

Interview with Richard J. Codey by Michael Aron
March 23, 2010

Michael Aron: It's the afternoon of March 23, 2010. I'm Michael Aron of NJN News, here for the Rutgers Program on the Governor. We're in West Orange today in the legislative office of Governor Dick Codey. Dick Codey served as governor when Governor Jim McGreevey stepped down before his first term ended and before the election of 2005. He's been in the legislature since 1974. He was elected in 1973 from West Orange, served in the assembly during the eight years of Governor Brendan Byrne, was elected to the state senate the year that Tom Kean was elected governor, 1981. He has seen a lot of governors come and go. He's been a governor. And we're gonna talk to him about that. Before we ask you about the Brendan Byrne years, we're interested in your reflections on the governorship a little bit since you served in it, and wondering first off whether it's the same office it was in 1974 or whether it's a different office today.

Governor Codey: Well that's a tough question to answer, Mike, because obviously I wasn't in the governor's office in '74, I was down with the assembly. And I was the youngest one ever in that chamber or even either house to be honest with you.

Q: How old were you?

Governor Codey: I was 26 when I got elected. I think what has changed is obviously the growth of state government, without question. And the influence of the governor's office, vis-à-vis the legislature, has, in my opinion, been severely diminished. As the legislature got more staff, they grew more independent of the governor's office. It used to be that the governor's office, if the governor was a democrat and the democrats controlled the legislature, the governor's office ran the caucuses. And once I came in, they changed that policy. And there used to be someone from the governor's office in the caucus but not in the speaking role, and then eventually, within a year, they said nobody from the governor's office is allowed in the caucus.

Q: Going back to like '75, was it?

Governor Codey: '75, yeah, it stopped, unless the governor wanted to come in. But even now it's just-- nobody's allowed in other than senators or assembly people. It's strictly for the members of the legislature, nobody else.

Q: Is there anything else big that eroded the power of the governor vis-à-vis the legislature?

Governor Codey: Yeah, I think the growth of staff. So instead of relying on the governor's office to explain a bill why they want amendments, you didn't need them anymore. You had your own staff, people who had a specialty. I used to call them like doctors, somebody who had-- knew

environment, somebody knew education, so you didn't have to rely on the governor's office anymore for information about whether it's their bills or somebody else's. So you had your own staff. When I got there, the assembly had, what, 64 Democrats roughly, or 66. And we had a secretary and two people for a staff. I mean that was it. We had one executive director. Today you have maybe 40, 50 at least. So you didn't even have a district office, Mike. I was an assemblyman to Senator Dodd, and he had his quote unquote "legislative office" in his barn, because you weren't given any money to have an office. So you either did it out of your house or from your business office.

Q: When did it become the district office?

Governor Codey: District offices started roughly about '76, '77, Mike.

Q: How about the creation of legislative leadership pacs? Did that also erode the power of the governor in some way?

Governor Codey: Well it increased the power of the legislature, so by not having to rely on the governor to raise money for the legislative races, clearly, once again, they were not as big an influence as they had been before. So that was a big significant change.

Q: So the governor of New Jersey is less powerful than he or she used to be?

Governor Codey: Less powerful in terms vis-à-vis their interactions with the legislature, without question, because he's still constitutionally, maybe, the most powerful among all governors because we don't elect statewide people. Now you go to Texas and you have a milk commissioner, a land commissioner, a gas commissioner, everything else, elected, attorney generals. In New Jersey we don't. We elect a governor. Now we do-- well we don't even elect a Lieutenant Governor. He or she's a ride-- along for the ride. They're selected by the gubernatorial nominee. That's a big difference. So in terms of being able to dispense patronage, the governor is very powerful.

Q: When you started in the legislature, legislative leadership turned over every...

Governor Codey: Every year.

Q: Every year or every two.

Governor Codey: Well it was-- no, it was every year, Mike.

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Q: Every year.

Governor Codey: And then it...

Q: When did that change?

Governor Codey: It started to change in the 70s. In the assembly, which is a two year term of office, it changed every year. It was something that just was a ceremonial thing. And then it changed to-- and by the way, the senate was the same as-- well because my first year Pat Dodd was president of the senate, next year he was not. So then they decided, you know, maybe two years. Then of course, you know, two years becomes four years and four years becomes six or whatever. So that certainly was a significant change to the point where the argument was, is it gonna be ceremony or is it gonna be permanent leadership. I fall somewhere in between. I kind of look at it as someone who's a mayor or a governor, I don't think you should-- I think there should be term limits on executives.

Q: Even though you did, what, ten years as senate president, or ten as senate Democratic leader?

Governor Codey: Eight.

Q: Eight as senate president?

Governor Codey: Oh, well I was a minority leader for four years and then became co-president of the senate for two, and then president of the senate for six.

Q: This seems about right to you or...

Governor Codey: Well, according to my nemesis that was a little too long. But no, it's about right, Mike.

Q: Let's go back into the 70s, early 70s. How did you get into politics?

Governor Codey: I got into politics-- as a kid in Orange we used to let every politician who was running, hire us to rip down their opponents' signs. And they all ran at large so, you know, it was a good way to make some extra money. So that really sparked my interest. I had an uncle who ran for

commissioner but my father always stayed out of politics because he was a local funeral director. My family lived up top the funeral home and he always thought it was best, you know, not to take sides. And he's correct. It just doesn't do any good politically. And at that time it was, you know, it was a rough and tumble political town. I mean they took it very seriously. You know, it was not strange to see-- there would be-- about 20 people would run for five seats, and each of them would have at least ten cars painted with their name on it, you know. It was just-- it was a blood sport.

Q: What was the ethnic makeup of the town in those days?

Governor Codey: It was mostly Irish and Italian and, I would say, 20 percent African American.

Q: And today?

Governor Codey: Today, probably ten percent white, 20 percent Hispanic, and the rest African American. So there's been a big demographic change in that city.

Q: Who were the powers in Essex County politics at that time?

Governor Codey: Well Dennis Carey was the Democratic chairman back then. When I first ran it was Harry Lerner who was the chairman. He, you know, they controlled the free holder board. There was no county executives at all back then so the county chairmen were very powerful but-- unlike today where some of them are, what I would call, bosses or bullies. Harry Lerner, although he had power, was never a boss, you know, or a bully. The only time I ever remember him asking us how to vote was the governor had obviously-- Byrne, had called him and said he wanted to make sure the Essex delegation was gonna vote for the increase. Well, not the increase, to put in place an income tax. So for my district, which is more poor than wealthy, it was a correct vote. And I remember in the room was a gentleman by the name of Bob Ruane, who had gotten elected in a Republican district in-- right after Watergate. So I mean it was easy to win, you know, if you were a Democrat. And so he looked at the chairman and said, "Mr. Chairman, I'll do what you want but I could-- don't ever ask me to vote for a bill that allows abortion." And he looked at him and said, "I don't give a blank about abortion, all I care about is getting judges made." That was it. But I did ask the administration for a favor. 280, that runs through Essex County, the heart of Essex County, had just been built, and there was no exit in Orange. And as a result it created a huge bottleneck in West Orange, the first exit, because everybody who lived or were going to Orange lined up to get off West Orange. And it was a huge problem. So on a Sunday night I get a call from Allen Sagner, the DOT commissioner, ask if he could come over and see me. And I said okay. And he said, "Listen, we're gonna do this exit in Orange for you, you know, if you vote for the income tax." And I was already voting for it anyway. And when it got built they actually put, you know, worked for my dad, did

everything, picking up dead bodies, you name it. He was, for a while, a county coroner, which he didn't get paid for but you were able to get more funerals than you otherwise would because you picked up the body. But the county coroner picks up everybody that dies unnaturally. So there's no kind of death that I didn't see. Whatever gruesome death you could ever think of I saw as a teenager. But I also learned, watching my father, how to be compassionate with people, and understanding.

Q: He was good at that?

Governor Codey: Oh, he was the best, the absolute best. And never work-- never woke up a day where he didn't put a shirt and tie on and suit. That's-- he felt he had to be a professional. And he was very good with people.

Q: Who was the first governor you recall knowing anything about?

Governor Codey: Well, oh boy, I would say a little bit about Meyner, then Cahill. I remember an ad that he'd never lost a race and he used to be in the FBI. I served under him for one week. And then Byrne came in of course. But it was easy-- when Byrne ran we had Watergate, and he lived in my district so I mean I could've gone to Paradise Island for three months and still won the election. It was an easy election district then and if I have that old district back, it's pretty Democratic, putting it mildly.

Q: You say Meyner and Cahill, but Hughes was for eight years in between. Were you aware of Hughes?

Governor Codey: I was aware of him because of the Mike Douglas show that my mom used to watch. And his wife would appear on the Mike Douglas show.

Q: Betty Hughes.

Governor Codey: Yes. And I, you know, I got to know him later on in life. And he was a big fan of mine, and he was really good to me whenever he saw me.

Q: Do you recall when you first met Brendan Byrne or became aware of Brendan Byrne?

Governor Codey: Oh, he used to play tennis with my dad so I was well aware of him, and I knew that his father dated my grandmother.

Q: His father dated your grandmother before she married your grandfather?

Governor Codey: Yes, that's correct. So I don't know whether she made a mistake or not, you know. She could've had a governor.

Q: What was Byrne at the time when you met him, a judge, a prosecutor?

Governor Codey: Both. He had segued from prosecutor to the BPU maybe, or a judgeship. But I also-- my-- as a teenager, one of my side jobs was working for the limousine company that serviced my dad's funeral home with limousines. And on more than one occasion I would be sent up to the Kean estate to pick up Mr. and Mrs. Kean, the governor's parents.

Q: His father was a congressman.

Governor Codey: Had been, yes. Yes.

Q: So who did you know first, Tom Kean or Brendan Byrne?

Governor Codey: Tom Kean the governor I knew from being the son of the former...

Q: The people you drove.

Governor Codey: Right, right. And I told young Mr. Kean that serves with me now, I said, "You know, I used to chauffeur for your grandparents." So he says to me, "You don't have to tell me," he said, "My grandfather never tipped you." I said, "You're right. I'm living proof." He said, "For whatever reason, he just did not believe in tipping people."

Q: His son has a reputation for frugality as well, does he not, Tom...

Governor Codey: Tom the governor? Oh yes. Yes. But, you know, they used to tease him about his wardrobe and how old it was, but once he became governor he-- I think he went out and bought a

few more suits and ties. And an easy person to work with, you know. It was a delight to, you know, even though he was a Democrat, you know, I enjoyed serving under Tom Kean.

Q: Did you enjoy serving under Brendan Byrne?

Governor Codey: Oh, absolutely.

Q: Tell us about those years. What comes to mind?

Governor Codey: Working on the casino bill, you know. We spent a lot-- I spent a lot of time in his office going over the nitty gritty of the casino bill.

Q: Were you a champion of casino gambling?

Governor Codey: I've never gambled in a casino in my life, to this day.

Q: Were you a sponsor of the bill?

Governor Codey: No. But what I became was the architect of how we would implement casino gaming in the state of New Jersey. So-- and the reason I was selected was because I was chairman of a committee and I was single, and I had the time to spend, you know. So I was sent all over the world looking at casinos, whether it was England or the islands, Las Vegas or whatever. And I can remember one time...

Q: That's a tough gig.

Governor Codey: Yeah, it was really tough. One time I'm sent to Las Vegas, and the governor, Governor Byrne, calls me. He says, "Listen, I know blank at this hotel casino, and I'll make sure you meet with him." So when I got back I said to him, "Governor, you know, when he lived in New Jersey, he was a bookmaker." And he said, "Dick, that's how I knew him." I said, "Okay."

Q: Was it tough getting a casino bill passed?

Governor Codey: It took a while to get all that done. I mean this was brand new to us. The only other jurisdiction we could look at was Las Vegas and we didn't want to be like Las Vegas, you know.

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Then, here, the other thing is, the press kept saying the mob's gonna be involved, the mob's gonna be involved, which I thought was overblown but we had to be conscious of that when we wrote the laws. Later on, you know, we let go a lot of that stuff because now you're dealing with publicly traded companies. Back then, you know, a lot of them were not.

Q: You needed a referendum to...

Governor Codey: There was a referendum. Well there was a-- one referendum, I think was in '74, '75, failed. So they brought it back in a different fashion saying if you say yes to casino gaming in Atlantic City, this money will go to senior citizens and the disabled for prescriptions and other things. And as a result of that change it passed.

Q: Looking back now, is there anything that should've been in the legislation that wasn't, or vice versa?

Governor Codey: No, I think the one bad thing is when you look at Atlantic City back then and look at the amount of population within driving distance to Atlantic City, which is roughly about 150 million people at least, you know, you realize all they had to do was open the doors and you're gonna be incredibly successful. You didn't need to, you know, we required them to have certain amenities but they never really, you know, created Atlantic City as a resort designation. And that was a mistake, and it's caught up with them.

Q: What would've enhanced Atlantic City as...

Governor Codey: Well, you have to understand, the weather's different than Las Vegas. That's a given. But they didn't create the kind of atmosphere. I mean ten years after casino gaming was approved the boardwalk still looked like it looked like before you had casino gaming, you know. You'd walk by a store and they'd have rotten stuff to sell, not classy stuff, you know. They should've just broke down the whole boardwalk and started from scratch.

Q: How much progress have they made in that regard now?

Governor Codey: I don't think they've made a lot, to be honest with you, you know. They made too much money by just-- by opening their doors. And now that competition's here, you know, some people say it's too late. We'll see.

Q: Would it have passed, the casino act, without Brendan Byrne spearheading it?
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Governor Codey: I think it would have because there was a lot of major players that contributed to the referendum. I can remember, as being chairman of the city of Orange, Mike, and you would go down to the county chairman's office to pick up your literature for election day, and when I picked up all the bags for the committee people in the city of Orange, it was loaded from top to bottom with pro casino literature. So I knew right away that someone had gotten to the chairman to make sure that the vote in Essex County was gonna be pro casino, and it was.

Q: Should there have been some kind of state commission, like the Meadowlands commission, created to administer Atlantic City and oversee Atlantic City?

Governor Codey: You know, that issue came up. Looking back, I would say yes. Atlantic City government obviously was a failure. I think every couple of years the mayor would go off to jail. And they just weren't equipped to be able to handle it. It was an old form of government and it just did not work, simple as that. It was-- you were asking something that was impossible.

Q: Why did that not come up at the time?

Governor Codey: I'm not sure as to why that movement stalled, to be honest with you. I just can't recall.

Q: Was Steve Perskie in the legislature at that time? Did he spearhead this movement in the legislature?

Governor Codey: Absolutely, positively, unequivocally, yes.

Q: He was in the senate or the assembly?

Governor Codey: Assembly, and he-- I remember him pushing the square footage. He wanted each, you know, we had saddled that each room had to be a certain size, and he wanted it to be roughly, maybe, 325 square feet, which, just by coincidence, fit the local Howard Johnson's which his relatives owned.

Q: If you had to name three people who made that casino act a reality, who were the three?

Governor Codey: Brendan Byrne, Steve Perskie, maybe myself. I don't know.

Q: When you were in the assembly, the Sports and Expedition Authority was coming into being, was it not?

Governor Codey: Correct.

Q: Did you have any involvement with that issue?

Governor Codey: No, not until later on when they started to assign racing bills to my committee.

Q: What committee were you?

Governor Codey: State government.

Q: And yet today you're heavily identified with that complex. People think of you as either going to run the thing or being an active supporter of sports around the state, professional sports.

Governor Codey: No, I'm very involved in sports and have been all my life. That hasn't changed 'til even now, I've got to leave and meet with some sports people. But no, I was always involved in legislation over there from the late 70s until the 80s. But not in the beginning. That had its roots before I got to the legislature. The creation of it was under Cahill, really.

Q: How important has it been?

Governor Codey: Sports...

Q: Yeah.

Governor Codey: Oh, you took a swamp and now you have a Meadowlands Chamber of Commerce. What does that say about it? So instead of a swamp you have, right now, maybe the second finest football only stadium in the country not financed by the public. You have hotels, you have malls, you have office parks, all of which never would have existed had state government not stepped in and did what it did. Now my understanding of the story I was told is people had tried to get a racetrack up in northern New Jersey and always failed. So finally they were able to say hey listen, since private industry can't do it, let's do it ourselves. And it was so successful that allowed the government to build a stadium, a football stadium, convinced the Giants to leave Yankee Stadium

to come to New Jersey, and eventually built an arena as well, all of which were very, very successful for decades and fueled that economic engine over at the Meadowlands.

Q: Were there any mistakes made in the creation of the Meadowlands and the Sports Authority?

Governor Codey: No, I don't think so at all. I don't think the-- the only mistake that was made was under Governor McGreevey there was an individual allowed to run it himself who thought the best thing for the state was to get out of the sports business. And that's the reason we created the Sports Authority, to bring major league sports to New Jersey. And as a result, you know, we created a whole economic engine.

Q: George Zoffinger, it's not a mystery who he was. George Zoffinger presided when Xanadu was created. Is that something that you think was a mistake?

Governor Codey: If I had been governor earlier, it never would have happened. NJSEA is Sports and Exhibition Authority, not malls, you know. Essentially what he was doing was turning the sports authority into a landlord. If I had not come along at the time when I did, the Jets certainly weren't gonna stay there and I think eventually the Giants would have left. The Giants were under a lease from 1995 that said you must renovate the stadium to modern standards. So Mr. Zoffinger refused to follow the lease, the Giants went to court and said they owe us \$400 million in renovations. He agreed to at least \$150. Split it down the middle, that's \$300 million. People forget that, that as a result of my stepping in, having them build their own stadium, taxpayers were relieved of that burden. But, you know, every team wanted out and that's the Nets, the Giants, really, if they could find a spot would leave. The Jets were gonna get \$600 million to go to the west side of Manhattan, sponsored by Bloomberg, and he said he might give them up to a billion dollars. The Metro Stars were leaving and now they're in their own brand new soccer stadium. So all the teams were looking to exit based on somebody's personality, and that was unfortunate.

Q: How do you see the future of the Sports Authority now?

Governor Codey: That's interesting. You know, unfortunately here in New Jersey the casinos have so much influence that we don't have slot machines at racetracks like all the other states surrounding us, and most states throughout the country. We want to always do something to help the casinos but nothing for the racetracks, which obviously suffered as a result of competition from the casinos. So what other states have done is allowed them to have slot machines at racetracks, and they're big money makers. And it makes no sense for us here, especially in Northern New Jersey, to allow people to go to Yonkers, and now they're going to be going to Belmont and Aqueduct for slots. And we do nothing. We lose all that revenue, then we lose all the jobs, close down the race tracks, all the

horse farms close, are developed. It would be a disaster. But we're close to being a disaster because the casinos are protected. And that's sad. And what makes it even worse is the casinos created their own competition. Casinos in New Jersey, the companies, have put slot machines at racetracks in Philadelphia. Makes no sense. It's sad.

Q: The Nets are leaving for Newark next year. Is that a blow to the Meadowlands, or the future of the Meadowlands?

Governor Codey: It all depends upon what you do with that arena. I think it can exist and make a small amount of profit as long as they do everything in concert with the Newark arena as opposed to being against each other for entertainment acts. It makes absolutely no sense. Now I think the team's gonna be much better, obviously. It'd be impossible to be any worse than they are this year. So I think the attendance in Newark for the next couple of years-- I think it's gonna take three years, myself. We'll be great, [ph?] but what happens after the Nets move onto Brooklyn?

Q: Looking back to the 70s, you had mentioned casino gambling. What were your issues? What was your focus as a legislature in the assembly?

Governor Codey: Well to-- for a good six months or so, or maybe a year, it was to create the New Jersey Casino Control Act. And that took quite a bit of my time. I mean as I said, traveling all over the world, learning about an industry I knew nothing about, talking to people and trying to do the right thing, trying to ward off some of this criticism that we're gonna let the mob get involved, which never happened. And I think as a result I thought we did a very good job. Now we've changed it as time has grown, as time goes on, and I think we did a good job. There was never any finding of any direct influence by the mob in ownership of casinos. They tried to do some things with unions, but that was it, so we were successful. They were successful. And the thing that would bother me, though, is that we'd have these national stories that Atlantic City has casinos that are gonna make millions of dollars and there's still poor people in Atlantic City. I didn't know we were supposed to give them all \$100,000. I mean I just couldn't understand that criticism. There was people in casinos making \$50,000, \$60,000, \$70,000 that heretofore were unemployed. They had no jobs. I mean I remember when the referendum passed in November of-- maybe of '76, roughly, and I went down to see the people who owned resorts and who owned a hotel, a down and out hotel but a big one in Atlantic City, and they told me there was two people staying in the hotel that night and one of them was the president of the company. So that showed you how bad Atlantic City was before casinos.

Q: Repeat that anecdote please?

Governor Codey: In December, a month after the referendum passed, I went to Atlantic City to meet with the president of Resorts International, which owned a hotel, a large hotel, in Atlantic City. And he told me in the hotel that night there were two guests, himself and somebody else. So that shows you very vividly how bad Atlantic City was, that you could just have floated the hotels out into the ocean and nobody would've cared. It was as dead as Asbury Park had become since their heyday back in the 50s and 60s.

Q: One of your colleagues in the state senate, Jim Whelan, has a proposal now to allow casino hotels in Atlantic City. What do you think of that idea?

Governor Codey: Well, if we're gonna do that, why don't we put the slot machines at race tracks? I mean what those are are not boutique casinos, they're grind joints, is what they call them in Las Vegas. They're slot machine parlors, simple as that. And I would be opposed to it. And I'd see where even the casino owners are opposed to it, and unions. And just-- that's the last thing-- when we looked at Las Vegas, the last thing we wanted to do were allow just slot machine parlors. You wanted to have all the amenities that a major hotel in Las Vegas had. We required them to have a showroom, so many restaurants. I could go on and on. And we didn't make-- we made the laws so that the casino gaming floor wasn't the focal point of the hotel.

Q: When Brendan Byrne famously stood on the Boardwalk when he signed the bill, and turned to the cameras and said, "I have a message for the mob, keep your dirty hands out of Atlantic City," were you there?

Governor Codey: I wasn't there but it was a great line. Politically he couldn't have done any better.

Q: How does Atlantic City recover if not by allowing smaller hotels?

Governor Codey: Well obviously they're in a-- they're suffering from the national recession and competition, like any other business. So they're looking for new ways to make money. Sports betting, which probably will never happen. So they're in the same boat that racetracks are as well.

Q: You think it's a bleak future for Atlantic City?

Governor Codey: No, I don't say that. But, you know, they have to reinvent themselves. And listen, they've got competition. They all knew it was coming. But Mike, they're also in competition with themselves. So while Atlantic City-- somebody's Atlantic City hotel is down in revenue, they've got slot machines at other places in Philadelphia that are making more money than they ever did. So

when you add the two together they're doing very well. Now the Atlantic City property may be down because they opened up 20 miles away from themselves, but overall it was a good business decision. And those are at racetracks.

Q: Some say New Jersey has overregulated Atlantic City and kicked some of the more creative casino executives out like the Perlman and Steve Wynn. How do you view that statement?

Governor Codey: Nobody kicked Steve Wynn out. He left on his own.

Q: But maybe because the climate was hostile toward him.

Governor Codey: Ah.

Q: You don't buy it?

Governor Codey: No. He's a showman, God bless. And by the way, a big sports fan, especially college basketball.

Q: When you think about Brendan Byrne, what accomplishments jump to mind?

Governor Codey: Pinelands, casino gaming, creation of the income tax for education, things like that. And a man of integrity, decency and honor.

Q: A successful governor?

Governor Codey: Well he wasn't recognized as a successful governor when he was, but I would argue that having gotten reelected was successful, you know. But as time went on and people realized more and more what kind of a person he was and the things that he did do and did accomplish, and the kind of person he was...

Q: You were his ally?

Governor Codey: Absolutely. I mean we disagreed on occasion and he one time called the-- when I didn't like the idea, necessarily, of public financing of campaigns and he did call the chairman, which I resented.

Q: Tell me more. He called the chairman to say lean on Codey and get him to support this?

Governor Codey: Right.

Q: And the chairman then called you?

Governor Codey: Right. He said, "Listen, I don't really give a flying whatever," but the guy called me. I said, "Okay."

Q: Did it sway you at all?

Governor Codey: No.

Q: What was your problem with public financing of campaigns?

Governor Codey: Well, I didn't think we necessarily had to have taxpayers paying for campaigns, you know. And then when he finally got the decision that the wealthy can spend whatever they want to, it's, you know, that skewed politics tremendously.

Q: One could say you were a victim of that.

Governor Codey: I would agree with that.

Q: What?

Governor Codey: I would agree with that.

Q: During the income tax fight, who were the key players in the legislature?

Governor Codey: The legislature? Joe Lefante out of Hudson County, Howard Woodson, Ministerr Woodson, Bill Hamilton, people like that. But it was drudgery. It was painful.

Q: How so?

Governor Codey: Well, because they had to get to 41 and they weren't getting there. And so we'd go down there and sit there, and there was no air conditioning except downstairs so everybody would try to run downstairs, you know, just to keep cool. It was painful. And then you had the TV lights, which only made it worse, so instead of being 90 degrees it was like 110.

Q: What was Lefante like?

Governor Codey: He was a good guy, a colorful Hudson County politician, you know, street guy, understood people, knew how to talk to people. But he always told me the story about Speaker Jackman, that the governor had them over to Morven for dinner and gazpacho was served as the soup. And the speaker took a mouthful of it and said, "Joe, the god damn soup is cold."

Q: What was Woodson like?

Governor Codey: Oh he was a showman. You never knew which color of the day it was because if he had a green suit on, he had a green shirt and a green tie, green shoes and green socks. If it was purple, it was all purple. If it was black, it was all black.

Q: Was he speaker?

Governor Codey: He was speaker for a year, and also a minister.

Q: Who was the third assembly leader you mentioned?

Governor Codey: Bill Hamilton.

Q: What was Hamilton like?

Governor Codey: Bill was very much an intellectual but down to earth, and understood politics, and was a good speaker. So those were the principal players. Somewhat Alan Karcher but he hadn't really come into being a top figure in the legislature at that point. But certainly he was a voice that was listened to. And Al Burstein, who I always had tremendous respect for. And if I had ever become governor earlier than I did, I would have put him in the Supreme Court in a heartbeat. Probably one of the most intellectually knowing persons I've ever had the pleasure of dealing with. And one of the finest gentlemen I've had the pleasure of dealing with.

Q: Karcher was a smart guy too, was he not?

Governor Codey: He was. I thought he made a mistake running against Byrne, I mean running against Kean.

Q: In '85.

Governor Codey: Whenever that— whatever year that was.

Q: Well he ran for governor in '89 but he was Kean's antagonist in the legislature in the mid-80s.

Governor Codey: Yes, I just thought he was too negative. And I used to say to him, "You know you got to pick your spots." If you're negative every day, after awhile people don't listen to you, but.

Q: Was Ken Gewertz a player in the income tax?

Governor Codey: He was a player but he was playing with people other than a political leaders <laughs>. Very colorful.

Q: How about you. What was? Aside from trying to seek some relief in the basement, what were you doing during those? And, trying to an exit off of 280? What's your recollection of? It was a long fight, two, three year fight to get that income tax passed?

Governor Codey: It was two years, maybe, two years.

Q: What was your role?

Governor Codey: Yes, I was just one of the assemblymen, trying to make a mark for myself. And I had more bills passed in the law than any other freshman in the legislature. So I would look at what other states were doing and try to find good bills. I read newspapers, get ideas for bills. So, I worked and worked very hard at it. And I was single at the time so I had the time, and the... I was living at home, so..

Q: Living at the funeral home?

Governor Codey: Yes. And then eventually I'd say in my late 20s we moved to a house next door. It was a big move.

Q: You and Mary Jo?

Governor Codey: No, I wasn't married. I didn't get married until '81.

Q: Were you afraid of the, allying yourself with the state's first income tax?

Governor Codey: Listen. A lot of the mail was ugly and negative but I started back then a practice. If you sent me a negative letter I picked up the phone and called you. So while they may not be happy with what I— the way I was voting. They respected the fact that I called them. And I do that today as well.

Q: As I recall you lost a call, or a dozen or two— used to anyway, call a dozen or two dozen constituents on a Sunday night randomly.

Governor Codey: Absolutely, still do that.

Q: Still do that?

Governor Codey: Absolutely. And it's still. Well, back in the, when I thought I'd have a challenge in a year or two? I would try to do 1,500 a year. Voters who I didn't know.

Q: Random out of the phonebook, or?

Governor Codey: No, from the voting list, which I enjoyed. I enjoyed talking to people. And I enjoyed meeting people, and interacting with people, so. It was easy for me.

Q: Was it the Supreme Court that forced that income tax vote that finally succeeded by threatening to close the schools?

Governor Codey: I just think we got worn down. For me, as I said for my district and what they were going to receive in benefits, it was a correct vote.

Q: Worn down by the governor's office?

Governor Codey: Everybody. Yes, the proponents of it, special interest groups that were for it. Because it was something that wouldn't go away.

Q: Who were those special interest groups?

Governor Codey: The educational people, good government folks. I don't know, it was. You know, there was as much it was, as it was not favored, there was a lot of interest groups that were strictly for the income tax. As a, saw it as a benefit to the state of New Jersey.

Q: Who in the governor's office did the heavy lifting on that? Do you recall?

Governor Codey: I would say, what? Leone, Kaden... I think it, was Harold there in that time? I don't know. I don't think so.

Q: What were they like, Leone and Kaden?

Governor Codey: I would say neither one of them was someone you wanted to go to the bar, have dinner with, and watch a game with. Put it that way.

Q: All business.

Governor Codey: More the intellectual type and not the home grown, down to earth, can relate to the common person on the street.

Q: Who in the governor's office over those two terms could you relate the best to?

Governor Codey: Mulcahy, Harold Hodes; what was her name, Jerry English was bright talented, had a personality. Harold understood the street. Bob understood the legislature. So, I mean, I thought his second term was really great in terms of people that he surrounded himself with.

Q: Were you surprised that he won re-election?

Governor Codey: Not shocked but I think surprised, but not shocked. Clearly, I mean, he was always called as we all know, OTB, in one term Byrne because of the income tax. But like anything else time can heal a lot of wounds.

Q: You say that Leone and Kaden were kind of...

Governor Codey: Stiff. Well, I guess I'd say that.

Q: How about Brendan Byrne?

Governor Codey: Naw, he could be a lot of fun.

Q: Was he aloof?

Governor Codey: Some would say that. I didn't necessarily find him aloof. Not at all.

Q: He could be fun.

Governor Codey: Yes, I have a picture somewhere, where the two of us have boxing gloves on. Going at each other because he was fighting Ali or something. And he had some gloves in his office and we were clowning around.

Q: How do you view, now, 34 years later the whole school of reform effort that grew out of that income tax: The Abbott decision, the court mandates, et cetera.

Governor Codey: The idea was right. But it's never really shown that money is the answer, clearly.

Q: Did the courts try to micro manage the situation too much?

Governor Codey: Well, I don't think courts should ever legislate.

Q: Did they in this instance?

Governor Codey: They do in a lot of instances. My thing is if you want to legislate, take off the black robes and put your name on the ballot.

Q: You sound like Jerry Cardinale.

Governor Codey: Well, that's frightening.

Q: When was it that you went undercover at Marlboro Psychiatric Hospital?

Governor Codey: That was roughly about '88.

Q: That late? Okay, we're into the Kean years now.

Governor Codey: Yes, that's right. It was.

Q: So your interest in those issues. The mental health issues wasn't really active in the '70s?

Governor Codey: No. It had been active for me since the '60s. As the son of a funeral director, regularly I was sent up to Greystone Psychiatric Hospital to pick up a body, which was the largest morgue that I had ever seen. And I've been in a lot of morgues, shall we say. And he would go to the main office. They would give you the key and a patient to help you take the body off the slab and onto the stretcher. So at that time I was in my late teens and the patient they gave me was roughly the same age. And as we were riding down to the morgue he was telling me about some horror stories about what was going on at the mental institution. And I remember reading on a Sunday literature not too long after that an expose about really bad conditions up there. So it always stuck in my mind to try to do something about it. So when I became Chairman of the Senate Health Committee was when I really took hold and had a position that would enable me to visit these institutions, get a sense of what was going on. And after I did visit them all I had the sense that maybe our staff wasn't as good as we should have. So using a friend in the union I was able to get the Social Security number of all of the workers in our mental institutions. Found out roughly 30% of them had criminal records ranging anywhere from murder to shoplifting. And I had disclosed that. And they said, "Well, geez, as a result of what Codey has found out, from now on we will take fingerprints of every employee, and run record checks." So about six months later I got a tip from somebody up at the Greystone who said they take the prints but they don't really run a record on them. And the people coming for a job who are friends with those who are already employed know that. So we're essentially still hiring the same people. So at that point I got a friend in the corrections department to give me the ID of both a convicted rapist and a murderer. And I merged the two so it made it easy to check my background. I

gave the Social Security number of the one criminal and the birth date and name of the other criminal. So it made it real easy to find out who I really was. And I applied for a job there as what you would call an orderly working with— through direct contact with the patients. They never looked into my background. They never checked any of my references. And hired me for the midnight shift where my first night at work I walked in and the head nurse was laying on a couch with a blanket on her, and pillow under her head, watching T.V. And she told me that, listen, you know the rules are you're not supposed to watch T.V., or sleep, or whatever. And she said to me, "You get that, don't you." I said, "I get it."

Q: I think it would be useful at this point to ask you for a thumbnail sketch of each of the governors of your...

Governor Codey: Tenure.

Q: Your 37 years in Trenton. Byrne, Kean, on up. Give us a thumbnail of each person, would you.

Governor Codey: Byrne had that Irish wit about him. He came. He was fortunate in that some of the mobster said he couldn't be bought off. And he was off and running. And I mean, at hope at some point and time he thanked that mobster for what he said about him because he certainly owed him. Not to say that he wasn't a man of integrity. He certainly was. But Brendan Byrne understood politics. But also understood that he had to do the right thing even if it meant it wasn't a popular thing. And I give him credit for it because putting in the first income tax was not popular. Saving the Pinelands, certainly the right thing to do. Not popular. So he wasn't afraid of being unpopular if the decision that he made was the right one for the people of the State of New Jersey. And I think you have to admire that in any politician. And certainly I admired that with him. But he was certainly somebody you could talk to.

Q: Keep going, Kean.

Governor Codey: Tom Kean and I like, was, I knew the family. And despite being in the largest land holders in the State of New Jersey, coming from incredible wealth, he had a certain down to earth personality about him. I can remember him calling me on a couple of occasions just saying that I love what you did in the committee the other day. I think I like the bill you introduced. Get it on my desk as soon as possible. So there was a common touch about him. And he understood street politics, which is hard to imagine that someone with his upbringing who was schooled in New England at a boarding school. And as some people would say kind of had a strange way of clapping his hands. But despite that people over all backgrounds economically have thought he got along with very well. And he came into office, economically it wasn't a good situation but he was able to change things around.

And he left as a very popular governor and then he became Chairman of 911, and he's still clearly the most popular governor we've ever had by far. And I think it's of the great distinction for him and a great honor because he is known as a man of great integrity. But yet, someone who is a very good governor.

Q: Jim Florio?

Governor Codey: Jim Florio was someone who talked policy almost around the clock. I mean, I remember being a member of leadership when he was governor. And we'd have these Monday meetings with him when the legislature was in session. And you would walk into the meeting with him and you'd say, "hello," and most people would say, "Geez, did you see the Giants game or the Mets game yesterday, or whatever." Not with Governor Florio. It was— Dick, let me talk to you about the gun bill. Always, it was strictly policy, yet you would think being Italian-American, being from Brooklyn, being an amateur fighter that he'd walk in a room and give you a hug and a kiss. And I guess he didn't. The game yesterday or whatever, and it just, that was not him. And you had to accept it.

Q: Would he have been more successful had he had that side of him.

Governor Codey: I think so without question. But it just was not him. But the way, the other thing I remember about him was I served with him in the assembly. People don't even realize he was in the assembly. And when he was in the assembly there was a bank of phones in the back of the chamber. And he was constantly on the phone because he was running for governor— for congressman. So, he, that's what he was— he really wasn't interested in being in the assembly anymore. He was trying to get to congress, which eventually he did. Then I can remember when he ran for governor the first time, he had an office. His office was in East Orange. And so I would see him down there all the time, having lunch or whatever. And then he ran again and I thought there was no way Tom Kean could beat him. And sure as hell— and hey, I thought even the governor won. I substituted for Jim Florio against the governor like four days before the election right here in West Orange. And the way he was talking to me was he didn't think he was going to win. And sure enough on election day he won by just a few votes, but he won.

Q: It took three weeks to sort it out.

Governor Codey: Yes.

Q: Christy Whitman?

Governor Codey: Someone who I'd just, I liked personally but I just didn't understand why every Republican member of the legislature almost didn't like her. And I just thought that she never ever had the sense to pick up the phone and say, "John, Bill, Jane, Sue, you know, what can I do for you? Can we talk about your bill?" You know, she just didn't have that. I mean, I was minority leader when she was governor for four years. And if I were in that position. If I were governor and she was minority leader, if she was in Trenton, I would pick up the phone and say, "Why don't you come up to the governor's office and let's have lunch?" Or, "Would you like the governor's box to see the hockey game?" Those kinds of things that most politicians would think of, she just never did. So she never ever got along with the legislature. Not that she ever did anything to hurt me or was ever mean spirited to me but the incredible thing was mostly the animosity in the legislature and about her came from her own party as opposed to the Democratic Party.

Q: She once told me a story that her father who was the State Republican Chairman told her don't worry about the Democrats, it's the Republicans who will try to stab you in the back if you ever get too big.

Governor Codey: Well, the way things unfolded he was right.

Q: Do you think that her lack of inclination to pick up the phone, and to try to court legislatures was a function of her being a woman, and not coming up for that old boy network kind of thing?

Governor Codey: I don't think it had anything to do with gender in any, way, shape or form. It's just the way that she was either raised, or just her own personality. I mean, Tom Kean came from the same socioeconomic...

Q: But was a man, he was a man who went to a boy's boarding school.

Governor Codey: Okay, that's not exactly where the men's men go to school. I mean I got schooled in the streets. But he understood the streets. And maybe that was when we were living in Essex County, but the things that a normal politician would think of doing in terms of interacting the show. Here's someone who comes from great wealth, and so forth, and so on. So how do you break that barrier between yourself and all these other people who come from a much lower socioeconomic background is reaching out for them, and saying, "Listen, despite that I can talk your talk and walk your walk." And she just never reached out to do that and I thought it was a terrible judgment call on her part and her staff's as well. You never really got to know the person. I didn't dislike her. Unfortunately I just didn't get to know her as well as I would have liked to.

Q: Acting Governor DiFrancesco who we now call governor because you passed a law that said that anybody who served acting for longer than 180 days.

Governor Codey: Sixty days. Was it 60 or 180? Yeah, right, governor.

Q: Shall be known as Governor. So it's Governor DiFrancesco. What about him?

Governor Codey: I like Don a lot. I mean, I always felt that he felt he was one of us in the legislature, and he understood what someone in the legislature needs. And as governor he would constantly reach out. Is there anything I can do for you. He was down to earth. He never gave any impression he was better than you because he was governor. And just the opposite. I still savor some of the notes he sent me when he was governor. So I mean, I had just good impressions of Don. I never had it—I was Minority Leader. Now I don't know if I ever criticized him one time. I just liked him that much. And I felt a little bad the way his term ended. But someone who I like personally, and...

Q: When you say that you mean the fact that he had to withdraw from running for re-election.

Governor Codey: Right. And gone through a couple of maybe two or three months from some painful things. But as I said, somebody who really cared about people on a basic level.

Q: For the record the painful things were stories in the New York Times about his finances. And that kind of thing.

Governor Codey: Yes, different stuff that is upsetting to a family. I understand why he didn't run. Now I think he would have blamed that all on Mr. Schundler, and that very well may be true. But I don't know, that's Republican politics. I've got enough problems with Democratic politics.

Q: Well let's get back to Democrats because they took over. Jim McGreevey?

Governor Codey: Jim McGreevey. A man that would go to every first communion if he could. Or every bar mitzvah, or every political dance, or church dance, or whatever. He just loved to go to functions. And I never saw anything like it in my life. I had once—I was for him. And I remember calling Mayor James for him at the time.

Q: You were for him when the Democrats were choosing up sides between him and Rob Andrews?

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<http://governors.rutgers.edu>

Governor Codey: That's correct. So I called Mayor James and he said, "Dick, I can go for him because Andrews doesn't think like we do. But you got to tell him to stay out of my office." It's like well, listen, if you want the Mayor's endorsement don't go to his office anymore.

Q: Would you say he was driven, is that what it was?

Governor Codey: He was driven beyond what was normal. There's no question about it. And looking back there just was never any balance in his life. His whole life was politics. In that sense he was all he could really talk about. He didn't show any interest in anything other than being successful in politics. And even in the State Senate, he really didn't stand out as a state senator. He was more interested in doing what he had to do to become governor. So, I mean you could look at him and say, "why did he do these different things," and I think it would be a great study to be honest with you.

Q: Short of how it ended for him. Was his tenure, his term, his three years. Were they a failure, were they mixed, were they successful?

Governor Codey: I think they were mixed, and I think part of Jim's problem was he wanted everyone to like him. And I'd say to him, "Jim, I just had two groups on opposite sides of the issue tell me both of them that you agree with them." And he would do that with almost every group. And then it would catch up to him. But he wanted to please everybody. You can't be a good politician by trying to please everyone. If you don't have people who are your enemies, or don't agree with you then you're not doing your job. But he wanted to please people all the time. And I can remember talking to him about you're governor now. You don't have to go to all these functions. You got to stop it. It's not gubernatorial. And so I understand it, I understand it. My wife's telling me the same thing. And he called me three months later and there was— about seven o'clock, and there was a lot of noise in the background. And I said to him, "Jim where you?" Oh, he said, "I'm marching in the Toms River Halloween Parade." I said, "Boy, my talk <laughs> was very successful."

Q: The next governor was you for 14 months, I believe.

Governor Codey: Well, I always say 14 months plus three because for three months before I became governor when I was a governor-in-waiting <laughs> we were essentially the Governor's Office, which was very hard with a limited staff, but.

Q: How did you do in your own estimation?

Governor Codey: I thought we did as well as we possibly could within four months. We got things accomplished that a lot of editorial writers say that most governors couldn't do in four years. So I think our accomplishments were significant. I worked at the job. I enjoyed the job. There wasn't too many days where I disliked the job.

Q: Were there any?

Governor Codey: I'm sure there were, there was days. There was days we didn't like it because when you're governor, and you wake up in the morning, and you've got a schedule. You have no idea what's going to happen that day that's going to turn that schedule totally around. Whether somebody dies. Whether there's a blizzard, a hurricane, a huge fire somewhere, a disaster somewhere else. Something happens during that day that's going to change that particular day. I mean, that's the way it is when you're governor. I can remember my birthday being woke early and told there's a huge oil spill in the Delaware River. So as soon as it becomes light out, I'm picked up in a helicopter, and we fly over the Delaware River. I meet with the officials from South Jersey. I meet with the coastguard and everybody else. Spend the whole day down there making sure what—that we do what we have to do now that we've got this huge spill in the Delaware River. The other thing I remember about the Delaware River is that eventually we want to build the port in South Jersey for a company who wanted to come into South Jersey, create maybe 600 jobs. And the state of Delaware was against it. And the way it is, it is now is that half of the Delaware River belongs to Delaware, and New Jersey is responsible for the other half. So somebody in the House of Representatives in Delaware put a bill in calling on the Congress to declare that Delaware owns all the Delaware River. So the reporters asked what my response was and I said very simply, "In a war, we'll kick their ass."

Q: What surprised you about the job of being governor that you didn't know before?

Governor Codey: How enjoyable it could be in terms of doing things for people. Like when I was governor, and it was July, and it was hot and humid. And I said to my staff, "I don't think at Greystone we have air conditioning for the patients in their rooms." I said, "I'm going to go up there." And they're like, "it's not a good idea," whatever. I'm doing it. So we got a thermometer next door for a dollar. I went up there and sure enough their rooms were like 110 degrees. And the only thing there was were some fans in the hallways. So I brought the CEO in and I said, "In two weeks every one of these rooms is going to have air conditioning. Do you understand me?" Yes, I do. And in two weeks they all had air conditionings. So to improve the lives of those people who are poor people, who have mental illness, who in many cases their families have abandoned them. Just to give them air conditioning during the summer is so meaningful to them in their lives. And when you're governor you can order those things to be done. When you're the legislature you can fight for them but you can't order them to be done right away. And as governor you can get it done right away. We had in New Jersey. We were, we fought for like 10, 12 years to try to get a bill out of committee to ban smoking in public places. It never got the light of day. So when I was governor I had made a commitment that I was

going to get it done. So if I didn't get it through the legislature I had a backup that we didn't tell anybody about. So if we didn't get it done and I'm still governor we're going to have the Commissioner of Labor declare public areas a health hazard because of smoking. And ban smoking in those places by executive order. So I was going to get it done by hook or crook. But I didn't tell anybody that. So what I was able to do. I just came up on my idea one day to say, "hey listen," to the casinos because they were fighting it. I'll allow smoking on the gaming floor but nowhere else. And they bought into it. And two weeks before I left the office, finally after 12 years, New Jersey became roughly the 10th state in the country back then to ban smoking in public places. And it was overwhelming public support. I even get people now in the business who say, "You know Governor, you were right, I was wrong, it actually helped my business."

Q: Is that the bill you signed on Sunday before the Tuesday when you left office at Mayfair Farms?

Governor Codey: Yes.... At the Manor.

Q: Okay. Let's move on to Jon Corzine. Your thoughts on his governorship?

Governor Codey: I think he was a very genuine person, a nice person. A good human being who certainly wanted to do the right thing but was cast in a job that your personality is highlighted. And I think he could be very indecisive. Some people say the last person to speak to him is the way he went. And he was not able to connect with middle class people. He just couldn't walk in a room and make them feel that he was one of them. And I think in a chief executive, whether it's a president, a governor or a mayor. They want to feel a personal connection to you. If you're a legislator, or a councilman, or a congressman; listen, as long as you vote the right way, do constituent work, that's fine. I don't have to have a personal connection with you. But a president, a governor, and a mayor, they want a personal connection to you. So when they see you in the store they want to be able to relate to you when you're in the shop, right. When you're in the coffee shop. And as much as a good human being as he was, he couldn't come across as one of them.

Q: Is that more because he was worth hundreds of millions of dollars from Wall Street, or because he grew up in rural Illinois on a farm. And what's not really in New Jersey?

Governor Codey: I think he grew up in rural Illinois with that background. And I can remember saying to him one time. I said, "You know, when you give these speeches, you're not very emotional. Even your staff." So, I said to him, being a funeral director's son the best thing to see with emotion is to go to an Italian funeral. Because they display a lot of emotion. Of course a lot of people display emotions. But you want to go to a funeral where the widow wants to jump in the grave and see what emotion is. Because he never really displayed emotion when he spoke, or as a person. I think

showing your emotions is not a negative, it's very much a positive. And I just never thought he connected with middle class New Jersey. And I said to him, "You know, going to the Hamptons on weekends during the summer does not make a connection." Saturday night dinner parties in Manhattan does not make a connection. And I also remember one time, it was after his accident. He was talking about polling and he was saying to me how bad Democrats poll in Ocean County. And he looked at me and he said, "except for you," so. And then he went into something that was very revealing. He said to me, "Dick, I can understand why people lied to you. You know you got a wife and two kids now. My kids, I got divorced. And people look at me as a millionaire, multi-millionaire who bought a Senate's seat, and a Governor's seat. And I said, "Nothing wrong with the truth." So he said, "You can go after yourself," in a kidding way. And he says, "You know Dick but I really can't get past that, or past the fact that I gave my girlfriend, former girlfriend, a lot of money." So to be seen as someone who's a good governor, I just have to do a good job. So it's not going to be done on who I am, what I am, it's whether or not I do a good job.

Q: Does that make sense?

Governor Codey: It does, but you have to overcome the fact that you're not making the connection. So if they don't think you're necessarily doing a good job, they won't overcome. See, again I would say if you can make that connection where they like you, they're more likely to give you a break. What they would see as bad policy.

Q: It's a little early to be talking about Chris Christie's governorship because as we tape this it's about two months old, but.

Governor Codey: It's almost three.

Q: Yes, a little more than two. But when you were talking about Jim McGreevey trying to please everybody and you said, "You got to make some enemies." In two short months Governor Christie has made significant enemies mainly among the public employee unions. But that's a lot of people and some important constituencies in the political life of the state. How do you see his first two months so far, and has he gone too far in the other direction?

Governor Codey: Well, I think when Chris gets up in the morning he argues with the Cheerios. But when I've said this to his face is what he does right now has been, I think, successful in the short term. And yet he picks what you would call "bogeymen." These are bad people. Like when he was a prosecutor. Politicians are bad. I'm a prosecutor, I'm good. I'm the governor, these are the bad people. They make too much. Their benefits are too big. They're screwing you up. So it makes good politics to always have good versus evil. But you can't create good and evil for four years. And that's

as simple as that. So you build up the resume— or, residue of bad will over here. So you have to keep the good versus evil going for four years and that's not easy. And the other thing I would say though is that sometimes you just have to tone down the rhetoric. There's a right way to say this is what I believe in. And I think it should be done as opposed to necessarily demonizing people. And I think that's hard for those people who have been demonized. Who feel, "Listen, I'm making \$37,000.00. I struggle every day. I've got a side job to make a living, to enable my children who go to Junior College, pay my property taxes. Pay my shopping bills or whatever, and you're making me out as a bad person. Am I a resenter?" As opposed to, listen, most teachers are good. I'm sure the teachers his children have he looks at as good teachers. So now they have this position, government employees, and teachers that, oh, now we've been demonized as someone who's bad people. Who are lobbying from the rest of our citizens. As opposed to saying, sitting down and saying, listen, we have some— we have a problem. And I want you to help me. So at some point you got to turn more towards that. But right now I think he's more successful than he is unsuccessful. By, as I said, creating good versus evil. And with his tell it like it is style. I always say when someone who says to me I tell it like it is. You, that can turn into being rude. And I don't think you ever want to be seen as being rude. And I'm sure he really doesn't at all. I mean, I think he can be very much down to earth. And I think he does have a life beyond politics. Like me, we were talking just the other day about how they were choosing the little league teams and who he would get to coach, and whether it was fair or not. <laughs> Chris will say, if it's not fair, Chris is going to take you on.

Q: But we'll see how his governorship plays out.

Governor Codey: Yes, we will.

Q: Let's sum up with this question. Are there any common qualities that the best governors have?

Governor Codey: An ability to connect with people; an ability to get your message out within the media that you— your agenda out there, and in a favorable way. And just try to be as honest as humanly possible, and have as much integrity as possible. And surround yourself with people who are good, and with people who will tell you "no" when they think you're wrong.

Q: Sounds like a good way to end...

End of Richard Codey interview