of law. But most, I think most of the guys, I went to law school with stayed in, you know, stayed in the law, but you learn, that's what you learn is how things work. And part of that is, you know, one of the things that was amazing to me, like, you have to take federal income tax, [0:18:00] you know, which I dreaded even thinking about one thing, one, because it changes every year, as we all know, when we tried to do our tax returns. But what was interesting about that was the political reasons that there were certain things in the IRS code, you know, you certainly get a sprinkling of that, you know, how the IRS works, you know, kind of then how Congress works, you know, obviously, business lobbyists are putting things into the, to the code, you know, so you're kind of learning that, which I was learning at that time. And we also, I also took a course in legislative drafting. While I was there, and you know, how to draft bills, and, you know, how that works, how the statutes have come together a little bit, you know, through the process. So, you know, I mean, I got a little more practical knowledge of house how some of these things work. [0:19:00] You know, because it never occurred to me that the Internal Revenue Code was so politically driven, but obviously, it is, and it's, it seems even more so, you know, today that politics is driving what's in that in the code, and, you know, how the taxes are levied, and who gets all who gets breaks and all that is driven very much by politics. And so, you know, I was exposed to that. So I, you know, that was more of the practical side of politics. I'd been exposed because of my dad and FJ, you know, to the, you know, put up the posters, you know, walk the streets, do door to door, do advertising, that

kind of stuff, that political campaigns I've been exposed to and been involved in, you know, not necessarily not as much as when I was my own campaign, but quite a bit and, you know, there was always a lot of talk about doing that one out to be done and, and that kind of thing. So, you know, it was kind of a nice blending of both of those. By the time I was out of college, you know, I'd had the practical experience plus now I was getting, [0:20:00] you know, some of the practical, this is what happens in politics type stuff from stuff that I learned in law school.

BB:

Yeah. Okay. Now did you have any children?

RD

Yes, I have two children. My older daughter Darby is an attorney living in Seattle with we have two grandchildren there. And then my younger daughter Dana lives in Phoenix, where we lived for a number of years after we left Indiana. And she has two children. Both are still in high school, both of my Darby's kids, one is out of college and the other one is just started college. That age it's kind of interesting to see what they're doing.

BB:

Yeah. Yeah, definitely.

RD

I mean, just as an aside. Darby. My daughter Darby married another lawyer. She went to law school or married a lawyer. And they're, you know, they're married. My daughter, Dana, married a immigrant [0:21:00] coming from the country of Colombia. Oh, that's, and he got to America with like a fourth grade education. And he went, he started going to the junior colleges in in Phoenix. Got a D. D. Graduated in junior college, went to ASU and then wanted to be a lawyer. He came back to Indianapolis and lived here for three years and went to the Indianapolis law school. Graduated from IU and is now practicing law. We practiced together for a number of years in Phoenix before I retired, and he's not practicing in Phoenix. So the law is our there's been the family business, although I mean, Darby's two kids look more interested in business than they are in the law. I have no idea what my, my one grandson will be a senior in high school, and he's looking at college. He thinks he might want to be an engineer or something like that. So we'll see. So you know, the world is different now. [0:22:00] Should it be better to be an engineer in business than to be a lawyer. It's a bigger struggle for lawyers now than it used to be the way it was organized.

BB:

Yeah, I guess it's true. It's interesting to see how employment options change over time? Yeah.

RD

Well, I think it's harder for, you know, young kids coming out of school to find jobs, because company, law firms just don't offer jobs like they used to. And so a lot of them have to strike out on their own. And, you know, you're not always taught, you know, how to. And when you started on your own, you're a businessman as much as your lawyer. And that's not why a lot of people go to law school. So I think it's tougher now. Yeah, to get started, because I was very

lucky. I got started with my dad and his law partner. And so that was, that was a very easy transition.

BB:

So when did you start thinking about running for office and getting involved with politics?

RD

[0:23:00] It was always kind of in the back of my mind. But I would say what happened in 1970 reapportionment of the legislature. Accelerated, you know, my thinking. Because until then, there had not been a Republican elected from St. Joseph County, Indiana for 40 years. But and, you know, for many, for most of those years, they elected five members of the legislature, you know, all in a group from South Bend. You know, at that time, I think they were electing 15 from Indianapolis, all in a group, you know, is either 15 Republicans or 15 Democrats, but in St. Joe County was always Democrat at that particular time. So the prospects of doing that were pretty, you know, pretty slim. And the Congress, you know, the Congress was long serving Congressman John Brown, so that never that didn't look like an avenue. [0:24:00] But you know, somehow I got information. Maybe my dad got it, about the reapportionment of the legislature, and they happily I lived in a township called Clay Township, which was put in a district with some, mostly it was St. Joseph County, northern St. Joseph County, but there was also some in Elkhart, and I lived in the district. And I think the I think the Constitution requires you have to live in the district for two years, you know, before you run. So I lived there for two years by the time 1972 came along, which was the first election that that reapportionment applied to. And so I mean, anyway, I got the I got all the precinct voting stuff for the historic information for that district. And I looked at it and my dad looked at it and we looked like there was a possibility that Republicans could win. I mean, there were a lot of Democrats in it. [0:25:00] You know, it was, you know, a little bit Republican leaning. But you know, it wasn't overwhelming Republican, like they do the districts now. But it was, you know, as we would say, the Republican had a chance, we felt like it was a two member district. And, you know, there was no Democrat incumbent, I don't think that of any note in the district, and at that time, because they live in other parts of the city of the county. So I, you know, I looked at it and thought, well, you know, I have a chance, so I'm going to do it, and got a lot of encouragement from my father and other people, I had been involved in the Clay, there's a Clay that was a Clay township Republican Club, and I'd been involved in that, since I got back to town in 69'. Because that's where I lived in the Clay Township, and made a lot of friends there, I actually became the president of the club, after a year or so being there. And, you know, so I had kind of a base of support in that area, [0:26:00] you know, to get started, and several people encouraged me to run. And so I did, and I, you know, I remember the lobbyists for the, one of some of the things you remember, for the teachers association, you know, came to interview me about the, you know, my thoughts, you know, it was kind of that was over, they said, you know, why the hell you run it Republican hasn't run up here for years and years and years, you know, why are you wasting your time doing that? So I got my stuff out, you know, showed him how it was a potential, you know, like, it was a potential to win. And, you know, they hadn't even looked at it like that so much. So, you know, anyway, you know, that was kind of an interesting conversation. But, you have to look at that, look at that kind of stuff. And that's what I learned, you know, from my dad, and FJ, you know, this is what you have to look at. And I was

successful. And so, it was, you know, it was the Nixon landslide years. So, that made it a lot, a lot easier. [0:27:00]

BB:

Sure, yeah. Now, what was your campaign strategy when you were running?

RD

Well, there was a man in South Bend called Jim Carroll, who was a good friend of my dad's, and he was a PR type guy. And basically, it was, uh, you know, I'm a lawyer, I was in the army, you know, I care about, you know, I care about the community I care about, you know, the environment. And, you know, he came up with some themes, and one of them was, you know, clean air and clean water, who's one of the themes that I used, you know, which is still unfortunately, issues today, even more so with the clean air? Yeah. But that kind of, you know, and then just, you know, basically, you know, my family's connection, you know, particularly the Republican primary to the, to the community and their involvement. You know, I thought, you know, being a lawyer, and, you know, having served in the service, [0:28:00] you know, this was the Vietnam era and all that was, you know, some people thought that was patriotic, other people thought, you know, you were nuts for being in the service. And I, you know, I was involuntarily, you know, I wasn't drafted, you know, I went through ROTC, you know, all of that, just, I mean, a lot of it was just, you know, here I am, a good guy, I'm running, you know, I'm, learning how to talk politics, you know, on this stuff on the stump, so to speak, you know, I went to every meeting, I was invited to, you know, I was happy to do that a lot of did a lot of door to door campaigning. And, you know, that was, excuse me, that was also the year of the property tax relief issue. And I met Doc Bowen, he came, he came to St. Joe county a lot, he lived down in Bremen got to know him, you know, talk to the, you know, the state people about the property tax, and then we, you know, became very much in favor of the property tax relief, because it was, you know, [0:29:00] getting out of hand proportionately, you know, to other kinds of taxes. And, and that, you know, that became a big campaign issue as the campaign went along. I mean, I think Doc Bowen is pretty much running on that a lot. You know, he'd been in the legislature, you know, he knew what needed to be done from a statewide basis. And I kind of took his guidance on that. And, you know, we don't I want to say we became friends when we certainly became acquaintances, and, yeah, the campaign trail and, you know, we tried to help him as best we could, and vice versa. And so that all kind of worked out. But that was the big issue in you know, 1972 that I think, you know, that and, of course, it was just, you know, a big landslide year. So, yeah, in our in our area. I mean, I can't remember Nixon carried St. Joe County, but I mean, he carried my district, you know, about as you know, about as heavy as you could. [0:30:00] The one point of pride I did get a few more votes than he did. So I felt good about that. You know, so that. I mean, that was kind of the theme of that year. And of course, when we got to the legislature, we tried to, I did anyway, a few Republicans, didn't it, but we had so many, you know, we had 73, I think, 73 Republicans in the legislature, which was overwhelming number. I mean, they have those kinds of numbers now. And it was kind of unwieldy. But we were, you know, I mean, I helped him as best I could, you know, to push the property tax relief stuff through for the governor.

BB:

Sure. Now, you mentioned that you did some door to door campaigning. Did you have any interesting, like, experiences doing that? Or any kind of funny stories? I know, that can always be kind of interesting.

RD

I can't say, you know what happened, I mean, not because I did door to door in every campaign. [0:31:00] But I remember being in some in one neighborhood where the overwhelming smell of cat got out to the, you know, got almost to the street. And, but, I mean, a lot of times, I mean, the two things that happened to me, were, you know, people who would come to the door and take the literature, and you know, just be totally indifferent. So you had no idea, you know, they wouldn't react at all, I tried to engage them in conversation, they wouldn't react. I mean, I think that's probably not unusual. And I had stuff designed, door hangers, so if nobody was there, you could just leave it on the door. And of course, other friends could go from place to place, you know, just leave the door hangers, I had people doing that for me, you know, putting the door hangers on, you know, in other neighborhoods. And I would say, particularly in the first campaign, [0:32:00] I got a lot of people who recognize my name, knew my father and even knew my grandfather in those days, even though he passed away for a while. So I mean, that was always I guess, encouraging. And I tried to go, you know, I was, you know, you're always looking for kind of the, the independent vote, you know, the swing vote. So I was trying to go to neighborhoods that didn't in my district, they didn't always vote overwhelmingly Republican, you know, look, you're looking to be there, you know, quote, show the flag a little bit, I guess, the right word. And, try to pick up a few of those. Which is why I think I ran a little bit ahead of Nixon in that. So that was one. And then we did another, we did another technique, which, at that time, nobody had thought of I thought of it. Luckily. And those days, you had to write, you know, [0:33:00] you had to prepare an application for an absentee ballot. And they went, you know, they were mailed into the clerk's office, and there weren't that many, like there are now there's much more of that kind of voting now than there was then. But that was significant numbers. And even though the Democrats had the clerk's office, you know, I was able, you know with some help from a couple other people, my dad, maybe, to convince them that those were public records that I that I had a right to see. So when the applications came in, I said, those, I have the right to, I'd like to see him. Anyway, they let they set it we set were able to set it up, that I could go in, or somebody from my campaign, or go in and write down the names and addresses of the people who had applied for an absentee ballot. And we would immediately send them a letter, maybe even a postcard and letter with, you know, my literature, and, [0:34:00] you know, please vote for me, and I think that's another one of the reasons that, you know, I kind of did so well, is that, you know, getting extra votes from, you know, there were precincts later when we looked at him work, you know, I got practically every absentee ballot, whether they were Republican or Democrat, because they got the literature for me. But you know, right about the time they got their ballot in the mail. And now, I mean, I think it's harder now to make that timing but it was just very fortunate timing that I was able to do that. I know that technique, I think worked really well. And then the other thing that we that I did, I kept that out through my other campaign after a while they, they, you know, they said I couldn't keep getting the names because they saw how effective it had been. So I didn't know I couldn't do that every year. But I, we did little postcards and I found them the other day and I was going through my stuff, which we would mail every [0:35:00] voter in a district that had, you know, the show how to, you know, where my lever was, you know, the number and the number of my lever where to push my

lever, and, you know, tell them where to go vote. And we mailed those, like three or four or five days before the, the election, you know, so everybody was getting him on Saturday or Monday, hopefully, before the election, and the feedback, you know, people work the polls on election day, you know, passing out my literature, and they, you know, they peep person after person was coming in holding that postcard just really worked. Well. You know, so those were the kinds of things that that we did that I think separated us from other candidates who were running.

Sure, yeah, that's interesting.

Well, yeah. Well, you know, you want to get, you know, you want to get information out, you know, first time I had run, so, you know, basically running on, [0:36:00] you know, the fact, you know, the families involved in politics, the fact that I was educated and had been in, and, you know, it was supporting, you know, Doc Bowen, which I did, you know, I felt very strongly about him after I got to know him, which I did get to know him in that first campaign. And that was the one of the things that was kind of interesting, and, you know, sort of shocking to me, because in my part of the state, which was St. Joe County and Elkhart County, were the two counties I had to work. You know, people just really liked Doc Bowen, you know, because he came from close by. And he was just, I mean, he was very likable, I think, you know, I don't know if you ever met him, he just was a likable, he was a country doctor, and just everything that I imagined of what a country doctor was, he was, and just a great guy. And, you know, so they were flabbergasted, you know, you know, the, if anybody would be, you know, any Republican would be against Doc Bowen at the time, you know, he just was that popular in our area, [0:37:00] get down to the legislature, you know, and all of a sudden, you know, we have a big majority, and all of a sudden, it's pulling teeth, to get the Republicans to, you know, put up 51 or 52 votes to pass the property tax relief, which everybody ran on, in, which was overwhelmingly supported, you know, by the simple, you know, by a lot of voters. I mean, yeah, people are indifferent. But, I mean, a lot of voters really were, you know, like that prospect, but, of course, we had to raise another tax, you know, we had to raise, I think we raised the sales tax in order to pay for it. And, you know, anyway, I was just surprised when we got working on it, how hard it was to get it passed, you know, in the, you know, with overwhelming Republican majorities in both houses at that time, because the election worked out and how many people were willing to, you know, thumb their nose, a little bit at Doc, [0:38:00] but a lot of whom had served in the legislature with him when he was speaker, you know, they'd known him a lot longer than I had, that was a surprise and a disappointment to me, you know, in my first couple of years.

BB:

Yeah, that's interesting. Now, who was your main opponent when you first ran for office?

RD

Another lawyer by the name of Schmidt. I can't remember who the other opponent was at that time. The first time I ran. Because I didn't we didn't do you know, I didn't really wasn't really on the hustings with them so much, you know. But then, the second time I ran was when it got more interesting because it was a two person district. And the other Republicans was a man by the name of Rick Lindsay. And the...Dick Bodine, who was running for lieutenant governor in 1972. And of course, last because you know, [0:39:00] Doc Bowen and Bob Orr ran was from Mishawaka, which was in part of my district. And he decided he wanted to return to the

legislature. So all of a sudden, my second election, which was 1974, which was right after Watergate, you know, when everything I thought I was, I had to hide, you know, Republican lawyer, incumbent. Those three things, which I thought I'd run on and 74'. You know, we're all I mean, Republicans and lawyers and incumbents who are going to jail or, you know, being run out of office because of the dishonesty reading relating to Watergate. And now, here's Dick Bodine, who was, you know, been elected many times from Mishawaka to the legislature had been speaker on time, you know, it was a statewide candidate for governor was now running against me. And, and the, I mean, the thing that they did, which was probably a mistake in the long run, is they went out and recruited Pat Bauer. [0:40:00] I don't know, you may have Pat Bauer's sister to run against me. So on the ballot, it was Bauer, Bodine, and it was DuComb, Lindsey, Rick. Lindsey. So I, you know, Bauer you know, you looked at it, you thought I was running against Bauer instead of Bodine. You know, so, of course, 74' was a very bad year. And so, I mean, I campaigned almost as if I was a Democrat. You know, I don't want to disparage my opponent. But the Pat's sister did not have a lot of experience. You know, did not want to...she just wanted to, you know, they had a very powerful political name. Cherie Bauer, her dad had been in the Senate for a long time, was in the Senate at that time, Pat was in the legislature at that time from different parts of the county, but they had a very powerful name. [0:41:00] And so she didn't, she didn't go, even the Democrat function. So I started doing that. I started going to Democrat. And of course, I go there, and there would be people that I knew from the courthouse from the clerk's office from the treasurer's office, you know, so somebody would always talk to me, they wouldn't always do that. But I so I started doing a lot of that campaigning, you know, you know, trying to get heavily get Democrat votes, because it really did look like a Democrat year and 74'. And it was, as a matter of fact, a very big Democrat. And, I mean, we went from 73 to 37. You know, we went from the majority to the minority, and overwhelming numbers. And, you know, I don't blame the people. I mean, the the national party, you know, Nixon in that crowd, had been very dishonest in a lot of ways. And, you know, we all, a lot of people paid the penalty for it, but I was able to survive. I mean, I worked really hard to campaign [0:42:00] I probably worked the hardest did the most door to door, you know, raise the most amount of money, you know, to spend. And but you know, but Dick Bodine got elected to I mean, so now he we had a district that was split, one Republican and one Democrat.

BB:

Interesting how those things work?

RD

Yeah, it is interesting. It was interesting. I mean, I really thought I probably, it was probably the end for me. That year. I mean, I think a lot of people were. And so I was very grateful to win that election.

BB:

So what did you think of the election process when you're running all these different campaigns?

RD

Um, I thought it was a fair process. The, you know, the, I've always found that the clerks, you know, the people who are conscientious who sit there on election day. I mean, I'm assuming they still do it the same way. But there were, like three Republicans and three Democrats in almost

every precinct. Who were election officials. [0:43:00] And, you know, they were, you know, they were interested in the election being done right. You know, they were honest, you know, they worked hard at it, there was always a meeting the night before. Then I worked the polls, I was a precinct committeeman for a while. So I had to work my precinct. And so I got involved in how the mechanics worked. That was the day of the voting machine, you push a little lever to vote. And those are long gone. Everything is computerized, I'm assuming. But I mean, I, I thought that elections was, you know, fair, I thought they were well done. I was very happy, you know, the people from both parties, you know, we're trying to get and so I mean, I thought the process was very good. It was honest. You know, I didn't see a problem. [0:44:00] I still don't I mean, there's been a big controversy in the last and the 2020 election, which has become a big controversy. I went and sat in a precinct in Cass County, Michigan, for the day. And I mean, I thought the procedures were fabulous. You know, they were, they had people they checked everybody's ID. I mean, the, the people that work there. I mean, they knew half the people that came in and, you know, I mean, which is what you want in a precinct, you know, I mean, that was the way it was in the precinct. I was in in Clay Township. The people that work the work the precinct, I mean, they knew, you know, half the people that came in to vote, you know, they knew the Republicans and half the Democrats that came in, to vote in that, you know, in our precinct, and that's the way it was in this one in in Cass County. You know, there were in fact, I asked the person who was the woman who was in charge, there was little law one point, and I said, "Well, what's the vote here? I mean, is it two to one Republican two to one Democrat. [0:45:00] What is this?" "[Woman said] "I have no idea. I'm just here to do it right." You know, and they all were that way. They were totally bipartisan during the whole process up there in Cass County. The way it was, is I remembered from, from St. Joe County, and I just thought the process was good and big controversy in Michigan. But you know, if all the precincts did it the way the precinct I sat it, it was a very fair election. And so, you know, it's just, I mean, I think the people that are doing that, I mean, one on one, I think they're lying right now to everybody. I mean, Trump in particular is lying about that, you know, he didn't win the election to Arizona, which I'm familiar with. He didn't win the election in Michigan, which I was familiar with, personally. And, you know, it's just, it's just very unfortunate that the election process is being challenged when, you know, it really hasn't been and it's been fair and honest, for a couple of centuries. You know. [0:46:00] I mean, one, one funny story about the about the precincts, because my dad was always involved. At that time, the West side of South Bend was very heavily democrat. So but the Republican Party, you know, had to find three people to be republicans in all these heavy democrat districts. And so they, you know, they found people and I don't know, if the party paid him, the party might have paid him, but I know they got paid by the county. So maybe the party didn't pay him, but they were supposed to be republican precinct workers, you know, that there were a judge and a clerk and something else that had specific responsibilities on election day. And my dad said, well, there are some precincts on the west side where we don't even get our poll workers to vote for it. So that does happen.

BB:

Yeah. So what was your reaction when you first found out that you would want your very first election?

RD

[0:47:00] Very excited. Absolutely excited. My father was incredibly happy. And well, we were we were incredibly happy. I was elated. And it was my father was very happy, which I was very grateful to see. I've got a picture of him smiling. So together, sitting in my house. And I got to go down and be on TV that night. And I think that may have been the first time I was interviewed on television, because it was surprise that Republicans were winning just legislative seats in the county. But it was, you know, it's a wonderful feeling. And I immediately started deciding what my agenda might be in the legislature, you know. And so I, you know, anyway, it was a very exciting moment for the family. And for my friends, we, you know, [0:48:00] we probably had 50 or 100 people in our little house celebrating the victory. And there was, you know, there were other pockets of where people, you know, had parties that I, you know, I did a little travel around the county to two or three of those in my district. It was a very exciting evening, because, you know, I had no idea what, you know, we had no idea what's going to happen. But, you know, it was pretty clear early in the evening, the township that I was in did, we did our own count. And I was there at that at that little headquarters, you know, we had somebody run from each precinct or call in the votes from each precinct. And so we knew pretty early that, you know, we've done really well in our area. And, you know, that had began to come in from other areas that, you know, the, I had done well, my running partner, Rick Lindsay had done well, we both done really well, in that. I think we elected a state senator at that time to from that area. District was similar, but of course, they weren't the same districts [0:49:00] from Elkhart County. And it was just a great, you know, it was just a great, it was a great evening. And, you know, I was very much looking forward to being in the legislature. And I was very fortunate, because, you know, I practice law with my dad and FJ, who are, you know, had politics clear to their bone, in the interest of the community very much so. And so they were willing to help, you know, keep my law practice alive when I went off, you know, for two or three months. You know, I come home on weekends and work on weekends at the at the law practice, but I mean, they were very, very supportive in every way you can imagine, of my political activity, which, you know, probably would have been much harder. I mean, it would have been impossible if they hadn't been supportive. But it was. I mean, that was one of the wonderful things about it. I mean, we just, you know, the three of us in this building that they owned it was just wonderful.

Yeah, that's cool. Yeah. [0:50:00] Awesome experience. Now, did you end up changing your campaign strategies throughout the course of your political career? Or?

Well, yes, I mean, obviously, you know, like I said, in '74, it was hard to run as you know, as when I was a lawyer, incumbent, republican. So we don't, you know, we downplay that, like, you know, people have done, you know, we downplayed all of those things, although, you know, they should have been things that were, you know, wouldn't be very successful for a rerun. And, you know, ran more on just, what I, you know, what I've done, the property tax relief, and the other things I tried to do in the legislature, and, you know, just on a personality type basis. And that was successful, then leave me later than it became more, you know, [0:51:00] this is my legislative record, you know, I've done all these things, I've worked on this, the kinds of things I've supported, you know, you need to keep supporting me, because you want these kinds of things to go on. I got support, I mean, obviously, a strong supporter of public education. Caveat, you know, my wife was a public school teacher, and my younger daughter was a public school teacher, but I, you know, my great aunt had been a public schoolteacher, but I have a strong affinity for supporting the public schools. And so I always had a lot of support, then from the

Indiana State Teachers Association, because of that support that I had for education, which a lot of you know, eventually, during my legislative process, they they became, they didn't support as many Republicans, because Republicans weren't as supportive of public education. [0:52:00] But I always was, and, you know, they always supported me and always stayed in their corner. But that became less of a Republican selling point that it had, you know, in the beginning, we never really did much in my that I can remember in my legislative career, you know, for the pro environment. I mean, we weren't anti environment, but, you know, people just wish this wasn't a lot being done. So I, you know, didn't emphasize that kind of thing, as much. But it was more running on my record, you know, later on in the process, but I still, I mean, I still pounded it door to door, every campaign, you know, and my district never changed. So it was always, you know, try to go to I try to hit as many neighborhoods as possible, you know, you couldn't, you know, I think 100,000 people in the district, you know, you couldn't go to every door yourself. [0:53:00] Man, I had people that would go to other doors and put literature in mailbox. Well, he didn't put them in mailboxes, take that back. But they weren't supposed to anyway, occasionally, they did occasionally, post office or return a bunch to me with a nasty letter, you know, yeah, supposed to put those yet. But, you know, I mean, the, the techniques that, you know, the direct technique of trying to see as many voters as possible. I mean, all of my legislative career, I would send out letters, you know, we, in April or March or April, to all of the civic groups in town, say, you know, I'm happy to come and give a talk. I gave hundreds of talks, you know, to small groups in all kinds of civic groups, Pina Coladas, you know, those kinds of meetings and other groups, political and non political. You know, this is what we did in the legislature and take questions. I'll you know, I was always happy to take questions and try to answer them. I never the best of my knowledge, I never dodged the question the way a lot of legislators and congressmen are doing now, you know, [0:54:00] they never show their face, you know, in a situation where they can be questioned, but I didn't, you know, I never, I felt that wasn't the job, the job was to go out there and talk to people. And I did that as much as I could. And I think that just built, you know, over the years, I just had gotten a lot of exposure because of the talks that I gave and the other you know, that work like that, that I did, which helped build a strong base of support for me.

BB:

Where were you thinking when you walked into the Statehouse for your first day in office?

RD

Wow, yeah, I am, you know, this is gonna, this is where the statutes I read in law school and the ones I read being a lawyer, this is where they were drawn up. And you know, I had a sense of wonder, I guess, and, you know, part of the process and of course, I was a newbie, and there were a lot of People there, you know, [0:55:00] it had a lot of experience. And I've made friends pretty quickly with Ned Lamkin. You know, we just were very simpatico on beliefs and issues and, you know, things we want to do accomplish. And he remains a very good friend to this day. And other people like Ray Richardson, I mean, there were more. I mean, there were a bunch of lawyers in the legislature. I had, you know, in the beginning, I, you know, I think I probably talked to them more than others, because we were all dealing with some of the same kinds of issues for the first time, some of whom became lobbyists, you know, they they were retiring about leaving the legislature about the same time I was, but they went into lobbying, guys like Nelson Becker, Tom Frekenec, people like that, who, you know, I became friends with them, they were good guys. They were smart guys. You know, well thought of on both sides of the

aisle. I mean, that's one of the things that, [0:56:00] you know, that did happen in at least did happen in the 70s, is that you had, you know, friends on both sides of the aisle that you could work with. And I talked to you earlier about Dick Mangus, who was a very good friend of mine told me he was a republican, but he, he was able, I mean, he would help the republicans and me when it was helpful. He would work the rural farmer type people to in the legislature on the democrat side. I mean, he made good friends with a bunch of democrats from rural areas, you know, over the years, and then he would could get them to support things, you know, that I was working on personally. Yeah, sometimes he couldn't, you know, you, you can't sometimes talk people into things, but you do try. So, I mean, that's part of you know, what I did the first couple of years and.

BB:

Yeah, makes sense. [0:57:00] How did you know the needs wants of your constituents? What was the your, your way of figuring that out?

RD

Well, I mean, part of it was just from the campaign trail. I mean, we, you know, we obviously, in that particular one, we were in the first one, we were pushing the property tax relief, which, you know, everybody that I talked to, seemed to be in favor of that. But, you know, you would, you know, I was the first campaign I was going to more Republican meetings, then I would, then I would say, independent meetings, you know, I still tried to, you know, reach out to the Kiwanis type, you know, and get some speaking engagements like that, but didn't get very many that, you know, that first campaign, but, you know, the, I go to a lot of Republican meetings, and people would just say, this is what I'm, you know, this is what we're interested in, I sent out questionnaires, you know, what, you know, these are the things we're looking at, you know, do you like this or don't like this, you know, [0:58:00] that people, some people would send them back, you know, with little comments, this is what I'm interested in. And, of course, then once you start in the session, you know, you start getting a lot of letters from people who are telling you, you know, what they're thinking. And one of the things I always I mean, two things, I, you know, I still believe, and I did believe at the time that lobbyists present, you know, present a point of view, but they're very valuable, because they do do give you a point of view. And if they're, well organized lobbyists, then you know, pick one Restaurant Association, I mean, they have people, you know, restaurant tours from South Bend would contact me, you know, this is, these are the priorities for this, and they would contact me, you know, this is what our group is interested in. And that worked for a lot of the different interest groups, you know, police and fire and whatever, you know, I didn't have a lot of, I had some farmers, I didn't have a lot of farmland and farmers, but I still heard from the Farm Bureau [0:59:00] and those kinds of people because there were farmers in my district, couple of my townships were pretty sparsely populated and had a lot of farms in them, but it was not a heavily farm district. But once you get down there, then you start the lobbyists start to work on and they have all kinds of meetings and dinners and you know, where you get to know them. And the well organized, want to have people from your district or your county, you know, who contact you with, these are the concerns of our particular industry. And, you know, you tried to take this and I always took them into account. I didn't always agree with them, because there were other factors, but I always took him into account. I always tried to be polite to him and find out what they were interested in. And if it was somebody I knew or met, you know, in the South Bend area, you know, I'd be more than happy

to talk to him and try to steer the conversation sometimes in other issues, to see what they thought about those. But you know, you don't lack for contacts from constituents at least in those days you didn't you got a lot of them. [1:00:00] So you knew what people were thinking. I mean, I mean, you got some Kooks and nutcases. There was some Klu Klux Klan or from Terre Haute area every year that was almost incomprehensible. But you know, and I was mean, I was I did work on weekends. But I would go to if somebody invited me to meetings, or somebody wanted to talk to me, you know, I'd be happy to go see him. That was lucky. That was the day before cell phones. So you know, you could you didn't get every call that came in with a cell phones now, I think they must be inundated with people calling them and trying to bend their ear. But they're, you know, I mean, I tried to return every phone call. I tried to return, you know, respond to every letter was just something I thought you should do. And I did it all the time. I was in the legislature. [1:01:00] I you know, even though I didn't agree with somebody, I tried to explain to them why I didn't, you know, but, you know, a lot of people just took the letters and threw them in wastebasket, you know, but I didn't, I felt the job was to respond to those letters. Now, if they were clearly you know, I'm gonna get a letter from Evansville, you know, I was, that was pretty low on my list of returning, share the things and if I got a whole bunch of form letters, you know, you because that would happen, sometimes you know, that some group would get all their people to send the same exact letter. So you can sign the form letter back, you know, explaining why you believe that you agreed with them, or didn't agree with them, or whatever. And I tried, and I tried to do that. But I mean, I think you got a pretty good idea of what people thought by what they were saying to you, and letters and phone calls. And, you know, if they'd buttonhole you, when you were back home, which of course, once the session was over, then you had, you know, [1:02:00] several months of, you know, being in the community. And I, as I told you, I really tried to reach out and talk to as many groups as possible. You know, just because I thought that was part of the job. And, you know, I was as also building a base of people who knew me anyway, which is always important. Get your name recognition up, so to speak, that was part of campaigning, but also part of, you know, finding out what people wanted. And, you know, you'd go to a meeting and there'd be 20 people there. And inevitably, you know, you talk about what you thought interested them, and then they'd ask questions, and then some, you know, usually before you got out of the room, two or three people would come up and you know, sort of buttonhole you in, you know, give you an earful if they didn't agree with you, or, you know, talk to you about some stuff. And so, you know, once I was elected, it was, I thought it was, you know, I wouldn't say I had my ear to the ground, but I'd say I got a lot of information about what people thought what they were interested in. [1:03:00] And because of my connection to Dick Magnus, who represented a totally different constituency, and his almost all farmland, also Elkhart and St. Joe County at the time. I mean, he, you know, he had a whole different group of people that were bending his air. So we, you know, we talk about, you know, this is what somebody said to me, and this is what they're interested in. And, you know, I mean, he had issues that I was happy to help him on that by never would have thought of that related to the farm, you know, farm country, so to speak. So, you know, that's what I tried to do, and that worked out pretty much I think, for a lot of people. And, and it's, you know, for me, in the beginning, it was a learning process, you know, I didn't know what the hell REMC was, until I was enlisted, you know, these guys are getting these huge, I mean, I didn't have any REMC in my district, [1:04:00] so I had no idea what it was, you know, they're getting these stacks of postcards, you know, but some issue, you know, and so, I mean, I learned about that, you know, what those were, I mean, because you are ignorant, I mean, anybody that goes to the legislature

and says they are ignorant of half or three quarters of what goes through there is blown smoke, because you are, you know, I mean, you, you learn about all those things, you have you been there a while but you when you first get there, there's a lot you just don't know. And so that's the process of its process of learning. And you got to keep your mind open for it, which I'm not sure everybody does for learning.

BB:

Do you remember the first bill that you sponsored or offered?

RD

No, I don't. One of the things that I did work on is that we had a serious issue with annexation, the city's annexation in the rural areas. Um, into the cities, [1:05:00] you know, which the people in the rural areas that I represented were very much against. And I can't remember that was my first year or, you know, a couple of years into it. But that became a big controversy. And I had to I mean, I did put a bill in that that went, you know, that eventually went through, but I think that was later. Well, one of the first things I started doing, I think it was in '73, is I felt very strongly about the bad effects of smoking. Unfortunately, both my parents smoked heavily. And I grew up with what they call secondhand smoke. I didn't, you know, and I came with a real strong prejudice against smoking, and I put in anti smoking bills, if that's the right word, after a year, and push them in, sometimes I got them through the house, [1:06:00] but I never got anything into law. But things eventually got into law. I mean, people I serve with, eventually got the bills passed. And there's no smoking legislation now, you know, no smoking in a lot of lot of buildings. And, you know, restaurants, I mean, the Restaurant Association, you know, it was basically moving up, they went up the tree, you know, they were so unhappy about it. I mean, the first one I put in, were just, you can't smoke in the public parks of public buildings. You know, I felt if you had to go to the clerk's office, you shouldn't have to inhale a whole bunch of smoke while you're doing business with the clerk, and that kind of thing. So that's what I started with. I may have started with something stronger, but I was willing to cut it back to get that hill to get that through. But you know, me now, it's accepted everywhere. You know, can't smoke in restaurants, you know, which is one of my big objections. [1:07:00] You know, I just hated to go into a restaurant and have a table next to me, everybody who's smoking away. And so that was one of my personal proclivities to push. And I meant to go back and look at some of that stuff, but I just didn't do it. So I don't know the specific bills. But that was one of my I mean, and I, I beat that I beat that hammer, the whole 10 years, you know, that I was there. And gradually got more and more success with it, but it never came to fruition. And the governor, I mean, Governor Bowen, being a doctor, I mean, he was supportive, but I never could get it to his desk. So yeah, I mean, it wasn't one of the things he was gonna do. Put high on his list. Unfortunately, I tried to get that done. But, you know, they he just had so many other things. [1:08:00] You couldn't get that done. And we had some funny moments, you know, in the, in the discussion, you know, with it, I remember Jerry Repata did you ever do him he was from up in Lake County. And he was a smoker. And, you know, I mean, he got up and quoted something about, you know, the sex appeal of a smoker, you know, and he said, "you know, you know, as for me, I just can't afford to give up any sex appeal. So, I'm against it. But you know, and that was the only other sort of environmental bill. I mean, I consider that an environmental bill, an indoor environmental bill that I pushed was also kind of funny, I pushed at the time, you know, we'd summered in Michigan, and they had a had a bottle bill, you know, you had to pay a deposit if you got your

bottles. And it was remarkable. The difference between St. Joe County and, you know, [1:09:00] the counties in Michigan, how much litter was in the road? Because, you know, you throw the bottles in the cans, you know, people just throw bottles and cans out the window, then they weren't worth anything. And that was before there was even much recycling. And, you know, in Michigan, you know, they all were they were worth a nickel or something. Now, they're worth a dime. People didn't throw him on the side of the road, you know, I mean, it was, it really helped with the littering to have that bill. But anyway, I got, I mean, I ended up with, I don't know, 13, 14, 15 sponsors, you know, everybody thought was a good idea. And then the lobbyists went to work. And, I mean, it turned out, you know, the bottling plants thought this was going to, you know, it turned out there was probably a bottling plant in every legislative district in the state. Anyway, you know, they put it up for over, [1:10:00] they let it vote, go to the House floor and vote. You know, as my friend John Coleman said, "You didn't even carry your sponsors." You know, I mean, they lobbied so hard that the people who had sponsored it to vote for it, it did not do well, it was a big L stinko. But then they put it on the floor for me as a favor to me, but it was an embarrassing moment of like, you know, I mean, it's never come in Indiana. And now that of course, the you know, a lot of people go around and recycle them. So there's less litter, but it was, you know, trying sort of an anti littering thing.

BB:

Yeah. Interesting. Okay. Now, generally speaking, when you were serving, how hard was it to get a bill passed in the General Assembly? If there was a somewhat controversial bill?

RD

Well, the more controversial, the more difficult it was. One of the things I first did in the legislature, [1:11:00] one of the things that happened in the first campaign when I was running, we did have a few forums, republicans and democrats are in the same in the same room, you know, having a republican democrat forum. And the, at that time, the all the judges in the county were elected. And so I mean, we go to these meetings, and of course, the judges are articulate lawyers, you know, I mean, and so they're giving these fiery partisan speeches against Nixon, you know, and, you know, against republicans in general, which I thought was inappropriate for judges to do. And it also turned out then to become, to get elected as a judge, as a democrat, you had to ties to the party. So 10%, you had to give 10% of your salary, which was pretty modest, actually, for lawyers in the 1970s [1:12:00] to the party as a contribution to be slated, you know, they did slating in those days, you know, the partisan vote for these guys, for a judge. And I thought that was totally inappropriate. And I saw a one of the judges just rake Dick Bodeen over the coals, you know, I'm waiting for my turn. And he's up there with a divorce client or some case, you know, just raked him over the coals. And it was all because he hadn't supported some judge pay raise or something. I mean, that didn't really come out in the thing, but I asked him about it later, what the hell was all that about? You know, and he's, you know, I didn't support this or that or something that they wanted. And I just thought all that partisan politics from judges was wholly inappropriate. And so I lobbied through a bill, I think, in my first year, which was a bill [1:13:00] which created a system of governor appointments of the judges. And what you did is you created a panel, one of the members of the Supreme Court sat on it. And then there were other lawyer members and public members. And where there was a vacancy, then the, this commission would nominate three, or they had to nominate at least three, they could nominate as many as they wanted. And the governor would pick off of that list. And that when I

got that passed, in 70', I'm pretty sure I got it passed in my first term. Very, I mean, I ran on that as, you know, judicial reform. And that was extremely difficult because it was, in some ways, it was a little bit partisan, because I was against the partisan politics that was emanating from the bench. And a lot of people felt well, I want to be able to vote for my judges, [1:14:00] you know, and in fact, Marion County, I don't know what their system is now. But they put in a system that I mean, maybe there were 20, when they first put it in judges in Maricopa County, and each party would run 11. You know, so that at least eight or nine from each party would be elected. I mean, I don't know how they work that out. But yeah, you know, it still remained partisan elections of so one kind or another. So, that was controversial with Democrats, obviously, because they didn't want to give up the power of electing these guys. And a lot of Republicans were against it, because they, you know, they came from counties where you voted for the judge, and they wanted to keep it that way. You know, they didn't say anything wrong with the system because they didn't see the bad parts of it. You know, the way I saw it. So I mean, I had to go around. I mean, I did go around, you know, door to door so to speak. [1:15:00] Legislator, you know, trying to gin up the votes. And you know, so it was very, very hard. And in most of my bills, if there was any controversy, or at all, even if there wasn't a controversy, you know, I won't say it was door to door, but I would, it was similar to that I would try to go to talk to as many legislators as I could, you could talk to your own legislators in the caucus, obviously, you know, in the speech kind of thing, but basically, I go around and count votes. I mean, that was, that was part of what I did to get my legislation passed, or legislation I had agreed to co sponsor for somebody in the Senate, which there was some, you know, sometimes there was that. But I didn't get I don't think I got much of that the first year or two, because I was a rookie and the senators that were passing stuff, you know, new representatives. And then I go work the Senate, you know, you had to go find somebody in the Senate to sponsor your bill. [1:16:00] And then you had to, you know, you had to help them, you know, get them going, you know, push, you know, put the pressure on, to get assigned a committee and all the different steps you have to go through, you had to put pressure on, you know, to get the bill heard to get the bill voted in committee, you know. So it was hard. I mean, that bill was hard. I mean, I did have to, I had to talk to everybody, and, you know, tried to get favorable editorials from the papers and things like that. In our county. And, I mean, it was, it was good. It was, it was able to be precisely because obviously, it only applied to St. Joseph County, it didn't apply anyplace else. So, you know, the other counties where they want to keep their judges, you know, I can always assure them that, you know, I'm not coming for Adams County, you know, that's all my concern is here, where we've got, you know, we've got a bad system. And, you know, I was successful with that, and, you know, but that is hard work. [1:17:00] I mean, you know, some are, Mom and Pop type stuff that, you know, you it's easy to get the votes. I mean, they're particularly that first year, you know, with that many Republicans, if you could stir up your own party, you could get things passed, but, I mean, I always tried to get Democrats to sponsor the bills with me if they would, and to help me, you know, with their caucus. I don't know if they do that anymore. But it was almost a regular process of getting people from the other side, to support your legislation. Then after, you know, the first year, we had the overwhelming majority, then we went into the minority. And then when we got back in the majority, we had very, very slim majorities for from 76', well, 77', after the 76' election, you know, through when I left the legislature in 82'. Very small, you know, nothing like 73', you know, very small, so you really had to work hard. [1:18:00] We I think we had one year, we had 51 or 52, and you just had to work really hard to get, you know, both parties on something that wasn't a real partisan issue. To get the votes. I

mean, and that's how you were successful, you know, I mean, one of the things that Dick Mangus taught me, which I hadn't ever thought of was, you gotta get some of these lobbyists to support your stuff, you know, so, you know, obviously, the judges bill that didn't have, you know, there was no lobbyists that was going to work on that. But other bills, there are lobbyists who are interested, or you can get them interested, you know, how it affects their group and get their help. And Dick was, Dick was kind of a master of that, you know, finding lobbyists who would support a bill for you, and help you get it passed. That was one of the things I learned from him, because it never occurred to me until he started talking to me about it, [1:19:00] that that's what you needed to do. And so, you know, I did that if there was a lobbyist, or, or two or three lobbyists where they could be helpful, because they're helped their group, you know, you've tried to explain to them, why it help your particular group and get them to help you push it through. And, you know, just like with legislators here, you know, I normally I wouldn't say you made friends, although I did make friends with two or three lobbyists pretty well, a couple from the South Bend area, I became pretty good friends with but basically, you know, it was more of my interest in your interests are aligned. You know, would you help me with it? And sometimes they would, you know, sometimes they said, "No, we got other fish to fry" and they wouldn't help, you know, but they would remain neutral or something like that, you know, they wouldn't try to stop it.

And then, of course, when you had the lobbyists trying to stop it, then you had other things to overcome, you know. [1:20:00] The people that that they can talk to you have to go talk to them and see if you could peel some of them away from particular lobbyists. And no luck with that with my smoking bill. That was my environmental, or, you know, the bottle bill, as I call it, you know, trying to, but you know, other things, sometimes you could, you know, peel some people away. And you had to get that knowledge, you know, who really influences which lobbyists really influenced these legislators? And I'm sorry, I'm sorry to say, it's probably might even be worse now. There were some lobbyists that had inordinate influence on some legislators. And, you know, I can't I wouldn't name names if I shared, but I, you know, I can't remember. But I mean, that's something that came up a lot now, where, you know, and, you know, people got campaign contributions. So, you know, you had to be, you know, you had to listen to him. I mean, I was listening to everybody that gave me money, even if I didn't agree with him. [1:21:00] That was one of the hardest things that I ever did in the legislature was talk to some really good friends who would work like hell, to get me elected in '72' and '74'. And explain to them why I was supporting the Equal Rights Amendment, you know, when they were having, you know, they were having conniption fits, you know, they were very concerned, you know, they're conservative people, they have been my friends, you know, men, but you know, you have to do that sometimes. And that was one of the hardest things I did, but I, you know, I did it, and you sometimes have to talk to your friends and tell them, you know, I cannot with you on this, you know, try to explain to them why, and hopefully you don't lose them as voters or helpers. And I never did, really, although they didn't like that I was really sponsoring that particular bill. Or particular thing. But, you know, I felt very strongly about it. I wasn't going to give it up. And I didn't.

BB:

Yeah, [1:22:00] the equal rights bill was honestly a big, really big thing when you were serving. So what were like the main sort of debate being had at a time?

RD

I mean, early on. In fact, I just looked at it in '72, when I ran in the '72, Republican State Convention, you know, they pretty much said they approved and the Republicans approved of the concept of the Equal Rights Amendment. And there really wasn't that much opposition early on. Until, you know, Phyllis Schlafly and the very, very conservatives just started, you know, going cuckoo, you know, I mean, I won't say cuckoo, but objecting very heavily. And, of course, many, you know, when it came to Indiana, then we were very important, because we were like, you know, if we passed it, there'd be they only needed one or two more for it to become part of the constitution. So it became a real battleground. [1:23:00] You know, in the beginning, I think, you know, early on, I think, in the early 70s, most people thought, you know, it's a good idea, you know, equal rights, women ought to have their their rights. The same as the same as men. Everybody didn't agree with that. There's always a misogynist, thrown around here and there. But then, you know, then it became just a real huge political football in Indiana and every place in the country because the conservative the real conservatives, I mean, conservative conservatives, you know, they really got organized and, you know, marches and stuff. You know, it was, I mean, part of it was just, well, you know, it's vague, in some ways, it was, but a lot of our Constitution is vague, you know, 14th Amendment, you know, the incrimination amendment, you know, all those are, you know, intentionally vague, you know, open for some interpretation. [1:24:00] You know, in my lifetime, and we went with, you didn't have to incriminate yourself to you had to have a lawyer before you incriminate yourself, you know, a big change and, but it was like, you know, well, we don't know what will happen, you know, I mean, terrible things, you know, women will be suing everybody everywhere, you know, for everything, which of course has happened anyway. Even though they were against the amendment. And, you know, I think there was a lot of misogyny in it wasn't necessarily expressed as directly as it is sometimes, but I think there was a lot of that just anti woman, you know, they, you know, we've got a lot of it was, you know, we have a special place, you know, we're being taken care of, you know, our husbands are taking care of us. They'll, you know, they'll stop doing that, you know, we've got equal rights, you know, you know, we want to be homemakers I said nobody's telling you, you can't be a homemaker. [1:25:00] But you know, they were, they were worried that their, what they consider to be a protected place was going to go away. Which of course, they, you know, you tried to explain to them their still protected. You know, I mean, I tried to raise my girls with the idea that you have to take care of yourself, you know, you can't count on a man. I mean, luckily, they both got very good men, but you can't count on a man to take care of you, you know, I mean, he could die, you know, for one thing, I mean, people do die, even at young ages, you know, you could get divorced, or whatever, I mean, all kinds of terrible things gonna happen and a woman needs to be able to take care of herself. And that's why I wanted to get him educated, which, you know, I got, you know, I really, we really pushed education in our house. And that's sort of the same thing. You know, I mean, the, the privileged place, the women thought they had, you know, was subject to being ripped out from under him in a minute, because of something like, you know, a death, you know, a divorce, [1:26:00] or, you know, a guy who loses his job, you know, and all of a sudden, they have to go to work, you know, and I was seeing all that kind of stuff in my law practice, and I did divorces, you know, we did everything in our practice. You know, my partner, FJ did a state, you know, and just, people who had their economic pins knocked out from under him through no fault of their own. But, I mean, that was an argument that people made the women made, you know, that

we are we have all of this, you know, we're pampered and protected. And, you know, we're going to lose that. And I mean, I felt that was a silly argument. You know, and but that was, I mean, that was very important to a lot of women. And that, there were a lot of women that were against it to this day, you know, against the, you know, law mandated equality. I mean, there's a little more, you know, anti discrimination stuff in statutes now than there used to be, [1:27:00] but, you know, they still don't have the basic constitutional protection. And I think of, I think of that, in past, we might not have quite so much controversy over abortion that we have now. I mean, I think it would be harder to put women in jail for having a, you know, a procedure, getting reproductive health care. But I mean, that's what's going on I'm not following it closely. And but I have been reading about what's going on in some states. And, you know, we're, we're going back to that, in some states, you know, you'll go to jail if you if a woman gets an abortion. And doctors will go to jail. And I think a lot of that might have been prevented by the equal rights event. But I don't know how that obviously would have been interpreted, because it would have been interpreted, but I felt it was something that was important to do. And I did sponsor it. And so one of the things I'm proud to stop being a sponsor of the last state that actually ratified, identified it. [1:28:00] And I mean, that was tough, because there was a lot of public opposition to it. Now, it just grew and grew and grew. As more and more states passed it, that's when it just grew and grew and grew the opposition to it did. And it was, I mean, to me, it was it was too bad. And Republicans abandoned, even though we had Republicans had been in favor of it, you know, they did abandon it. In many ways, but I mean, the leadership stayed with it. And so we were able to get it, you know, we're able to get it through the House in the Senate. And I feel really good about that, even though it's not the law of the land. I think it does. It has moved some legislation to protect women. But I think this, this latest spate of anti abortion stuff is going to be very punitive towards women. And I think that's unfortunate.

BB:

Yeah. So, yeah, that makes me think then, what was the abortion debate when you were serving in the General Assembly? [1:29:00]

RD

Well, Ray Richardson played a very big part in that we just kind of revisited that last night, I had dinner with Ray and Ned last night. And I mean, Ray was the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, I guess, I think, at the time, and basically, he just said, you know, after the decision came down, he just said, Nothing is going to pass that goes beyond what the Supreme Court has said, you know, and our statute is going to reflect, you know, the, the issues that the Supreme Court resolved, you know, and we're not going to do anything, you know, we're not going to do anything beyond that. And he was able to prevail in our caucus and the Republican caucus, and, you know, with the Senate to pass a statute that at that time, just, you know, sort of mirrored the Supreme Court decision. [1:30:00] These are when you have the rights and this is when it can be restricted. You know, like the third trimester, I think, and Roe v Wade decision. And, you know, everybody accepted that. I mean, Ray will talk last night about it a conference committee and you know, in which a very conservative Republican senator served on who accepted all of that, thinking at the time, and it really never came back after that, you know when it was passed, the Roe v. Wade came down in '73'. And by the end of that session, you know, I think we passed that statute that mirrored the thing, and it never changed. It never came up again, you know, this was a right that, that women have. And, you know, only later then did the state start to, you know,

well, you got to have, you know, permission of your husband, you've got to have, you know, you gotta have waiting periods, all this other stuff that came up. And I think they said last night, that said, that, like, [1:31:00] there are 55 restrictions in the Indiana law. I mean, before this whole, you know, before they threw Roe v Wade out at the, at the Supreme Court level, you know, and all kinds of states mirrored that, you know, I lived in Arizona, and they did the same thing. And I never did a count, but they were always, you know, coming up every year coming up with a new restriction to make it harder and harder for women to exercise their constitutional right. And it was, you know, it was unfortunate, but that's what's, you know, that's what happened in many states, some of the same states now that are banning it, you know, completely. And I think it's, it's kind of unfortunate, I think we're gonna have a real litigation and health crisis, it will be a crisis, but health issues in this country for years as a result of that, and what's going on in state legislatures now? [1:32:00]

BB:

Yeah, sounds like a recipe for never ending lawsuits?

RD

Oh yeah, that's gonna employ a lot of lawyers. A question about that. Yeah. And it's going to scare a lot of people, it's going to hurt a lot of people. And it's, it's going to be a very difficult thing to go through. I mean, to me, there are a few issues, and that would be one of them, that we really should have a national policy. You know, another one is same sex marriage, you know, which I think is going to be challenged here again, soon by somebody, at least, that's what Justice Thomas said, We need a national policy on that kind of an issue. To me, anyway, you need to have a national policy, and we have one now, pretty much, but you know, it's at the Supreme Court could say, you know, like this, it's up to the states, you know, some states can accept same sex marriage, and some states don't have to. [1:33:00] And I think that's, you know, I think those things are so important to so many people, you know, who have, you know, have same sex partners that, you know, and have children. It's just really, you know, if that gets changed, I mean, I think that would be even as an unfortunate, as unfortunate as what's happened here with abortion. But you need national policies on that. I mean, Clarence Thomas, even intimated that we, you know, that the decision that I think was Griswold versus Connecticut, which I studied in law school, that said, you have a right to birth control, is at risk. And I don't know if that'll happen. But, I mean, who knows? I mean, a legislature that will, you know, have no exceptions. You know, for any, you know, for some woman who gets raped or, you know, her whose uncle impregnates or something, incest. [1:34:00] I mean, why wouldn't they say, you know, you can't take birth control in our state. Which is what the law was in Connecticut, until that lawsuit, which I, you know, to me, that's ridiculous. But they, somebody may do it. I mean, I think that will be much harder for a state to do than some of the stuff they're doing now. But, you know, you need to have national policy on some of this stuff. You know, a hodgepodge of states. I mean, it's gonna be, it's gonna be a mess in the abortion area to have such a hodgepodge of laws around the country. And it's, it's unfortunate, it's very unfortunate. You know, the states are trying to say, you know, if you're a citizen of our state, and you go to a state and have an abortion, we can still charge you, criminally with doing that. I mean, I think that's totally unconstitutional, but some states are going to do it.

BB:

Yeah. [1:35:00] So, you know, it's interesting because you served in, you know, I guess, the 70s and 80s. When you compare the time that you were in politics to politics today, like, what's that like for you? Does it seem like totally different worlds? Or does it seem like, you know, these recurring issues that never fully went away, just popping up?

RD

it's very disquieting to see what's happening now. With a lot of the social issues, if you want to call them that they're in particular, but the way you know, when I served, I, there was a lot of friendship, if, you know, our friendly relations between the two parties, you know, we, when I served, it seemed like, I guess the way to put it seemed like there were eight or 10 issues, that were partisan issues. [1:36:00] And, you know, we had the caucus on him, and we caucus on more than that. But there were eight or 10 issues, you know, budget being the main one tax policy, election laws, those things that were very clearly basically partisan issues. And we had to, you know, the legislature, we had to drum our caucus into them. And the Democrats the same way where they were in traditionally, there was eight or 10, or 12 issues that you had to, you know, every year, the governor had a list. I mean, Doc Bowen did, you know, Bob Orr did when I was there, you know, and those were issues that you had to do your best to get the Republicans to support because that's what the governor wanted, didn't always happen. But you know, those were partisan issues, everything else was more rural, you know, versus cities, different kinds of perspectives, that people had labor against management, that kind of stuff that went across, you know, different lines, and weren't wholly partisan. [1:37:00] And everything wasn't wholly partisan. Now, it appears to me, like, everything is partisan. You know, every decision to adjourn is a partisan decision, you know, I mean, it just seems that it's gone crazy with regard to making things partisan. I mean, the Republicans in the Senate just voted against the veterans of this country who got hurt in Iraq was some kind of burn pile. I never even heard of that being a problem. But they decided, you know, that was a step too far. And then, you know, the Republicans in the Senate all voted against it. I mean, I think they will, but at least, they may lose, they didn't, I wouldn't say they all voted against it, because I didn't follow it that closely. But they've made I mean, everything has become partisan and bitter. And, I mean, my friend, Dick Magnus, was telling me that in the mid or late 80s, about how partisan it was becoming and how, you know, uncomfortable it was [1:38:00] becoming because there was this partnership and anger and lack of comity between the parties that didn't exist when I was there, didn't exist when Ned was there didn't exist, you know, when Dick and I were serving at the same time. And I think that's very unfortunate that that's happened, because you have to work together. I mean, there are different perspectives, and nobody's got the right answer. You know, they just really don't have the nobody has the right answer. And to make it mean, to make it a republican issue that transgenders can't play on High School Sports, you know, which is, or, you know, to have a state law that says, which they were trying to do in Arizona last year, you know, you can't have any medical procedures relating to transgender until you're 18 or something, you know, I mean, [1:39:00] and, you know, all those kinds of decisions become wholly partisan. And it's unfortunate, because they should not be partisan issues. You know, they need to look at how these things, all these kinds of things affect people. But now, I mean, we've just, you know, we just wake up every day with some issue. That is just, you know, this is a republican issue, and therefore, we're all for it. And the Democrats are all against it. No, this is a democrat issue. Democrats are all for it. The republicans are all against it. And it makes for terrible government. And I think that's what we've had in state and federal legislators, we have bad government,

because of the lack of cooperation that ought to exist. You know, they keep talking to the US Senate. You know, the greatest deliberative body in the world they don't deliberate anymore. You know, they don't do it. You know, you watch the Senate floor, somebody to gets up and speaks. There's nobody there listening to him. You know, it's all just, you know, it's all just politics. [1:40:00] I'm sure there's more deliberations and committees and you know, behind closed doors and all that shows publicly, but publicly, you know, the face of politics is just as hard partisan divide. That seems right now unbreachable? And it's really a shame. I think certain media's have made that even more hard to deal with. And that's unfortunate. But you have to have the perspective of people who are elected, you know, around the country, for Congress around the state, you know, you bring those perspectives to the legislature, and you have to, you know, they're all different, you know, they are all the same. And you have to meld those together to do right, by the whole all the people in the state. That's one of the things I said in my farewell address when I left, and I wasn't really retiring, [1:41:00] because I was a young man still. But, you know, the legislature has to talk to people who are represented by big lobbying groups, you have to understand their perspective. And you have to bring that to the legislature. I mean, the lobbyists bring the perspective of their lobbying groups, you know, the Restaurant Association, I don't mean to pick on them, the teachers, I mean, Farm Bureau's all of those lobbyists, successful lobbyists, which there are plenty, several whom I serve with, who were very successful in the 80s and 90s. You know, they said they have their place, but they have their voice, but they you don't have the voice of the other, you know, the other side of the equation, if you don't listen to people who are not represented, you know, by lobbying groups, and if you only listen to the leaders of, you know, the pretended leaders of your party, or the elected leaders or your party, presidents, senators, you know, speakers, [1:42:00] you know, presidents of senate's, and all of those kinds of people, if you only listen to that small perspective of leadership, you're not serving all the people, you're serving a very narrow part of the people. And it's wrong. In my view, it's wrong. And it was never like that, at least I never felt it was like that, except a small range of issues that were, you know, partisan. But now, I mean, just everything is seemingly, you know, I'm not close to it anymore. I did do some lobbying in Arizona, for Planned Parenthood. You know, and so I, you know, I saw that was happening in there, same thing was happening in the Arizona legislature had happened to a lack of friendship, and, you know, just being kind, and to each other is, you know, was disappearing in Arizona. And Dick Magnus was telling me, it's the same time, you know, in the 90s, it was disappearing in Indiana. [1:43:00] And he really decried that. I'm really sorry, you didn't get a thing with him? Yeah, he had a really different perspective. But I mean, I would, you know, he I'd see him every summer almost every summer. And when we talk about that, and he talked about what was going on, and how, you know, he didn't like it as much anymore, because it wasn't as friendly. And it wasn't as working together, trying to solve problems instead of trying not to solve problems. I mean, I don't know how anybody, I mean people feel differently about global warming. But global warming has been a partisan issue for 20 years. You know, and Ray Richardson last night said, you know, it's over, you know, we've, we've lost to global warming. And maybe we have I don't know, I mean, some people still think there's things we can do. But we have lost. And I mean, I mean, the last vote in Congress, I mean, they finally got I don't know how to pronounce his name Manchin [1:44:00] or whatever is the senator from West Virginia. To agree with, you know, the, the, the democrats and putting forth something with regard to global warming, but I mean, they're doing it, you know, with a legislative sleight of hand. And, you know, none of you know, very few Republicans or maybe no Republicans will support, you know, taking any steps at all, to deal with that issue. And it's, to

me, it's unfortunate. I mean, we're seeing it every day, you know, the storms or storms are worse and harder. You know, my daughter lives in the northwest, you know, they've had unprecedented over 100 degree temperatures in Oregon and Washington, you know, I mean, get real here. I mean, the people in the keys down in Florida are talking about, you know, when they're, you know, when their lands gone. It's a shame, but, you know, the solution is not to build a 50 foot wall The fence around them, [1:45:00] it just isn't gonna work. I mean, it's just sad that they, they can't recognize it as a problem, you know, because of the partisan divide, you know, it's a lobbyist divide to, you know, it's the coal producers. And the, you know, the guys pumping oil out of the ground who wants to keep pumping carbon pumping carbon pumping carbon, you know, there's a big economic interest behind it.

You know, it's just a shame. Another one is like the NRA, you know, everything, you know, dealing with trying to deal with gun violence, and, you know, the massacre of so many people with these automatic weapons, you know, by I don't know, I don't know, if they're crazy, but they're certainly determined to act crazy. You know, and there's can't do anything about that, you know, it'd be a very, you know, very tiny little steps this year, but nothing that's gonna make a big difference, in my view. And these shouldn't be such highly partisan issues. [1:46:00] But you know, the strength of lobbyists, and, you know, the media, and then, you know, just what's happened in the legislation to make everybody so angry with the other party and at looking at them as villains and idiots. And you know, we don't have to pay attention to him. He's just wrong. I mean, you need to pay attention in the senate, from the senator from the small states, as well as the guys from New York and California, you know, I mean, you need to pay attention to it. But people have to be willing to come, you know, this first recognize it as a problem. And that's, that's the thing that bothers me the most about current problem current politics, is that one party or the other doesn't agree that this is a problem. You know, it's not a problem. I mean, that's been, that's been kind of the mantra of the republicans for a long time. With, you know, global warming, you know, it's just not a problem, the carbon in the air isn't a problem. [1:47:00] You know, we don't want to sacrifice, you know, whatever we're supposed to sacrifice, you know, they make fun of the presidents who've gone, you know, tried to do some Obama, you know, who signed the Paris accord, you know, Trump gets in and cancels, you know, our participation, that shouldn't be partisan. I mean, people should recognize, even if they're Republicans, that there is a problem here, and we need to deal with it. But, you know, I mean, that's the worst thing is when the partisan divide keeps you from recognizing there's a problem you have to deal with. And I think that's what's happened, unfortunately, you know, with the carbon going into the air, you know, the clean air is not there. You know, it really isn't. And we lived in Arizona for a long time, it's a valley, you get this inversion, in the, you know, you get to this inversion, which, you know, forces the pollution down into the valley. You know, they go on TV, if you've got little trouble breathing and stay inside today, and air conditioning, [1:48:00] you know, don't go outside and breathe the air. You know, you look at that, and you say, you know, why can't both parties realize that's a problem and try to deal with it. But they don't, you know, it just doesn't happen. And it's, it's a shame, because that's, I mean, they're supposed to be representing people and people are suffering in a lot of areas that nobody is recognizing that that's really a problem. And I'll get off my high horse. But that I mean, that bothers me.

BB:

It seems like politics today really just isn't recognizable from your experience.

RD

Oh, it is not. It is not. And the Republican Party is not recognizable. From my experience. I mean, I went through the '72' thing. I mean, they're, you know, they were talking about civil rights and all kinds of things in there that the Republicans were in favor of. That was the party that I joined as a party, that was the party I was in. [1:49:00] And it's not the same party. I mean, it's left me. You know, it's left net, it's left Gray. I mean, I'm still a registered Republican. But the literature I got there's a local there's a primary today in Michigan. I mean, I voted by absentee or dropbox, which I hope continues to be legal. The I mean, every, you know, everybody that sent me literature, and they sent these huge big postcards, who are running for the legislature running for Congress. Running for Governor. I didn't get much from the governor campaigns didn't have enough money to do it. You know, it was all you know, I'm more conservative than my opponent. You know, Trump supports me you don't support the other guy. Trump endorsed me, you know, I love Trump, you know, I mean, but they're all you know, [1:50:00] I mean, they're all just, you know, they support the second amendment, but they don't talk about, you know, I mean, you've got the right to carry a gun, but don't you have some responsibility? Can't you talk about the responsibility that gun owners have, you know, to keep these terrible weapons, you know, out of the hands of young men who a lot of them are young men who want to go into schools or malls, or wherever public places and shoot people, you know, the parade in Chicago, the, you know, that kid that went into the mall the other day that got shot, you know, I mean, these are, you know, these are issues that have responsibility, you know, but the, you know, the NRA, people don't aren't interested in accepting responsibility on behalf of all these people that are carrying all these terrible weapons. You know, it's just, you know, it's just to me, it's sad. It's sad, and it's sad that people can get elected, you know, just saying those things, [1:51:00] you know, saying, you know, I'm in favor of the Second Amendment. I mean, one of the guys, you know, he sent out pictures of him holding a gun, you know, I mean, you see it all the time, you know, guy, you know, people going out and shooting in the woods, you know, and putting a video on for their campaign. But they never talk about the responsibility that people have. You know, my brother was a policeman. And he liked it, you know, he came home every night and locked his pistol up in a, you know, in a lockbox that nobody can get in but himself. You know, so his kids couldn't get at it and shoot each other. You know, that's, that's the responsible gun ownership. And that should be, you know, that should be brought out. I mean, that should be enforced by law, if necessary, you know, and you go to jail, if you don't lock your weapons up, you know, if you give me your 15-year-old an AK 47, and he goes and shoots 10 people, you've got some responsibility for that, too. But, you know, you can't, talk about that, [1:52:00] even though alone, do it in a legislative context. You know, it's just wrong. And it's causing the country a lot of problems. And it's gonna get worse if we don't deal with the bill all recognize this as a problem. I mean, why Republicans don't recognize that it's a problem is beyond me, but they don't know. They certainly can't talk about a solution. For you know, for the gun control, or gun safety is a better way to put it, you know, from people's perspective. You know, I just, you know, I despair and, I can't do anything about it anymore. I don't have any political power. My vote or the people I, you know, I mean, I did help in Michigan, pass the petition to have a nonpartisan reapportionment. This is the first election that that new reapportionment is going to work in Michigan. [1:53:00] So I'll see how it works out to be a better election better districts and what they've had before but I mean, who knows? But yeah, at least it's not a partisan reapportionment anymore.

BB:

Sure, yeah. Yeah, wow. Yeah, things have changed. What was the platform of the Republican Party when you served?

RD

For example, and I'll just read a couple of them. We supported the community school concept with local community responsibility and control. And I still believe that that's a good. And yet we are seeing a growing trend of state legislators and governors, you know, wanting to act as the school board with regard to the curriculum that is taught in schools. And I think, you know, I think the more the legislatures stick their nose [1:54:00] into the curriculum, the more difficult it's going to be for public education to thrive. I think they ought to deal with local control. More than that is, you know, is now happening. Here's another one human relations. The Republican Party is open to all groups and full participation. Republican Party will continue to be the party dedicated to the rights of the individual. The struggle of minority groups to attain these rights, has moved into the area of organizing for the reassertion of their individual rights. We encourage their participation in the Republican Party. I think the Republican Party has gotten very much away from that sort of concept. Here it is 72'. We support the concept of the Equal Rights Amendment. [1:55:00] Again, When the Republican Party eventually became very much opposed to the Equal Rights Amendment and the environment, the Republican Party of Indiana reaffirms its commitment to assure protection of the environment for all of its citizens, and for future generations. Again, I think the Republican Party is not dedicated to the improvement of the environment the way they ought to be these days. I think environmental issues are going to become very more prominent, and it's sooner that the Republicans begin to work with the Democrats and try to solve some of these environmental issues, the better off the country is going to be. And then their final one, we solemnly declare that [1:56:00] the Republican Party does not now and will not hereafter advocate the overthrow by force or violence of any local state or national government, nor as an advocate or conduct any program of sedition or treason against any such government. I think what happened on January 6, is sedition, if not treason, it certainly was an effort to overthrow you know, the, the actions of the government to affirm the election of a new president. And it's been very unfortunate and unhappy for me to see the number of Republicans of prominence or alleged prominence, who have supported President Trump and what he stirred up on January 6 of 2021, I guess it was, [1:57:00] and continue to support him and act like, if he gets back in power, that's how they're gonna act. And I think that is not the Republican Party that I ever belong to. I belong to the one that just wouldn't support anything like that. And I think the changes, you know, in 40 years in the Republican Party, are many ways very unfortunate. And I was certainly a partisan Republican, and a proud Republican for 10 years in the legislature. And I'm not proud of the party these days, at all,

BB:

And so that was the platform, the Indiana Republican Party in 1972.

RD

Yeah, 1972 right there that I ran the first time. And it was the Republican Party that acted in a like that, for most of my, you know, probably for all of my 10 years that I served in the legislature, [1:58:00] we cared about those things, although they didn't do as much on the

environment, as I would like to have seen done. But it wasn't as urgent as it is now. It's more urgent now. And I would just say they should revert to some of those principles. And go forward. And I'm looking forward to seeing what they write in 19' and 2022. And they won't probably won't write one in 2022 and 2024. For what they stand for, because it's getting very difficult to understand what they really stand for other than we want to be in power. And we don't like the other guys. That's the impression they give the public image certainly impression they've given me the unfortunately.

Well, let's see thinking now with some big picture reflective questions. So why did you decide to leave the General Assembly?

A part of it was political, and part of it was personal. [1:59:00] I, I haven't talked about this before, but in 1976, I was fortunate enough to be elected to the leadership of the Republican Party in the house of representatives. I was elected as the Majority Caucus Chairman, the Republicans Caucus Chairman. So I participated in the leadership from 76' to 80'. In 80', and Ned Lamkin had been the during that period of time he had been the house majority leader, the number two person in the house, and our friendship and political fortunes were, you know, entwined. I wanted to help him he was going to run for speaker after the 1980 election and did run and was unsuccessful, and I was not successful in being elected as caucus chairman again. We both lost. And so you know, I mean, I [2:00:00] think Ned sooner than I was of the opinion that, you know, he should quit, his legislative career was over, I was still pretty young. So I had to think about it longer. But I do think I mean, that was the Reagan Revolution revolution, so to speak, in 1980. And that 1980 election, and it was a conservative, it was a conservative victory. I mean, more not as conservative as what we have now, people who call themselves conservative, but certainly, you know, he brought in people into the legislature, you know, who were more conservative than those who had served there, and in the legislature, and then the leadership took a more conservative viewpoint. And I viewed that as kind of a watershed election in that regard for the conservatives, to, you know, have more power. [2:01:00] And, you know, I didn't see a pathway for me, in this state legislature, you know, to regain leadership or be in leadership. And after you've been there, and you've been involved in making all the decisions or not making participating in the making of decisions, you know, you didn't really make them, but you certainly had an influence on all the decisions on report and policies that were made. And we had very tight majorities during the four years that I was caucus chairman. So it was really hard work to convince, you know, our party, you know, people what to do, sometimes, but we did, you know, try to do that. And those the last four years of Governor Bowen, which had been very successful, you know, been very successful, in many ways, and, you know, we were able to help him achieve his agenda. And I think all that just kind of, you know, in my view, went away with that 1980 election, [2:02:00] in governor or who was his lieutenant governor, became governor. But, you know, I think there just became a more conservative bend. And I think, you know, I predicted I felt that it was going to continue to get more and more conservative, which it has, you know, since then, I didn't see a future. I mean, I was a moderate, you know, I mean, (Unintelligible) were moderates. And we, there were a lot of us that were, you know, we probably had a majority of people who are more moderate in our political views than the people who then took over in 1980. And I didn't see it turning in any, you know, any particular time in the near future. And at the same time, my wife's family had all moved to Arizona. And she wanted, she'd been near my family ever since we were married, you know, and she wanted to

move to Arizona. She thought she could have some opportunities out there with her family. [2:03:00] And certainly be close to them. And, you know, maybe we agreed, I mean, we agreed that we would come back in the summers to Michigan, you know, to be around my family. But she wanted, she wanted to do that. And I, you know, I was persuaded by sort of what I felt was the end of my political career or certainly, hiatus, and whatever my political career would be. I mean, there was a Republican congressman, at that time, in our area, you know, there was no pathway there. So, I just felt that, you know, it was a good time for me to, my dad was sick, and he's given up practicing law by then he retired and he died soon after we moved to Arizona. And so, you know, I was no longer practicing with him. And although I dearly loved FJ, he was also an age where he was going to not, you know, [2:04:00] practice forever. I didn't think he would practice actually, as long as he ended up practicing. And so I was going to have to make a change, you know, with regard to my personal work as a lawyer. And so, you know, I felt like I'd work in Arizona, you know, as a lawyer, maybe not, I wouldn't certainly have the same kind of wonderful, you know, homespun practice I had. And my wife would have opportunities and we would be around her family, which she really wanted to do, you know, after years of being kind of isolated, not isolated, but certainly not with them as much time as she would like. And she, you know, she had three brothers, she had three siblings in Arizona, her parents, you know, a bunch of nephews and nieces. And so you know, that that was a pull for us. And when I you know, the other thing was I [2:05:00] would go to the legislature the last two or three years. And in January or February, she'd take the girls and go to Arizona, where it was 80 degrees and it was 10 degrees here. And that was, you know, that was something that pulled me a little bit towards Arizona. I do like sunshine and warm weather in Arizona certainly had it. So it was partially personal. Partially the thinking it was kind of the end of, you know, my political career. And so, you know, we made we made that decision.

BB:

Yeah, sure. Um, so, summarizing your time as a state legislator, what what would you say about your experience?

RD

It was a wonderful experience. You know, there's a lot of tension. I loved every minute of it. I love the politics of it. You know, [2:06:00] you get tired campaigning, but I really enjoyed the campaigning, I enjoyed meeting people. You know, giving speeches, you know, acting like I knew when I was talking about people thinking I knew what I was talking about. You know, I enjoy I really enjoyed it. I thought I played a good role in the legislature that 10 years, I was a positive role in helping to get through some programs that the, the party wanted the governor wanted, and that I wanted, personally. And so, you know, I felt very, I felt, I felt like I, the 10 years was a nice long time to be in the legislature. I didn't feel like I should serve 40 or 50 years, like a lot of people do, even though some of them were my friends like Dick Mangus served a long time. Ray Richardson served 26 years, I hadn't realized how long he'd served. I just didn't see, you know, doing that. [2:07:00] I mean, I think it's good to have turnover, even though I think the turnover that's happened, you know, what's happened is we've been unfortunate in the severe conservative bend, although some of the things I think they're doing in legislatures around the country and in Indiana, are not really conservative, but they think they are. And so, you know, I feel very, I feel very good about it. And I, you know, I did enjoy it. And I thought I made a impact. And, you know, I guess more as an attorney and committee work, I mean, a lot of the

things that you don't see behind the scenes are, what the committee's do and how they work and rewrite legislation and modify it. And I mean, I thought I worked hard at that. And I like to do, and I like doing that kind of work, you know, [2:08:00] helping craft and write legislation. Although, you know, there was obviously a lot of authors with the legislative council and stuff. But I played a role in that. And I liked that. I enjoyed that. So I feel I feel very good about it. I feel it was a good 10 years, I felt it was a good 10 years for the Republican Party for the state of Indiana. And so I have warm and comfortable friendships, you know, that I've maintained over the years, that's always you know, sometimes in the wrong room. That's the most important thing to have good friends from things that you've done. You know, as I told you earlier, I've got friends from college, I've got friends from law school, I've got friends from, you know, being in high school, grade school. I mean, I've got two grade school friends. Talking about we also went to the same high school together. But you know, I found a picture the other day of my grade school third grade class and you know, [2:09:00] there's this young woman their three year old same age as me and you know, we're still friends after all these years visited her a couple of years ago, she lives in Virginia now. Friends with her younger sister who I didn't know who lives in the South Bend area. We see her in the summer. So I mean, making the friendships you know, that I've kept and have good people like Ned Lamkin, Ray Richardson, and others has been important. Enjoying my life and bringing lots of important things to my life. So I feel good about that. And, you know, I wish I had some more influence than I do now today, but, you know, I voluntarily gave it up and never tried to reclaim it anyplace else. So I just have to be frustrated in that situation.

BB:

Yeah, yeah. What lessons did you learn from your experiences?

RD

Well, I think [2:10:00] you have to look, listen to other people's perspective, but you still have the right to reject it, if you if you don't understand their perspective that doing working in the legislature has to be a hard job. And I mean, I observed in my time, that there were a lot of people who did not work hard at it, you know, they just were sort of there, you know, I wouldn't call them furniture, but they, you know, they didn't work hard at the committee work, they didn't work hard at, you know, pushing and sponsoring bills. And, you know, a lot of the work was done. Basically, I think a lot of the hard work is done by, you know, 20 or 30, maybe people in the legislature. And I think more people need to, you know, [2:11:00] I think people need to work harder. And I think that's the lesson I learned, you have to look, work hard, you have to look at the details of things. I mean, that really played over into my legal career, you know, following through on knowing all the details, you know, not leaving a stone unturned, really understanding everything, about a piece of legislation, and then about a lawsuit, I did commercial litigation, most of the time in Arizona, and I did a lot of litigation up in South Bend, but we did other stuff, too. But yeah, to be careful about the details, because there's, you know, in the unforeseen consequences of things, I mean, you try in forming legislation, to see what the consequences are going to be down the line there. And I think there's not as much attention paid to that sometimes, you know, having had to litigate what some statutes mean, in both Indiana and Arizona, I think sometimes people don't understand the consequences, [2:12:00] they don't foresee, the, you know, the bad that's going to come from what they think is good. And, you know, legislators have to really work at understanding that, and trying to diminish the harm that

some piece of legislation is going to do. And I think that's a lesson I really learned, which, you know, to be able to try to foresee, you know, what the consequences of these actions will be, you know, and I, that translates to your personal life to, you know, what are the consequences of the decisions, you're making, the work you're doing, you know, how you're treating your family and your friends? You know, what are the consequences of that? So, and that's a lesson because I mean, almost every, you know, every important piece of legislation that's passed, has unforeseen consequences, you know, and people just, they don't, you know, they don't see that you don't see it coming, you try to cut that out. But you know, you can see it every day, you know, they tried to do X, and it does y, [2:13:00] or it has a consequence, nobody thought of, and they wish it didn't happen. But you know, those, and that's those are important lessons for life, you know, what are the consequences? What are the foreseeable consequences of action you take? And you have to translate that also to your personal life? I think, for most people, I mean, a lot of people I think, get in trouble, in business, in their personal relations with their family relations, by not understanding them, forcing them not understanding what the consequences of saying this to your children, you know, saying this to your wife saying this to your friends, are going to have, you know, it's, it's unfortunate, but that's a lesson you have to learn. And some people you can, I mean, just tell from the number of divorces we have in this country, and other problems, other social problems like that people don't understand the consequences, a bunch of that kind of stuff.

BB:

Yeah, sure. What advice would you give to future legislators or even current legislators?

RD

[2:14:00] My advice would be to carry on to the theme, try to understand the consequences and how the legislation affects people. And then sometimes it's, you know, very simple. I mean, I think, right now, what they're going through with abortion, there's going to be serious consequences to people, some very foreseeable at this point, you know, some obviously not, and they, you know, they need to do something, to mitigate some of the harm that I think may come from that legislation. They, you know, they need to mitigate it, but you always need to do that. I mean, whatever subject you're looking at criminal statutes, criminal penalties for statutes, you know, how severe are they? Are they too severe? You know, are we going to have more severe penalties, put people in jail for longer for things that they maybe shouldn't be put in jail, you know, like the possession of marijuana. You know, I mean, [2:15:00] lot of states have gone back and, you know, basically pardoned people who were in jail for possession of marijuana when the state has made marijuana accessible in Michigan and Arizona, both the states that I spend most of my time in, both of them have, you know, recreational marijuana, you know, sales and everything. And I think other states, like Indiana could profit, least from the idea of letting some of these people nonviolent offenders, you know, letting them out of jail, which the states that have passed, and I mean, Indiana hasn't passed. I don't think they've even passed medical marijuana. And, you know, I mean, I think that, you know, to me the jury's out a little bit about how it helps people. But it does help people with pain, I guess. I mean, I, even though I live in two states, you know, I'm not, I've never used it don't tend to use it. I mean, I suppose if I got in terrible pain, [2:16:00] I might try it because people get in terrible pain to try and claim that they get some relief. But I have a good friend who has tried it to relieve his arthritis pain. And he basically has given up, you know, it's not helping so I mean, I don't know. And I think that I mean, that's an issue to talk about, in terms of, we have to study that somebody's got to study that

to see what the long term medical effects of use are. I mean, we know what the long term medical effects of smoking cigarettes is, I cannot believe that there aren't serious long term effects to your health by long term use of smoking marijuana. But I mean, there's far as I know, there are very few competent studies of what the long term effects are, you know, with regard to lung health, heart health, you know, other kinds of things. So, I mean, I, you know, I would advise legislators to look at that. I mean, I don't, I don't approve, necessarily, that it passed, [2:17:00] but I think it's probably a good thing. To eliminate all, you know, a whole lot of criminal behavior. And we've, they need to look, I think, at the effects of these private prisons, and how much of a holiday effect long term incarceration or additional incarceration because they support, you know, they make a profit from it. You know, we've got a huge, we've got a huge incarceration in this country. And, you know, we need to take a look at that, what it costs, you know, what it costs in terms of human lives. And I think that's, you know, if you have to look at that in all kinds of policies, but those are, that's one that comes to my mind, because I, I really worry about the private prison setups that we have in this country. I don't know if they have them in Arizona, and in Indiana, [2:18:00] but they do have them in Arizona, in other states. And I know, they unfortunately do lobby for, you know, more severe criminal penalties and more prisons, etc. And I think, I think the need to take a hard look at gambling. I mean, gambling is great revenue, and all these lotteries, and, you know, and all that kind of stuff, but a lot of gambling has some very serious effects on a lot of people who get gambling addictions. And you know, you, that's just it's so easily foreseeable that that's what's going to happen, when you put in casinos and stuff is you're going to get that kind of stuff. And you have to have programs to deal with that. Because I mean, I think, you know, drug use, and gambling are two things that are very destructive of society of families. And those are things that need to, you know, [2:19:00] that need to be looked at and made to have better programs. You know, and like, we've been talking, I've been talking about abortion lot today, you need to look at, you know, taking care of these children that are going to be born that are not wanted, I mean, there's going to be more of those because people who seek abortions don't want a child for a lot of reasons and maybe their own health or whatever. But they're going to have them. I guess the the literature shows or the investigations show, that the people who seek abortions and then don't do it, are prevented from doing it by state government policies. You know, they don't tend to put the children up for adoption so much as they tend to keep them and they need help, you know, with daycare with jobs, you know, all kinds of things to give the kids the children that chance, you know, to thrive in our society. And we need to have, I think, more emphasis on that kind stuff, [2:20:00] you know, how do we give these children a good education, you know, good health care, you know, give them opportunities. And I think that's, I think that's something that legislators have been neglectful of over the years, you know, to provide those kinds of programs. And it's got to be more important now. As you know, as the abortions are being, you know, prevented in greater numbers. So what was the question again?

BB:

The advice you'd give to future and current legislators?

RD

Well, I mean, I think the two things are one, look at, look at the foreseeable consequences. I mean, I'm really understand what they are, and do what you can do to eliminate the bad consequences. I mean, obviously, with legislation, you think you're going to create favorable

consequences, [2:21:00] but you're also going to create unfavorable ones and outcomes that you didn't anticipate, and be ready to deal with that, and take care of people that, you know, that need help, because of what you know, what you've done. And what you haven't done also, when you neglect things, you know, like I think there's environmental neglect, I think is going on, you have to look at how that affects people and how you might do something to alleviate, you know, alleviate some of that. And, you know, gambling is going, you know, I suspect Indiana will eventually because there is great revenue, and it will approve marijuana, I mean, all their neighboring states, I think, have marijuana I mean, know Michigan does. I drive from South Bend, I drive by a little place that (Uintelligible) looks like a garage, and it's selling marijuana, and it's kind of a lineup, probably people from Indiana, because it's two miles from the state line, [2:22:00] you know, lined up to buy it all the time. And, you know, there are consequences from that. But I think looking at that. And then, you know, the other thing is being attentive to the people who don't have spokesman and lobbyists in the legislature who don't, you know, people because there most people don't have, you know, they don't belong to a group that's gotten a formal lobbyist, you know, they don't have a voice. And sometimes even the lobbyists aren't the voice of everybody in the group. You know, I mean, the lobbyists don't speak for every school teacher. And, you know, AFLCIL doesn't speak for every member of the Union, you know, I mean, they don't reflect the, always the views of everybody in the union. So you have to, you know, you have to reach out, you know, I mean, some of them will come to you, but you have to reach out and give their thoughts and ideas, some influence in the decisions that you make. [2:24:00] And it's imperative, I think, to do that, because those are the people that get angry, you know, when they, you know, when they see whatever happens to them, you know, and maybe it's the consequence of loss, or it's a consequence of a failure to, you know, appropriate something, or do something or trying to help them. And, you know, their voices are being heard, and they feel impotent. And I think we're seeing a lot of that in the country. Now, people who feel that they're, you know, they don't have any influence, and so they just get angry, instead of knowing how to channel their activity, you know, into having influence. And anger is, you know, coming out in unfortunate things that are being said publicly and being done publicly. And I, and I think part of that is just a consequence of not knowing that, you know, the legislators from the Senate, you know, on down to the, you know, the state's, city councils, I mean, [2:24:00] those people need, you need to reach out to those people who are not represented. I mean, a city council, of course, the people can get to them easier than they can get to a legislature, certainly, they can get the Congress. That's why you have to reach out. It's not easy for people to reach the legislature and write a letter or something, but, you know, to really influence it's hard and you got to reach out to him, you know, you got to go out in your community and talk to him. And hopefully, they'll, you know, talk to you and, you know, in less than four letter word more than four letter words, you know, they'll talk some sense and, you know, that's what needs to happen and it'll change the way people think, I think sometimes if they really talk to people who aren't represented by a group who, you know, haven't, don't speak up for whatever reason, or if they have, you know, have a lot of anger that they don't know how to express very well [2:25:00] are a lot of problems that they don't know how to express. In some of it, you know, some things that happen, you know, the legislature's politics can't solve, but you can, there are also ways you can help people, if you really know what their problems are and what they're, you know, what they're going through. And I mean, that's one of the problems. I think with Congress, they don't, you know, they don't really live in their communities anymore, they don't really have to earn a living in their communities. I think that's one advantage that state legislators and city council's and

county councils and things like that have is that they are living and making their fortunes are they're making, they're living in a community. And that, you know, you see, you know, more about a community, if you're making your living there, as opposed to you're visiting a few weekends a year, you know, to give speeches and have fundraisers. And, you know, so I'm asked, I think that's part of the problem with Congress, they are too detached. And I think maybe because [2:26:00] of the super majorities that some places have, in this country, either Democrat or Republican, they perhaps aren't reaching out the way they should to a lot of people, because they don't have to, they can ignore everybody else, they don't have to reach out, but we, you know, we need people need to reach out, I mean, if you want to have a position of power, you need to reach out to people who aren't standing at your door, necessarily, and find out what their problems are, and how you can deal with them. Or certainly how you can eliminate unfortunate consequences of legislation that you pass about their you know, I mean, the legislation you pass about various occupations, you know, make a big difference. You know, I mean, so many occupations have, they want to have a monopoly, like lawyers, I mean, lawyers are the worst, you know, you have an old pal will say the worst, but they're bad because they have a monopoly on who can be lawyers, and they enforce it, [2:27:00] you know, pretty stringently, and a lot of other occupations who have state control of them of the occupation, you know, with regulations and everything. I mean, a lot of it is, you know, for monopoly purposes, for competitive purposes. And that's one of the things I learned in the legislature, which just popped into my mind, is, so many people who come with the problem to the legislature are really looking for the legislature to pass legislation to give them a competitive advantage in something I mean, that goes with tax policy, all kinds of other regulations, they're, you know, they're not looking to be fair, they're looking to get a competitive advantage for their business, or their type of business. And, you know, you have to be aware of that, and you have to look at that. And I don't, I'm not, you know, I don't know much about what's going on here, but, or, anyplace, really, but I know that, from my experience, [2:28:00] that that's what people came to the legislature for sometimes, was to get a competitive imbalance to get a competitive step up on their competitors in all kinds of occupations and businesses. And, you know, you shouldn't I mean, people talk about a level trailing, you know, competitive field, everybody, so many people are out there trying to get a competitive edge on government, you know, it starts with the biggest companies and the most prominent names, you know, in the country in terms of the money that they have, you know, the Microsoft, as you know, tries to get a competitive advantage, you know, Amazon, these big companies, you know, and it applies to small companies, too. And legislators, I think, aren't always attuned to that. And, you know, on a tune to what part they play in creating competitive advantages for certain businesses and occupations. [2:29:00] And I mean, luckily for the legislature, the lawyers because of the way they're organized, they don't have they can't get into that. But you know, but they do, you know, they do get into it in medicine. But, you know, the Supreme Court does a lot of regulation of attorneys and stuff that, you know, the legislators can't really stick their nose into, which may or may not be unfortunate, depending on how you think feel about lawyers. But, you know, there are, you know, there are a lot of professions, occupations, which the legislature does give people competitive advantages.

BB:

Yeah. Well, my my last question for you, that is, what do you want the people of Indiana to know about their influence on the General Assembly?

RD

I think the what I think they need to know is that they have to speak up. If it's possible, they have to organize into a group which is always, you know, [2:30:00] can present more influence, if there's 10 people speaking, you know, with one voice or their 10 people speaking with the same voice, you know, and it makes sense. You know, in some ways, I mean, that's, of course, a very subjective point of view. But, you know, the more people that you can get to agree with you, then the more important your voice is, and you and you have to reach out, because, as I was saying earlier, the legislators, you know, particularly from the Congress level, you know, are more and more detached from their constituents in terms of the time that they have available, or they make available to really meet with people in their constituency, that aren't active in their particular party, you know, they really don't, they don't have the time in Congress, I don't think they have the time, or they certainly don't make the time to do that as effectively as they should. [2:31:00] And the state legislators the same way. I mean, you're you go to work, you know, you go for five or six weeks, you're exhausted, you're not, you don't think about, you know, am I gonna go to the clients meeting and give them a speech, you know, and I rather stay home and take a snooze. But so you have, you know, you have to reach out to them, you have to organize in productive ways, you know, not just be, you know, not be against something, but have some positive things to say about what you want to be in favor of big organization works. I mean, I would tell anybody, you know, in a state like Indiana, try to find people around the state and you know, that believe in the same thing you believe in, and try to get them organized, because the organized people are the ones that get the attention, you know, if you know, a lawyer, you know, a legislator gets one letter, you know, maybe he blows it off, doesn't even respond to it, he gets 10 letters, [2:32:00] or 20, on the same subject from his constituents. And, you know, the guy sitting next to him is getting tan from his constituents, then that has more influence, you know, on the legislator, you don't necessarily need to belong to a big lobbying organization, but you do have to be organized. If you've got an interest, a special interest or a you even or a financial interest, you know, you let them know, what the consequences are of what they just did, or what they're contemplating, because they don't you don't always know it. I mean, it's really hard to know what the consequences are. You know, to foresee what they're going to be. And sometimes they don't show up for a couple of years on some things that you pass that you thought was, you know, I mean, that always hurt me as a legislator. I mean, personally, when you would pass something you thought was good, you know, everybody thought it was good, you know, [2:33:00] hell, maybe it passes 92 to two or something, and you think it's good. And it's, and two years later, somebody comes up and says, well, you pass this, you know, it hurt my business, you know, or hurt my child in school or whatever. And that's always something you don't I mean, I never wanted to hear that, you know, but you did hear it, you did hear it from time to time, you know, that what you did was harmful, and then you know, then it's possible. Sometimes you can go back and correct it. But sometimes you can, you know, it's becomes entrenched. And so you can't always correct. And that's, you know, that's always hurt. I mean, you always, I mean, if you're a human, you feel hurt. When something like that has happened, you know, you shouldn't hurt somebody's life in some way or another by some, some act that you thought was good, you know, and it turned out not to be but. And so you just had, you know, you just have to be careful. [2:34:00] It's hard to foresee stuff. I mean, I understand that.

BB:

Right. Well, is there anything that I didn't ask about that you wanted to mention? Or?

RD

Oh, not really. I mean, I think I've been on the soapbox about a few things. Yeah. I mean, there were a few other stuff, other things that I worked on. You know, some of which I can't remember. But, you know, without digging into the record, but you know, the middle record of what I sponsored and what I did, you know, it's there. I'm pretty proud of the things that I worked on and sponsored with one or two exceptions, but you know, pretty much I mean, I mean, one of them I remember, I was we were in the '73' or '74'. When I was in, we were in the minority, it just popped into my head. I was asked to sponsor a bill that was supposed to be about this, the safety of manhole covers, you know, and somebody that I liked, came to me and said, [2:35:00] "Will you be my republican sponsor?", and I looked at it and it made sense to me. So I said, "Sure." Well, so we get to the committee meeting. And it's been a 20 year fight between a union and you know, maybe an employer or two unions about this. They have these damn manhole covers, you know, whoa, I didn't sign on for this, you know. So I was kind of embarrassed by that. But you know, it was a long you know, I just didn't know enough about, I've been smart enough to say no, but you know, so I mean, those things kind of happen in the in the legislative process, but I basically feel very comfortable with my record and the stuff that I sponsored. I always tried to do something that improved or reformed things and I tried not to get into helping somebody get a competitive advantage over somebody else and that did come up from [2:36:00] time to time you know, you have to watch out not do things as much as two things because you can get bit pretty hard if you if you do some you really don't know what you're doing with like that manhole cover thing I was talking about. Huge fight that have gone on for it seemed like centuries. I was taking sides and didn't even know there were two sides. So you know, that's ignorance is not always bliss. In that particular case, it was not bliss. But no, I think this has been a good process. I really enjoyed it. And I hope somebody besides you listens to it sometime. But if they don't, that's okay. I feel good. I feel good about my service. I feel good. But I feel good about what I said here. And if I think of anything profound, maybe in the future, I'll ask to come back and add something to it.

BB:

[2:37:00] Yeah. Well, yeah. Thank you so much for being part of the project and you can preserve this history.

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