

Jane Kenny Interview (February 15, 2011)

Michael Aron: It's the morning of February 15, 2011. We're at the Eagleton Institute at Rutgers University. I'm Michael Aron of NJN News here for the Rutgers program on the governor, the Thomas H. Kean archive. This morning we're going to talk to Jane Kenny. Jane spent seven years inside the governor's office during the Kean administration in a variety of positions. She would later resurface in the Whitman administration as Director of Policy, Chief of Policy and Planning and Commissioner of Community Affairs. She had some experience in the transition from Tom Kean to Jim Florio, and from Jim Florio to Christie Whitman. And we're going to hear about her career. Jane, where you were born?

Jane Kenny: Jersey City, New Jersey.

Michael Aron: Your parents did what?

Jane Kenny: My mother went back to work when I was about eight and she worked at Jersey City State College as an administrator in the math/english program, secretary and then became an administrator. And my father, who was in the war and then National Guard, and head of Hudson County Civil Defense, the National Guard was really his love. He was a business person for an architect and engineering firm.

Michael Aron: Kenny's a famous name in Hudson County.

Jane Kenny: Yeah, we're not related. I used to think that was unfortunate and then I was glad. <laughs> There are Kenny's you never know that might go back but my father's family actually came here very, very early. In 1798 there's a ship manifest with Patrick Kenny and his wife. So we weren't part of that great Irish migration. And my mother is Italian and both her parents came over as immigrants.

Michael Aron: And how many sisters do you have?

Jane Kenny: Two sisters and a brother.

Michael Aron: Where are you in the pecking order?

Jane Kenny: I'm right in the middle. I have an older sister who is an educator. She taught at Ferris High School, Jersey City for the whole time. And then she actually joined the superintendent when Rich DiPatri was superintendent because she had been on a taskforce with him, an education taskforce. And he asked her to come in and assist him when he was superintendent of schools in Jersey City. That's when the state had taken over. And Rich DiPatri, I don't know if you remember, worked with Saul Cooperman and Tom Kean. And Joanne got very involved. She got a higher degree and her doctorate. Now, she's retired but she teaches teachers at Georgian Court University. And my sister Camille is the youngest in the family and she's a Superior Court Judge in Jersey City, Hudson County. My brother's an attorney. He's a partner at Clapp and Eisenberg in River Edge and they have offices all over-- New York, Florida.

Michael Aron: When did you become interested in politics and government?

Jane Kenny: Once I got there. <laughs> I was going for a Ph.D. in English Literature at Rutgers.

Michael Aron: Where did you do your undergraduate?

Jane Kenny: At Trinity University in Washington D.C. It was a Catholic women's college. I went to graduate school at Rutgers and I finished all of my Ph.D. coursework and I had been teaching. And I, for personal reasons, needed to find a job for a little while and told the head of the English program that I needed to take a leave of absence. And two days later Chris Daggett called the graduate English program at Rutgers University looking for a writer.

Michael Aron: What was Daggett at the time?

Jane Kenny: He was Deputy Chief of Staff. It was before Ed came in. He had been with Tom Kean for a long time. And they wanted someone. He was looking for someone to help out.

Michael Aron: Interesting that he would call the English department, rather than Eagleton.

Jane Kenny: Well, he was looking for a writer. He was looking for someone, you know-- Tom Kean-- and at that point it was really a glorified person to answer

letters. Not even glorified, believe me. <laughs> Tom Kean had decided-- and that first year was kind of shaky-- if you remember. He was in the hospital and had back trouble. He did not have a high popularity rating. In fact, I was so apolitical at the time that I didn't know-- when they asked me if I'd go to this interview-- if he was a Republican or a Democrat. <laughs> And I was so worried I was going to pronounce his name wrong during the interview. I did call a friend of mine to ask how you prepare for such an interview and he told me to go to the library in Highland Park where I lived and get out this little book called "The Legislative Manual" and it will tell me about state government and all of the different departments and the people that are there and what everyone does. So I went studiously and I researched and read the legislative manual and it was kind of ironic because about three years later I think I had one with my name on the cover, so that was kind of funny. I did interview with Chris Daggett and he hired me and he put me up on the third floor to answer letters and there was just mail everywhere. It was called the mailroom. And it was just totally unorganized. One of the reasons I wanted to take the job was because they said they were going to automate the governor's office. Governor Kean decided that he wanted every letter to be answered, every single constituent deserved an answer. That was his very strong commitment. And being very committed to education and the person that he was, obviously, we had to make sure the letters were correct, grammar was correct and, you know, the letters were conveying a real message. But it was chaos. There were still unopened letters from the Byrne administration all over the place. It was nothing to be critical of anybody but it was just an enormous task because people would write in and there really weren't people that were given the resources to answer those letters.

Michael Aron: Were you given the resources?

Jane Kenny: Not at first. Not at first. But there was a small group of people, some of the people that had worked on his campaign. And it became clear pretty quickly that we needed some kind of organization in the office and the letters were coded and somebody made up some kind of code. And they would be mixed up and everybody would say what's this code? And I was watching this, I couldn't believe the chaos. But at the same time this group from outside had been contracted to set up an automated response and bring in computers. And we were supposed to go live, as they said, a year later because at that point it was still typewriters, display writers. Nobody in state government had computers. So everything was still done on the typewriter.

Michael Aron: When did you take this job?

Jane Kenny: May 19, 1983.

Michael Aron: May 19, 1983. So Tom Kean has been Governor for a year and four months or thereabouts.

Jane Kenny: Yeah. And at that point Greg Stevens had just taken over as Chief of Staff. Greg was already there when I got there and Chris Daggett was Deputy. And Bob Grady was there. I'm trying to remember who else.

Michael Aron: Who did you work with closely?

Jane Kenny: There was a young woman that had worked with Chris Smith that was running this mailroom at the time. Her name was Elaine Spencer. She didn't stay very long. Lou Reed was somebody, an older gentleman that worked on the campaign. Scott Colabella who was a young man who lives in Ocean County. He had worked on the campaign. Susan Fenske, her mother was Helen Fenske who was the deputy over at DEP. She was very close to Tom Kean. It wasn't really a place where people thought we needed resources. And I think Chris kind of had a vision that we better get this organized and Greg had a vision about getting this computerized. But in the beginning it was very disorganized and haphazard.

Michael Aron: Was it the office of constituent relations?

Jane Kenny: No, no, we did that.

Michael Aron: You created that?

Jane Kenny: Yes.

Michael Aron: What was it, the mailroom?

Jane Kenny: It was the mailroom. <laughs> Yes, it was the mailroom. And it was interesting because I really had to do research to learn about how state government worked. But that was like boot camp. If you want to know how it works it's really a good idea to spend a little time seeing how letters get answered. And most of the letters at the time had to go out to the departments. And somebody would write in and say, please support this bill and that would go to counsel's office.

Or I'm really concerned about this sewer issue in my town and that would go over to DEP. We'd mark it and then it would come back and you'd look at it and decide whether the Commissioner should sign it or if it was something for the Governor's signature. We put together a little mail folder every day because he wanted to see sort of a sprinkling of what kind of mail he got.

Then I remember seeing the autopen. We used to have some fun with that. <laughs> But we had this really old machine that just kind of went aargh, you know, to sign Thomas Kean and it was interesting. Of course, if he signed a letter to some of his friends it would just be like Tom with a little dash next to it. So you learned a lot of things. But it was an amazing eye opener for how government worked. Very quickly I realized this is a place that affects the fabric of everybody's life every single day, from the minute you open your eyes in the morning. So I got hooked pretty quickly.

Watching the master at work was pretty much a Harvard and Yale for state government to see Tom Kean. I would get glimpses because of the direct relationship with the mailroom, and then just what we were doing there in terms of forming this office of constituent relations. And ensuring this is the place where letters are going to be answered and everything is correct and you have substance in it. We turned it over to a system. I hired somebody that was familiar with the library system so letters could be coded appropriately according to the Dewey Decimal system or the coding for libraries. (It's not that but you know what I mean.)

We got people right out of college either as interns in college or right out of college that were great writers, that were really hungry and passionate about government. A lot of them have gone on to do wonderful things. But we had this wonderful core group of young people. We really turned it into an office that took itself seriously, not ourselves, but our work very seriously, and really cared about making sure that people got the correct answer. And we would provide a lot of information for the other departments including speech writers. We quickly did a list of the top ten issues of the week that we used to give Tom Kean every week. It was a group of really wonderful, smart young people. We worked together. We had a great time, but we worked really hard. And Tom Kean really felt that a lot of his popularity and reelection results were a credit to us. People would say I wrote to you three times in the beginning and you never answered me. And you know how much he was out there. And once we started it was I wrote to you three times and I got three answers. And we'd do town meetings where he would talk to people and then they could go to our group of people and we'd follow up and talk to them further.

Michael Aron: You attended town meetings?

Jane Kenny: Oh yeah.

Michael Aron: So you got to see Tom Kean in action. And what did you think of him?

Jane Kenny: You know, I just couldn't get over how he was-- let me just back up for a minute because I think what I saw was this tremendous growth. I mean I saw him give speeches in the beginning and he never seemed really comfortable. And then all of a sudden, not all of a sudden but through really just the space of my early time there, he just got better and better. He got more and more relaxed. He really knew what he wanted to communicate to people and he was able to do it well. And I saw that happen in the time that I worked for him. And I also saw that he was willing to spend time with whomever. You know, somebody would come up to him and grab him, and we were always rushing because we were always late. Everybody was always behind. But he would stand there and talk to somebody that came up out of the audience, nobody important, but he obviously knew everyone was important and that's how he treated people. And it was very interesting. I was always kind of in awe of the fact that he had so much knowledge of the state and history at his fingertips. He just had a very deep knowledge of issues. He had been doing it for a while, but he also made it appear fresh. And he really had such an incredible political sense of how to approach things, which I didn't know at the time that that's what he was doing. But I learned as I worked with him that he was very strategic.

Michael Aron: How long did you stay in that role?

Jane Kenny: Well, until he was reelected. We formed the Office of Constituent Relations. I was a year in and then I became director of that office when we formed it. And I was in that role until...

Michael Aron: Did you suspend your Ph.D. pursuit? You got sidetracked.

Jane Kenny: I got sidetracked. Yeah. I was hooked. I was really hooked. And then he got reelected and first I was appointed to be the special assistant to the Chief of Staff who was then Ed McGlynn. And then he appointed me as his Cabinet Secretary and he really wanted me to be the liaison with the cabinet and work on specific issues and still oversee the Office of Constituent Relations. I had to then put

one of the people that had been working with me for several years in as director who later became his speechwriter, Mike Meagher. He actually became Christie Whitman's speechwriter but worked with him on his book. But he started working with me when he was a sophomore at-- I'm trying to remember where he went UVA? No, William and Mary. And he came to me and he'd sit and just code things all summer. And then all of a sudden I realized this kid is an amazing writer. And he had a great talent even then.

Michael Aron: He wrote the Politics of Inclusion with Kean.

Jane Kenny: He worked with Kean on that. And he was one of Christie Whitman's speechwriters years later.

Michael Aron: How do you spell his last name?

Jane Kenny: M-E-A-G-H-E-R. Mike Meagher. And he's Richard McCormick's speechwriter now.

Michael Aron: Oh yeah?

Jane Kenny: Yeah. Anyway, so then I worked on issues like the environment. I worked on health issues for him. Liberty State Park was one of my big issues. Public/private partnerships.

Michael Aron: When you were Cabinet Secretary?

Jane Kenny: There were certain things he asked me to do. The arts. There were a lot of stories about that but that was his love. And there weren't a whole lot of other people in the governor's office that were interested in that.

Michael Aron: So what did he ask you to do in the arts?

Jane Kenny: Well, he was really interested in public/private partnerships which we've heard a lot about. But I don't think people really were talking about that a lot then. He wanted to see how we could support people that were doing things in the nonprofit world through some connections with businesses. The state government would then sort of make it happen. You know, get people together, get the interest

aligned. I got really involved with Waterloo Village. I got really involved with the whole Liberty State Park issue with several of the other nonprofits.

Michael Aron: What was the issue around Liberty State Park?

Jane Kenny: What wasn't the issue?

Michael Aron: Making it a park?

Jane Kenny: Do you remember that? Do you remember what was going on up there? Oh gosh, it was so controversial and people somehow thought there was this pristine virgin forest that they were trying to preserve, instead of land that was full of metals and needed to be cleaned up. It would be very expensive to even have grass there. There were people that wanted a golf course. The golf course issue was still there when I got back with Christie Whitman, I couldn't believe it. The file was almost the same because it was so controversial. And then you had people like Morris Pessin from Jersey City. We used to buy our Easter stuff from Pessins (his store). And Audrey Zap. They had these very, very boisterous public meetings where they wanted to preserve Liberty State Park the way it was, but there really wasn't anything that you could preserve without a lot of money. As I said, it had been rail yards and a lot of contaminant sites and there needed to be a way to clean it up. And there needed to be a way for some money to be raised doing it. The marina was very controversial. So there are some funny stories about it, but it was very controversial. And we really felt that here was this treasure looking over the New York skyline right on the Hudson River. All of this land that was open, but it is what we call now brownfields. What could we do to make something happen up there. So we would meet with people and try to figure out what was best. There were a lot of plans that were put forward and I was kind of in the middle of that.

Michael Aron: You were in the Kean administration during the reelection period.

Jane Kenny: I'm sorry, I'm just thinking of this really funny story.

Michael Aron: Go ahead, tell the story.

Jane Kenny: I was really pretty new at being Cabinet Secretary and I walked in briefing him on Liberty State Park and he was standing up in that little office. (He always stood because of his back.) He was standing there and I was telling him and

he said, "Jane, I saw Mrs. Drive today when I was up in Hudson County." And I said, Mrs. Drive? And he said, "Yes, she was talking to me about Liberty State Park." And I realized that he meant Audrey Zap. There was a drive called Audrey Zap Drive. But it just sort of showed his sense of humor, I saw Mrs. Drive today. I was so puzzled. It took me a few minutes.

Michael Aron: He used the little office back in the corner, not the one that the current governor uses?

Jane Kenny: No. He used the little office.

Michael Aron: I think most governors back in those days, Jim Florio, I believe used that office.

Jane Kenny: Yeah. I think so. I think Christie Whitman might have been the first one to use the big office as her office. And then we had cabinet meetings or meetings with outside people in that room that the governor now uses for an office.

Michael Aron: You were part of the administration during the reelection year. What's your recollection of that election? Did you know he was going to win? Did you know he was going to win so big?

Jane Kenny: Well, I thought he was going to win. I don't think anyone could have predicted the stars aligning in the seventh House in Jupiter and Mars coming together. We thought he was going to win but you never go into something feeling complacent. I wasn't really directly involved in it at all. We were told to just do good and keep it up with making sure that we gave people information they wanted and answering the letters, and the mass mailings became a big thing in those years. You know, if you remember, we would get 2500 postcards on auto insurance. And there were just certain little trigger issues that we had to figure out how to answer. It was really the first time anyone had done that in the governor's office. So we were very, very busy and watched from afar. We saw things happen at town meetings. We saw him in action and paid very close attention because everyone was struggling to get his voice right and make sure that we were saying what he would say.

Michael Aron: How did you do that?

Jane Kenny: By listening closely. By reading the speeches that he gave. Sometimes he'd cross out stuff. We would run down the speechwriters and ask them if we could have whatever markings he made on anything. He would sometimes markup letters and they became our script for the next letter. Sometimes he would add something or say something that he would like to say. So we would just really pay attention and read the papers and hear what he had to say.

Michael Aron: When he got reelected you were then promoted to special assistant to the Chief of Staff?

Jane Kenny: Yes, I came downstairs. I got the ocean front real estate with the palm trees and everything.

Michael Aron: What did you do in that role?

Jane Kenny: Well, really pretty much what I did as Cabinet Secretary. I was really another senior aid to the governor and we all pitched in and we had our specific issues that we worked on and met frequently. Tried to keep things together. You know, it gets difficult because you're so busy. I mean you have 1,000 things burning on your desk. So you really have to make sure you keep in touch. Also, one of my first assignments was to run the Republican Governor's Association which was coming to New Jersey that year. And that was 1987.

Michael Aron: It came to Plainsboro?

Jane Kenny: No, we actually had it up in Parsippany.

Michael Aron: I'm jumping ahead some years. In the nineties it came to Plainsboro.

Jane Kenny: Yeah, but we hosted that and there were more Republican governors than there had been in a long time. And if you remember, we're off a year, so it was the next year when they all came in and Tom Kean was chair of the RGA at that point. And I worked on putting together the conference for him. But he really had very specific ideas about who he wanted to invite, in terms of speakers and pals, and that was interesting. And Ed McGlynn was really involved in it as well.

Michael Aron: And I want to correct the record. What happened in Plainsboro in the nineties was the House Republicans had a huge retreat. The House Republicans held a retreat in Plainsboro at Scanticon and that's what I'm confusing with your RGA in Parsippany which I also remember now that you bring it up.

Jane Kenny: One day I went into his office and was going over the list of people that we were trying to get to speak and he was thinking about who should come and he said, "You know, I really think we should invite Richard Nixon to come and speak." Nobody had heard from Richard Nixon for years. He hadn't come out of exile. He was living in New Jersey. "He has a very unique perspective. And I think he might say yes." <laughs> So, thinking about Richard Nixon from a Jules Feiffer cartoon was really kind of an amazing thought. And we did invite him and he did accept. And he came and talked to the Republican governors and a few of us, and it was probably one of the most fascinating hour-and-a-half's I've ever spent in my life. This guy had been with every leader from China and the Soviet Union, the only person that really had sat down face to face. And it was Tom Kean at his finest, thinking about what he wanted to provide and how this conference would be. One of the governors, Terry Branstad, he's Governor, again, of Iowa, refused to come as a child of the sixties. But it was history. It was really an amazing experience. And I was very pregnant with my second daughter and Tom Kean called me afterwards to meet Nixon. And he kind of grasped my arm. We have a picture, that's how I know but he was grasping my arm and saying to me, "You just have the greatest governor."

Michael Aron: Nixon said that?

Jane Kenny: He said, "Tom Kean should be president." So it was an amazing day. He had David Halberstam and he had the people that did the polls.

Michael Aron: Gallup.

Jane Kenny: Yes. No, it wasn't Gallup, it was the other one. I'm sorry. Now, it's gone.

Michael Aron: You were his Cabinet Secretary, did he have a philosophy or an approach to his cabinet that was-- how much rope did he give his cabinet?

Jane Kenny: I think he gave them a lot of independence. He felt that he chose very topnotch people. And he wanted to hear what they had to say. They were the

subject experts. I used to sit at the staff meetings with him as Cabinet Secretary and they'd come in one on one. And it was always interesting dialogue.

Michael Aron: They'd come in one on one?

Jane Kenny: If they had something they would come in. We'd have cabinet meetings, obviously, but if they needed something or wanted to talk about something or if there was a problem coming up they wanted to meet with him or with the Chief of Staff. But when they met with the Governor I would meet with them. I would be part of that. And it was funny because one of the things I really noticed was the person that always got everything she asked for was Jane Burgio.

Michael Aron: Why was that?

Jane Kenny: Well, for a number of reasons. I think they were in the legislature together.

Michael Aron: She was Secretary of State.

Jane Kenny: She was Secretary of State at the time. She was a big proponent of the arts and really changed the face of New Jersey's approach to the arts, I believe. It just seemed to me that the arts became very important. It was a budget item. It was something that Tom Kean talked about in the State of the State. People understood that he wanted to build this incredible arts center in Newark. Who was talking about doing something like that at the time? I was the person that worked on PAC. I got to know people. I had Joseph Papps in my office and talking to me. We went to meet Paul Newman and Ellen Burstyn. Nobody in the governor's office thought this was-- this wasn't an issue that consumed other people in the governor's office. They had other hot issues that they were working on. So I got to do the arts and it was great because it was something Tom Kean really cared about. We had this tremendous implementation with PAC being built. Tom Kean was the driver of that with Jane Burgio and Al Felzenberg.

Michael Aron: Al was the Assistant Secretary of State.

Jane Kenny: Yeah, he was Jane's sort of number two person over at State.

Michael Aron: When you think of the Kean years, what are the one or two or three top legacy items of the Kean years, do you think? What did he do for the state?

Jane Kenny: Well, I think he made people realize that we lived in this fabulous state. To have Tom Kean get up and tell you here's one of the oldest families in the state of New Jersey, committed to public service, and look what we have here and this is a good place to be. It's not a joke. It's not a "what exit" joke. It's a state that has an incredible amount of competencies and offers so much. That was the overall big picture of Tom Kean. The arts is something that I was really close to but I saw how it changed the way people thought about the arts as a way to do economic development and as a way to bring excellence to the state. The whole issue of education with calling out to people all over the country and even the world to say we want to establish good research here. A lot of outstanding scholars were brought in to Rutgers and other places. They were attracted because of the climate that was created in the Kean years, and by his leadership. I think that a governor really needs to be a leader and be clear about what he's expecting in the administration. It's a very powerful governorship in New Jersey. And you can really turn the ship with your policies and your beliefs and your leadership. And he understood that. He understood how the legislature works and how to work with them, because a lot of it is process. He had a person in Cary Edwards, a wonderful person, that could go and talk to the legislature. It didn't matter if you were a Republican or a Democrat. And it didn't matter to Tom Kean. People came in, both parties, and worked out issues with him. And that was something that I really thought was more typical than it was because later it became apparent that there was a lot more partisanship and divisiveness.

Michael Aron: But not in those days?

Jane Kenny: Yeah, there was some, of course. Republicans wanted to win and Democrats wanted to win and everybody wanted his or her own party but once people were in place, and there were issues to work on, I found that the partisanship was not so apparent as it became later.

Michael Aron: You said you were apolitical when this job was given to you. Were you political by the end of the Kean years?

Jane Kenny: I was definitely a Kean Republican person. I mean I still was an independent, but I really was very supportive of Kean. And I learned a lot about the whole political issue and process. And I felt that you understand especially when I

was working on the National Governor's Association or Republican Governor's that New Jersey was very unique in our party affiliation. What we call moderate Republicans where a lot of times you couldn't really tell the difference between a Republican and a Democrat. You know, some Democrats were much more conservative in some ways than the Republicans were. Tom Kean was a person that cared about social issues and education, the environment. I think that the Republican ideal of being more friendly to business, knowing that we need business to thrive in this state. So all of that made sense to me.

Michael Aron: As the administration was winding down, what did you think you would do?

Jane Kenny: I actually had a job offer quite early on during the last year so I knew I had a place to go. I was really one of the few people that was that fortunate. One of my friends that I worked with said, "You know, it's almost like the president of the company stood up and said we're closing this company." Everybody seemed so surprised when the eight years were up. <laughs> They were kind of wandering around like what happened. And I think what happens is you just get so caught up in government especially if you stay a long time. But I actually was in the room both times when Barbara and Finn Caspersen came to offer Tom Kean the presidency. It was just me.

Michael Aron: At Drew?

Jane Kenny: Yeah.

Michael Aron: Tell us about that.

Jane Kenny: The first time I met Finn and Barbara was through the work I was doing at Waterloo for Tom Kean and the arts, and got to know them a little bit. And they said they really wanted a meeting with Tom Kean. So I got on the calendar...

Michael Aron: What was their relationship to Drew at the time?

Jane Kenny: Well, Barbara was a trustee at Drew. And Finn and Barbara had been very supportive of Drew through the years. Barbara had pretty recently completed her Ph.D. in English Literature at Drew. She went back after she had children. And she just really loved the place. And both of them felt that this could be sort of a

shining star private university in New Jersey. It had so much to offer. And so they said they wanted to meet with him. They had the meeting with Tom Kean and I staffed it because I don't think anybody thought there were going to be any burning issues. I got to staff it as Cabinet Secretary. They both told him what they envisioned. It was during the last year of his governorship and a lot of people were asking what he was going to do next, a lot of speculation.

Michael Aron: Including possibly running for the U.S. Senate. Go ahead. There was an election in 1990 coming up that he could have run in against Bill Bradley.

Jane Kenny: Right. And there was a lot of speculation. There was a lot of speculation that he was going to run for Senate and I think he did consider it. So when they first presented this to him I just thought boy they've got to be kidding. But we were very polite, of course, and so was he.

Michael Aron: They've got to be kidding because it wasn't big enough...

Jane Kenny: I just didn't see him going to Drew to be president. I mean maybe Rutgers but it surprised me, let's put it that way. It surprised me when they offered it. Not that they offered it because I could see where they were coming from. And he was very pleased-- not pleased. He was very gracious, of course. And it was very clear to me that he had no interest. That was my read of things at that point. And then about a few months later, I can't say exactly when, they came in again and this time when he was talking to them I'm thinking to myself he's going to do it. Now, he didn't tell them he was. In fact, he surprised everybody except me. I kind of felt he was going to do it at that point. The way he was talking to them and I started to understand how it made some sense.

Michael Aron: How did it make some sense?

Jane Kenny: Well, if you're around the Governor and every day people are speculating. At that point, we knew he wasn't going to run for Senate for personal reasons with his family. And he was a person who cared deeply about education and he was going to probably have a great place, a platform, to continue to talk about things that he cared about. So it made sense. I thought he might do it at that point.

Michael Aron: Did you have your job offer by that point?

Jane Kenny: I think I might have, but I'm not sure. I don't remember the timing.

Michael Aron: What was your job?

Jane Kenny: I was going to Beneficial where Finn was CEO to work as Vice President for Corporate and Community Affairs. So I was offered a senior position and worked to continue to do some of the work I was doing in government but on a different vehicle.

Michael Aron: And that's what you did?

Jane Kenny: Turned out the lights and went up to Beneficial.

Michael Aron: You said off camera earlier that you turned off the lights, did you literally turn off the lights?

Jane Kenny: Pretty much. I stayed until the very end because I had work and I asked Finn if I could start in January and he said yes. So they had offered me the job, I think, in the fall maybe October. And I asked if he would mind. And I went in to see Tom Kean and I told him and he was very happy about it. He thought it was a great idea, great move and nice job. And I said to him, I'll see you through to the end if I can be helpful. And he said, "That would be great." And then after Jim Florio got elected he told me to give them whatever they needed and just help them in any way I could. So I was running back and forth to the transition office with books and advice.

Michael Aron: Do you remember who you interacted with from the Florio team?

Jane Kenny: David Applebaum. And who was the other one? There were a few of them. If I saw their names I would remember. Yes. And, actually, I think at least one of them was still there when I did it for Christie Whitman. So we got to talk again about transition. It was interesting.

Michael Aron: So what did you do at Beneficial?

Jane Kenny: I put together a grants program for giving so it fit in with the mission. And Finn was very generous. He had a lot of things going on. I was in

charge of public affairs-- that reported to me, and we did the soft side of the annual report, the writing and the production, working with the financial people. I worked with his board of directors when they got together, helping out, whatever Finn asked me to do. I did dressage. I rode for him once. Finn was a very visionary person so he'd be thinking way ahead all of the time. And he was always interested in the state and government and what was going on federally.

Michael Aron: Was there an element of let down coming out of government into this smaller venue?

Jane Kenny: Not really. That's not how I'm made. I realize I was running really fast after the first year and I had to slow down. So I just had to slow myself down a little bit...

Michael Aron: The first year at Beneficial.

Jane Kenny: At Beneficial. Because when you're in the governor's office, despite what people might think, you're really busy all of the time. There's never a down time. And I think the private sector is typically much slower than being in the governor's office or being commissioner or being regional administrator. The government jobs for me were very busy, running, moving around all of the time.

Michael Aron: While you were at Beneficial, Christie Whitman ran for the U.S. Senate. Did you know Christie Whitman at the time?

Jane Kenny: I had met her. In fact, I remember when Governor Kean appointed her as BPU commissioner towards the end of the administration. I was Cabinet Secretary and he told me about it. And I remember reading letters that her mother had written which were always beautifully written. She was on the Board of Higher Ed. She had been involved in politics. She always had a little something to write so I kind of knew the name from that. But he told me she was probably one of the finest, smartest people and she was going places. And I remember, in that little office when he told me about her coming in.

Michael Aron: Did he appoint her president of the BPU or just a commissioner of the BPU?

Jane Kenny: I believe president. Definitely. She came in as a cabinet member. I really only saw her at cabinet meetings, although we did have a couple of retreats. I remember, she did tell me when she was running for Senate, and I thought why? But I watched her because when I was at Beneficial, as I had been in government, I was part of the Women Executives in State Government, which was a group of women nationally. To be in it you either had to be a statewide elected official, or report to a governor, or report to a CEO, if you were in the private sector. So the women in that group were women that had served in similar positions across the country. And they'd invite Christie to speak because she was running for Senate. I would see her at these events and talk to her a little bit then. As you can imagine, I was very impressed with what I saw because she did a great job.

Michael Aron: Did you support her in her campaign?

Jane Kenny: I actually registered as a Republican so I could vote for her in the primary. She ran against Cary.

Michael Aron: Cary Edwards, for the Senate?

Jane Kenny: No, for governor.

Michael Aron: Primary for governor.

Jane Kenny: So I really was watching her. As I said, we weren't friends but I was excited by her candidacy. And when I was at Beneficial we arranged a day right before the election where she could come in...

Michael Aron: Which election, Senator or governor?

Jane Kenny: Sorry, I'm talking about governor now, where she could come and speak to the people. And we had it outside-- it's where Pfizer is now-- the beautiful headquarters in Peapack. And there was a front page story of her addressing this crowd of business people right before the election which was kind of nice.

Michael Aron: I probably covered it.

Jane Kenny: You probably covered it, Michael. You were probably there. And I was really excited when she got elected. Having a woman governor meant something to me. It was very significant to me. I remember waking up my-- I have two daughters and a son-- and I woke up my middle daughter, my little one and she was maybe five at the time and I said, Elizabeth, our new governor's a woman. And she just said, "Mommy is that good?" and I said, yeah, it's really good. And then my little son who was three at the time, he said to me, "Can men be governor too?" So it was sort of visceral.

Michael Aron: Did you know you'd go to work for her?

Jane Kenny: No. No. No. I had no idea.

Michael Aron: How did that come about?

Jane Kenny: I offered to help her with transition as a loaned executive and that was fine with Finn. And I used to drive from Peapack down to Trenton a few days a week. And at that point it was just the beginning. She had named Judy Shaw as Chief of Staff and Peter Verniero as her Chief Counsel, but none of the other positions were filled. And we started doing listening sessions, bringing people in from different areas-- health or environment or whatever. And a couple of weeks, she offered me a couple of positions, cabinet level positions. And I really struggled over Thanksgiving. But my husband pointed out later, I was just struggling about what position to take because I had a nice job and two very small kids as well as an older daughter who was a teenager.

Michael Aron: What were the positions you were wrestling with?

Jane Kenny: Well, I'll tell you that one of them was Chief of Policy and Planning. I won't tell you about the other two but they were cabinet positions.

Michael Aron: Because that's the one you took. And why did you take that one?

Jane Kenny: I wanted to work with her. I had been in the governor's office and I felt that I could be helpful to her in the governor's office. I don't think anyone else had any governor's office experience that was there. And I wanted to work with her. I thought it would be really fun to work with a CEO that was a woman. I never had that experience.

Michael Aron: Was it?

Jane Kenny: It was great. Are you kidding me? <laughs>

Michael Aron: What was great?

Jane Kenny: It was great working with her, first of all, just the personality. You know, talk about giving you independence if she believed in you. She was very good at that. And it was fun...

Michael Aron: You still work with her to this day?

Jane Kenny: She's my partner so obviously I like her. But, you know, I didn't know her that well then. And I agreed with her on a lot of her policies. So it made my job very easy because a lot of times-- where I would see something from her perspective, that I could talk to her about that other people hadn't. And, you know, she would see my point of view so she agreed with me a lot. So it was very satisfying, very validating. With Kean, he was more of a figure, sort of, up on the mountain because he had the experience and he was another generation and I was really a student learning. With Christie Whitman she was more of an equal even though she was governor. I gave her that respect. But we were closer in generation and in thinking.

Michael Aron: She ran on a tax cutting platform and implemented her promise quickly and fully. That's what I remember about the beginning of her administration. What do you remember about the beginning of her administration?

Jane Kenny: Well, I remember that. I was really concerned about that. I felt-- and I've told her this and it's not like I predicted anything-- worried that people would think anything that we did-- because we had to make cuts in government at that time. We were in a similar position, not quite so profound as is it now, but we needed to cut back on services. And I was really afraid that people would think that she was heartless because the tax cuts and the cuts that had to come in service wouldn't be seen from a policy standpoint. It was more to satisfy a political thing. And I was concerned about that. So I wasn't one of the brilliant people that figured out how she could do that. I was more the person that was always worried that it would color her.

Michael Aron: Did it?

Jane Kenny: I think it did. But it also showed the nation. The governor of New Jersey has this great opportunity in the first year-- you're ahead of all of the other governors. And so when the next group gets elected you have for better or for worse, a role model of things that could be done. So often you can capture what's necessary to do, what are the hard decisions you have to make. I mean it's interesting that Cuomo is doing a lot of the stuff that Chris Christie is doing now. If you remember, people around the country were looking at Christie Whitman and saying you really can cut taxes and you can continue to run government and the world doesn't come to an end. She was getting a lot of national attention.

Michael Aron: She was chosen to deliver the response to the President's State of the Union message after about a year of being in office.

Jane Kenny: That first year she got a lot of attention. I don't know if you remember, but she got a lot of national attention. And people were trying to emulate what she was doing. I was working really hard because it was the 104th Congress, the Newt Gingrich Congress, that just came in and they were pledging, the contract with America. And we were down there all of the time working with the moderates to try to make sure that the Clean Air Act wasn't opened up and some of the health issues were taken care of. We were the moderate voice working with Olympia Snowe, and Bob Dole and trying to get some balance in some of those things because it would really hurt New Jersey if some of that stuff happened.

Michael Aron: You said that you were excited that a woman was elected governor. How did being the first woman governor of the state affect her administration, either positively or negatively or both?

Jane Kenny: Well, I think it's always difficult in Trenton if you're not an insider, if you have to figure out a way to work with people that have been there. Process is always really important. And it was difficult for a lot of the men that had been around for a while to see the person in charge of the Republican Party at this point, as a woman. It was difficult for the Republicans. And it was difficult for the Democrats. They would come into the room to meet with her and there'd already be three women sitting there before we even started the meeting. So it was very different. When I worked for Tom Kean and when I worked at Beneficial, I was often the only woman in the room for most of my political career, my professional career. And that was usually commented on. And so it was very different when the Governor was a woman, the Chief of Staff was a woman, the Attorney General was

a woman, Debbie Portiz. We started out, if we were working on the budget or working on an issue, and a couple of times Brian Clymer who was the Treasurer at the time would remark, upon that. So it was something that definitely caused a little bit of process issues. Some things were just not as easy. They might have been easier if you could just sit down and talk about things gender to gender. <laughs> I think it was very challenging in that way.

Michael Aron: How about in terms of policy? Sometimes you hear people say put women in charge and there'll be no more war. Or put women in charge and you'll get a more sympathetic set of policies. How about in terms of policy? Did gender affect policy outcomes?

Jane Kenny: Well, it's hard for me to say because I've only looked at policy from a woman's perspective, but I do think that diverse perspectives make better policy. If you have a diverse group at the table, you're usually going to end up with a better product. And I think she really appreciated that. She wanted to know what people thought and did not want to be treated like a rock star. She said, "Let me hear what you have to say. I want to hear you disagree. I want to hear your perspective-- conservative, more liberal, a community perspective, from a perspective of raising children." All of those things were very important to her. Getting those different viewpoints. The people we met with, would come in and she would talk to them about different issues. I don't know if you remember, there was a big issue with-- this is terrible. There was an anti-Semitic black man who said and I can't remember...

Michael Aron: Khalid Mohamed.

Jane Kenny: Right. And that caused a big outrage and this is where a governor is a leader. And right at that time we were in Washington at a National Governor's Association meeting and Steven Spielberg was speaking and she made a bee line for him and asked him if he would allow "Schindler's List" to be shown in the state and have panels of people talking about and reacting to it. And he said yes because of the way she asked and he gave us unlimited copies of "Schindler's List." And we put together people from Christian and Jewish organizations, some black groups, Hispanic groups. We had panelists reacting to this film. It was a direct response to show that we have to talk to one another and hear one another's viewpoints and be aware of what we say. That was her reaction. How do I teach a lesson here? How do I use this as a moment that we can bring people together? So it was unique but I think those kinds of things sometimes aren't the things that you write about. You

know, good news is no news and so often some of those areas where she did make those kinds of decisions weren't the hot issues that are easy to identify.

Michael Aron: I realize your perspectives were very different in the Kean administration and the Whitman administration but discounting for that, how do you compare the two administrations? How do you compare the two governorships? What was the difference between the Kean administration and the Whitman administration?

Jane Kenny: From my perspective I think they were not dissimilar in their approach to the world, and approach to policy and approach to caring about people. They both were ingrained with public service and wanted to make the state better and wanted to make government better. And being leaders, natural leaders. The difference was mostly in process where Kean had been in the legislature had a tremendous relationship with a lot of the legislators that we dealt with from his time in the legislature. Christie Whitman, for all practical purposes, was an outsider and a woman. So I think those were two pretty big handicaps in Trenton. I think that just made some things that should have been easy, harder. That was the difference I saw. I think in terms of policy and their approach, they're probably very similar.

Michael Aron: You spent four years as Chief of Policy and Planning.

Jane Kenny: No. I spent about two-and-a-half years as Chief of Policy and Planning. And one of the key areas that I worked on was urban issues. We were trying create an urban coordinating council. We were trying to get all of the departments to work around a mayor and a community, the community leaders' plan for how they wanted to see redevelopment occur in a city. We had a few cities that we were working very closely with-- the mayors and the community leaders. Governor Whitman had this idea that it was time to get it out of the governor's office and really implement, and the way to do that was through the Department of Community Affairs and that's when she asked me to become commissioner.

Michael Aron: Who was commissioner at the time?

Jane Kenny: Harriet Derman who had been in the legislature and came over to the governor's office to be Chief Counsel. And Peter Verniero moved into the Chief of Staff position. He had been there already. I don't remember who was Chief Counsel. Who was Chief Counsel? It was Peter and then he became Chief of Staff. And then, I guess, Harriet went over and became Chief Counsel.

Michael Aron: So you were filling a vacancy or the governor really wanted to get you in there?

Jane Kenny: She wanted me. She asked me if I would do it. And she asked me if I would go and become Commissioner of DCA.

Michael Aron: And what did you say?

Jane Kenny: She asked me to do it. She's the governor. So, of course, I said yes. And that wasn't really ever one of the areas that I worked on for either governor, either Governor Kean or Governor Whitman. We had some good people over at DCA when I was Chief of Policy. So it wasn't one of the departments that I had to work with really closely. Harriet knew state government and she had some really good people. And I had a person in my policy office, Elizabeth Murray who was fabulous and she worked very closely with the Department of Community Affairs. She knew Christie Whitman, had worked on her campaign. So it was a new area for me-- housing and municipal budgets and codes and standards and it was great. It was fascinating. And it was true that we really could do a lot. At that point, we were starting to be able to focus resources. The Department of Health often didn't know what Environmental Protection was doing in the same city. We brought them all together and did some calculated redevelopment efforts with the mayors, the community, maybe the churches, and the nonprofit support. In Elizabeth, Mayor Bollwage, to this day, will talk about that if you ask him. Mayor Cahill in New Brunswick. I worked very hard in Camden. I'm keeping my fingers crossed for the new mayor. It's tough. But we were able to make some changes and get some things done, which I feel very good about.

Michael Aron: Did you stay as commissioner right up until Christie Whitman left office?

Jane Kenny: I was there. I actually stayed with Donnie DiFrancesco for awhile. She had asked me to go to EPA Region II but it took her awhile to get me there.

Michael Aron: Once she became EPA administrator she asked you to go to Region II but it took a while?

Jane Kenny: Mm-hm. Yeah.

Michael Aron: Okay. When you think back on her two terms, what are you most proud of that she did? What did she do for the state?

Jane Kenny: I think that she made businesses feel that it was a good place to live and work. She also made it a point to think about how you can attract businesses to the state. And I think we had a pretty good record of economic development. She was also very committed to the whole issue of charter schools and that happened in her tenure. And I obviously am most proud of the work we did in urban areas. And I think that the proof is there.

Michael Aron: Which urban areas spring to mind? The ones you named a minute ago, Elizabeth, New Brunswick.

Jane Kenny: Yeah. We did a lot of work in Asbury Park. We did a lot of work in Long Branch. All of the things that you see now in Long Branch we started. And we did some work in Perth Amboy some development there with the churches. You know, the transit villages were something we started. We built the first sustainable housing. Nobody was talking about that. We did green housing. We started an office of green planning. And we really tried to target resources that were needed by the people on the ground, what the people in the cities need. What is their plan? And then we try to support that with the state resources and, where we could, federal and outside resources.

Michael Aron: Another major initiative of her second term was open space preservation.

Jane Kenny: Yes. And that went hand-in-hand with the rehabilitation sub code. You take the pressure off open space by providing ways, which I know sounds boring, but I got several national awards for that. That was all of her support to take the pressure off open space and preserve a million acres.

Michael Aron: I remember she set that goal. Have we met that goal, do you know?

Jane Kenny: I don't know. We're close. Yeah. I noticed we stopped talking about Tom Kean, but I guess you wanted to do that.

Michael Aron: Yes, we planned on that. By the way, what was their relationship? Did he play any advisory role in her time?

Jane Kenny: We asked for advice quite a bit. We would call and ask for advice. He was busy in those days. He wasn't sitting around waiting for advice to be asked, but we did. And I think they have a good relationship.

Michael Aron: He was a friend of the administration.

Jane Kenny: Yes. Yes.

Michael Aron: When the history of the Whitman years is recalled today a lot of times the pension bond issue gets brought up as a mistake, a fiscal mistake. How do you remember it? How do you see it?

Jane Kenny: I think it was just hard for people to understand. And I think that once you have so much trouble communicating something like that to people, the people that don't understand are the ones that get to label it. And in terms of the state rating, the state rating stayed high. And it was always meant to be looked at again which it wasn't in the years that followed her. Just recently the CEO of New Jersey Resources told me that he thought it was a great idea at the time. It made absolute sense and the business people totally supported it. Bob Littell didn't like it and he was a Republican Senator at the time and he said it was wacky. And that's what caught on. You know, what caught on was the criticism and I think it was very hard. People said, what are we doing here? But fiscally, according to experts, it made sense. Now, should it have been looked at the year after she left? Yes. And years subsequently? Yes. And you look at it in terms of the big picture, in terms of financial health of the state, and you make decisions. But at that time, fiscally, it made sense, according to the rating agencies. It just wasn't ever sold. Optically, it didn't work for people.

Michael Aron: I remember I didn't understand it then and I don't understand it now.

Jane Kenny: Yeah. That's what I mean. It was so hard, that's why I just have to rely on fiscal experts. I remember saying, I don't understand it and how do you sell that? So when I say sell or just even educate people about it, it was very difficult. So I think that's why. But, you know, I do believe that history will see some other things and some of the things we talked about in terms of open space, a million

acres. And some of the work in cities-- like Nixon going to China-- Republicans were very good to cities and really tried to help them thrive. Several of the mayors told me they really missed us when we left. The Democratic mayors-- because we really saw where they needed the help and worked according to their plans. And Open for Business. New Jersey needs to be open for business and people need to feel welcome here. And a lot of times business leave the state because sometimes the taxes become so onerous that they feel they can't make a decent living. Then we lose the opportunity to have jobs and taxes paid by businesses.

Michael Aron: If you had to identify a weakness of the Kean administration or of the Whitman administration, what springs to mind?

Jane Kenny: I think it's just such hard work. There's never enough time and there's never enough resources. I mean it's just really government more than anything. Trying to get key people in the roles where they can work the best and be the most efficient is not a problem for governors, it's a problem of government. And it's a problem that you can't move people around or you can't get rid of people that don't want to work anymore. It's hard. I really noticed it, not so much in the governor's office, but when I went to the department. You have some fabulous people that are really committed to the mission, but then you have a lot of people that just really don't want to work and there's nothing you can do about it.

Michael Aron: Because of civil service rules?

Jane Kenny: And unions. The double whammy. So it's just hard to get as much done as you would want to because you can't put people in the roles where they can perform at their highest capacity. And I think the governors really get stuck with that. So there's just never enough time. I think they were both excellent governors and I think they cared about the state. They were good leaders. They listened to people. And I think we were lucky that people of that caliber would want to run for office, and you just hope that continues.

Michael Aron: How did Christie Whitman get tagged with the label in some quarters of being imperious and distant from the people? How did that happen?

Jane Kenny: Is that a gender thing maybe?

Michael Aron: I don't know, maybe.

Jane Kenny: I'm not sure. She's a very warm person. I've travelled all over with her and we're in Shanghai and people stop her on the street, in Dubai, in Florida. And she talks to people and says hello. She's mostly by herself in airports. She doesn't look for escorts. She's a very down to earth person. So I'm not sure. She looks regal, maybe that was why. I don't know.

Michael Aron: When did you leave the DiFrancesco administration?

Jane Kenny: Two thousand one. I went to EPA. I became Regional Administrator at EPA. I was a little busy then. I went there in November of 2001, and I stayed there until the beginning of 2005.

Michael Aron: Stayed there longer than Christie Whitman stayed...

Jane Kenny: Mm-hm. I stayed there for an extra year. She asked me if I wanted to start a business and have some fun working with policy and doing some of the stuff that we like to do but in a different capacity. So we kind of invented this business. And we've been doing this, this is our seventh year. We work mostly environmental and energy.

Michael Aron: Who hires you? Who are your clients in business?

Jane Kenny: Industry. Power plants. We have an independent power plant. We have some big companies like the DuPonts and the Chevrons of the world.

Michael Aron: They hire you to help them navigate regulatory issues.

Jane Kenny: Navigate regulatory issues. We don't go to the Hill at all, but there are a lot of good people that do that. We don't lobby in the legislature. But we work with the executive branch if needed. And we help them think about the regulatory process. And we're very careful. Only people that want to do better do we take on. So that's one of our standards.

Michael Aron: Is this more fun than government or less fun?

Jane Kenny: Everything's fun. It's just really what you make it. And I have a lot of fun with this because the entrepreneurial part of it is interesting to me. I don't say I

wish I was still in government. But I did love my time in government and there's nothing like government. And I think that as I said from boot camp of the mailroom, to being the Governor's Chief of Policy and Planning and DCA Commissioner to Regional Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency. It's thrilling that I got the opportunity to do these jobs and work with these fabulous people. So I think it just helped-- everything helps the next thing. I have this portfolio that can be useful to our clients and I'm enjoying that.

Michael Aron: You're probably the first person we've interviewed who has had experience in three governors' administrations. Before we wrap up tell us what you have done for the current governor, Chris Christie.

Jane Kenny: Well, what I did was help with transition into the Governor's and Lieutenant Governor's office. I was asked to do that, and that was quite an honor, and it was fun because I got to work with Cary Edwards, again, and some of the people like Wayne Hasenbalg and Peter Verniero. We actually were the little team that figured out how the Lieutenant Governor was going to be Lieutenant Governor and also made some recommendations about the governor's office, based on our experience. And that's it. That's what I've done for this administration.

Michael Aron: You're saying you were the ones who figured out that the Lieutenant Governor should also be the Secretary of State?

Jane Kenny: I think that was our advice, It was very interesting to work in government that way, knowing that I did not have to do anything to implement this. Just to give advice. But you understand how much you have done and learned when you're able to put together a process and some papers for the next person. And they really used it. It wasn't just something that they did for show. They really looked and thought about it very carefully and took a lot of our recommendations.

Michael Aron: How do you think it's working out, the whole Lieutenant Governorship?

Jane Kenny: I think that it remains to be seen. I think that the role is very new for New Jersey. And she seems great-- very energetic and passionate and committed. So I guess we'll see. That was just sort of a line in the law. Nothing was spelled out about what that should be. There was no ethics code. There was no salary. There was nothing. Just there should be a Lieutenant Governor. So this administration can really help define that. When you think about what the Secretary

of State did before Tom Kean it was basically the keeper of the seal and elections. He was the one that made it into the office where the arts and the arts budget and the Arts Council were housed and that really changed the whole nature of the Secretary of State. It was much more of a political office. Jane Burgio obviously was political. She was Tom Kean's Secretary of State, but she also had this big policy push for the arts. And that became the real highlight of the Secretary of State's office. And then it changed, you know, the next Secretary of State had a different role in the Florio administration. We first had Lonna Hooks and then we had Carol Cronheim acting for awhile. And then we had Buster Soaries, Pastor Soaries, who did Many Faces/One Family and diversity. He had the arts, but really much more important to him were the nonprofits and the churches and the diversity issue and that's what he used the Secretary of State's office for. It really is a constitutional office. Now they're doing the business, economic development and that kind of outreach and that's very valuable. You can really use it in any way. So it seems to be working.

Michael Aron: And since your days and even before your days in the governor's office, it's generally been organized with a Chief of Staff, a Chief Counsel and a Chief of Policy and Planning

Jane Kenny: Well, Tom Kean was the first one that did a Chief of Policy and Planning. There was always Director of Policy and Planning. And when Brenda Davis came in she said she'd like to be chief. So that was changed...

Michael Aron: Gary Stein preceeded her.

Jane Kenny: Yes.

Michael Aron: So Brenda Davis was in a slightly elevated capacity?

Jane Kenny: Yeah, I mean I think Gary Stein was pretty elevated. I mean he was definitely an advisor to Governor Kean. And he was in the office as much as probably Greg or Cary were. But I think it was just more of the perception that you had these three, the triumvirate.

Michael Aron: Well, when you advised the incoming Christie administration did you stick with that structure? Or did you suggest something slightly different?

Jane Kenny: They had already decided that they were going to do two, Chief Counsel and Chief of Staff and that was really the only thing they gave us when we walked in the door and that was Governor Christie's decision.

Michael Aron: So the Director of Policy and Planning is Wayne Hasenbalg and I guess it's now back to be slightly lower than the two chiefs.

Jane Kenny: I guess it could be although I believe that Wayne is probably right in there with the Governor and giving his ideas and opinions. And so you could have the most prestigious position in the governor's office, but if you're not useful to the Governor and the Governor is not comfortable talking to you, you can't walk in the door any time want. You can have the title, but you don't really have any clout. You want to be a person in the governor's office that can be valuable to the Governor and help the Governor and make sure you understand what the Governor needs. But at the same time, make sure the Governor understands what's going on and not try to cordon him or her off from reality.

Michael Aron: Can you see yourself doing it again for another governor?

Jane Kenny: I can't really see that but I'm always open to possibilities. I'm enjoying what I'm doing now. And I don't really think about the future so much as today because it's all we've got. <laughs>

Michael Aron: Well, thanks for sharing your recollections with us.

Jane Kenny: You're welcome. It was fun.

Michael Aron: Yeah, it was.