

Amy Mansue Interview

October 4, 2016

Rick Sinding: Hello. I am Rick Sinding. It's Tuesday, October 4th, 2016. We're at the Eagleton Institute of Politics on the campus of Rutgers University and with me today for the Center on the American Governor is Amy Mansue who served first as a policy adviser to the governor and later as Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Human Services in the administration of Governor Jim Florio.

Amy, welcome to Eagleton.

Amy Mansue: Thank you so much. Glad to be here.

Rick Sinding: Let's start at the beginning. Where did you grow up? Where did you go to school? What were your aspirations?

Amy Mansue: I grew up in Plainsboro, New Jersey, just a little south of here actually, a small town. In Plainsboro our claim to fame is that we created the automatic milking machine for a dairy farm--

Rick Sinding: At Walker Gordon--

Amy Mansue: --the Rotolactor at Walker Gordon Farm where my grandfather worked and was the major economic engine. I always like to say there were more cows than people in town when I grew up--

Rick Sinding: That's changed.

Amy Mansue: --and now it's become obviously a very populated area, lots of development, condos, townhouses, now over 55, a very, very diverse community. I went to school at West Windsor-Plainsboro, which is a regional school district. Most of the kids there originally were going to Princeton High and then in '76 they created the regional school district, which I think is ironic because that's a lot of what we did during the Florio administration is encourage regionalization and try to introduce shared services so I know what that's like. And then I went to college at the University of Alabama.

Rick Sinding: Why Alabama?

Amy Mansue: My dad had gone to Mississippi. I looked at schools in the South. I knew I wanted to go to a very different place than where I grew up. Plainsboro was pretty-- there was a lack of diversity I would say is probably the way best way to say it and I wanted something entirely different. I'm an only child. I wanted to

really branch out. The irony of course is I go all the way to the University of Alabama and my first internship is in Washington, D.C., with Congressman Jim Florio. He was then a member of Claude Pepper's health committee-- Select Committee on Aging, the health subcommittee, and so I got to work with the governor's-- the congressman's staff and then ultimately when I graduated I did a master's program at Alabama and they offered a program that allowed you to do a semester of your graduate work in D.C. on the Hill. So I went back and worked in his office and then eventually got hired when I got out of college.

Rick Sinding: You had no connection with Jim Florio other than being assigned to his subcommittee as an intern.

Amy Mansue: Never met him before then, didn't know where the first district was, didn't know any of those things but was really passionate about the issues that the select committee was focused on, which ironically is-- fast forward when I got to work for the governor-- were the same issues we were dealing with, which were long-term care of the elderly, looking at trying to provide greater home-care services and access to home-care services for people with disabilities as well as the elderly, looking at trying to expand-- the first bill I worked on for the governor as a congressman was trying to expand Medicaid to make community services an entitlement and look to try and move people out of large institutions. Here we are 30 years later still doing the same thing in many ways.

Rick Sinding: Was your interest as you were studying in the healthcare-delivery system, in healthcare policy, in some combination of the two? Did you see yourself going into public administration?

Amy Mansue: Yes. I was a social-work major and graduated with an undergrad and master's degree in social work and my concentration was in policy and management, and I remember vividly talking to Dr. Crunk who was one of my advisers and saying to him, "There is no way I am going to do this counseling thing. I'm not good at it. I have no patience. I have interaction with"--

Rick Sinding: Patience, C-E, not E-N-T-S.

Amy Mansue: <laughs> Well, actually both to be honest but "I have no acumen to manage clients." So fast forward. Here I am now in a role where basically what I do is manage people all day long and Dr. Crunk thought that was very ironic that as much as I at 18 had decided I was never going to do that, that my major role today and actually for the governor in large measure was trying to negotiate between people and do what you do as a social worker.

Rick Sinding: But that's primarily administrative in nature as opposed to sitting down on a couch and talking to them about their problems or is it both?

Amy Mansue: I was going to say I'm not sure if you remember, Rick, but when we were doing legislative work there was a whole lot of sitting on a couch doing negotiation, and really what the fundamental core of social work is is finding what the clients' strengths are, bringing them together with the resources that are available and then trying to make-- the ability to help people-- empower them to move forward, which really is at that point in my life what I believed government was all about.

Rick Sinding: When you went to work in Washington for Congressman Florio you had done an internship and now you were actually there as a staffer?

Amy Mansue: Yes. In 1987. He then had been appointed as chair of the-- they had made a special committee for him, the Subcommittee on Protection-- Environmental Protection out of--

Rick Sinding: Was it Superfund?

Amy Mansue: Yes, Energy and Commerce, yes, Product Liability Committee; that was it, and he really made a name for himself. We knew at that point that he was running although he had declared none of those things but he was going to run again, and it was really a very special time because we had so much interaction at the state level and we had-- everybody wanted to come see him because they knew that he was going to be running in a couple years. And so it was a really exciting time to be on the Hill. We had Jim Howard who was a congressman who was chair of the Transportation Committee and he had great stuff going on in New Jersey; Rte. 195 got funded. It was really an exciting time to be a staffer on the Hill especially with him.

Rick Sinding: Jim Florio as a congressman had a reputation for being tough, for I won't say chewing and spitting up staff members but there was a significant amount of turnover on his staff. Did you find him difficult to deal with? Was he challenging and demanding?

Amy Mansue: You said as a congressman. As opposed to when he was governor? <laughs>

Rick Sinding: No, not necessarily. We'll get there in a few minutes.

Amy Mansue: Yes. Was he tough? I don't remember that. A), One of the things I always respected about the governor is that he was very clear about what he stood for and there was not a lot of gray area, and so once you understood that it was really easy to work for him. And I always say that I could predict what his position would be on an issue that I'd never talked to him about just based upon what I knew were his values and his moral compass. And I think that as I've gone on in

my career especially after being with the governor that's a really unique ability to have somebody that is that centered on what their perception is of right and how to go about it.

One quick story: So when you were a legislative aide my expertise was in healthcare but then you have to cover a whole bunch of areas that you don't know anything about, right. I had veterans; I had taxes; I had banking; I had firemen relations. I had all sorts of things under my purview besides the healthcare piece of the equation and somehow I ended up with trucking, and there was an issue at the time that was going to-- Congress was going to mandate that you'd have to-- if you were going to create trucks you had to have the bar-- the protection bar that wouldn't let cars go under the truck, right. And the freight haulers came in and we had a very powerful-- New England Motor Freight was a New Jersey-based big company, big donor who was there, and he came in with all these drivers and they said, "This is going to put us out of business. This is going to be deadly." So of course this is the first time I have this issue where somebody says they're going to be put out of business, so I do this whole long memo and I talk about it and I talk about the safety issues and I talk about the other things. And I get a note back that says, "AM"-- or "AB" at that point "if this will put them out of business they have greater trouble than this. <laughs> No. We are going to stand firm."

Rick Sinding: JJF.[ph]

Amy Mansue: JJF or-- I didn't get a TTM ["talk to me"], which is probably meaning, this is done, don't bring this back. And he stood firm and now as you drive down the road and when you go home tonight you can see that the world did not come to an end and thousands and thousands of lives have been saved because cars no longer go under trucks.

Rick Sinding: And that trucking company did not go under.

Amy Mansue: It did not. It continued to thrive and do well actually.

Rick Sinding: Was Jim Florio much of a policy wonk on healthcare as he has developed a reputation for being on virtually every other subject?

Amy Mansue: Yes, he loved it. I mean he loved the detail. Here's the funny thing: I remember the first time I went back to the district. When he was in D.C. remember he would come in Monday afternoon and he'd leave as soon as the votes were done on Thursday so we had whatever that window of time is, 50 hours, 60 hours, and it was full. That was the only time you got questions answered, that was the only time you have face time, and it was jammed one after another after another. People were barging just right through the office; it was just crazy how much traffic came in. And I remember going to the district office on a Friday coming

back to New Jersey, coming home, and I... we were together and we were walking literally down a street together and somebody put their window down-- at that point rolled down their window-- and yelled, "Jimmy" and waved and I thought. "Who are they talking to?" ...and he waves back and smiles and I'm thinking "I've never seen you smile like that" because that just didn't happen in Washington. When he was there he was on, he was working, and he worked every moment of that time he was there and it was serious policy stuff.

Rick Sinding: By his own admission, he never particularly liked campaigning so the idea that somebody would yell, "Hey, Jimmy" and he would smile and wave probably was something that didn't come particularly naturally to him.

Amy Mansue: When he was in district one these were his people.

Rick Sinding: He was in campaign mode?

Amy Mansue: I wouldn't say that. I would say that that was the one place that I saw him - except for with Lucinda - where he was really comfortable.

Rick Sinding: Lucinda wasn't around at this time?

Amy Mansue: Yes. They got engaged actually right about the same time; I would say '88.

Rick Sinding: Valentine's Day if I'm not--

Amy Mansue: Yes, Valentine's Day '88 I believe or somewhere in that period of time because we met her when she came down, which is why it was so vivid in my mind.

Rick Sinding: Did you see a change in him?

Amy Mansue: I can't describe it as a change but he is a different person when he's with her. Yes, that was clear and again I would say he's a different person when he was in the First District. He was clearly home and you felt it, that these were his people and most importantly he was their congressman. I mean there was a real connection and he did all these great things, right, Superfund, all these really nationally landmark issues. And to them he was Jim. For me as a staffer especially because I'd only seen him in that D.C. light, to see him back in the district was really a turning point for me to see him-- I don't want to use the word "human" but but I think that rather than just this serious policy wonk see him as a real guy who had this huge heart and who was really, really motivated by everything that brought him there, how he grew up, his time going to school and getting his GED and doing all that but really living in that district, understanding that for a large part were blue-collar folks who were living hand to mouth and that he had a

responsibility to make sure that he delivered for them and he took that very seriously.

Rick Sinding: Who were some of the other key people on his legislative staff at that point?

Amy Mansue: Yes. So Greg Lawler was running the subcommittee at that point for the special committee out of energy and commerce; Frank Fortunato who went on to work in the governor's office with us when we were there as one of the counsels on insurance; Peter Newbould who was the director at that point of the office who later spent his career running the Psychology Association for the U.S.; [Jon Shure](#) came in as the press office on that last period of time; Diane Russell who worked with us in the governor's office and then went on to California and still today is a major executive at Schwab.

Rick Sinding: Now [Brenda Bacon](#) was Jim's healthcare guru. How did she fit into the work that you were doing? Was she on the staff at that point?

Amy Mansue: No.

Rick Sinding: She was back in the district or--

Amy Mansue: She may have been a freeholder at that point. I did not interact with her when I was in Congress at all and obviously met her when I worked for her when the governor won.

Rick Sinding: You had not had any interaction with Brenda before that.

Amy Mansue: No.

Rick Sinding: Now that surprises me because I saw the two of you working hand in glove almost from day one and I had this feeling that you'd known each other all your lives.

Amy Mansue: I had gotten married and moved back to New Jersey and worked for the Association of Retarded Citizens as their lobbyist when the governor was running for office, and then after he won I had put my resume in with a gazillion other people and it had gone to the policy shop to [Carl Van Horn](#) and I think it went to the bottom of the pile for no other reason--

Rick Sinding: That's where mine went.

Amy Mansue: --<laughs> for no other reason because there were just so many and I ran into the governor and he said, "What are you doing?" And I said, "Well, I'm working at The Arc and I'm hoping to maybe find a place with you and if there

is an opportunity"-- blah blah blah, the same things you always say-- and I remember he wrote on the resume "Brenda, TTM," and I didn't know who that was at that point and then the next thing I know--

Rick Sinding: Well, of course at that point you knew what "TTM" meant--

Amy Mansue: I did.

Rick Sinding: Nobody else knew.

Amy Mansue: <laughs> Yes, "talk to me."

Rick Sinding: It meant "talk to me."

Amy Mansue: "Talk to me," yes. And so then I got a call from Brenda.

Rick Sinding: You were not involved in the campaign. You left the congressional office, came back to work in New Jersey and then came to--

Amy Mansue: I mean I wrote a couple policy papers but I wasn't on the campaign, no.

Rick Sinding: Now in the interest of full disclosure, for the first several months of the Florio administration you and I shared an office. I'll use the term "office" liberally; it was a converted broom closet--

Amy Mansue: Absolutely.

Rick Sinding: --that the two of us barely fit into just so that folks who are watching know that we have a relationship that goes way back, and you were very, very actively involved in a whole bunch of healthcare and human-services issues from the very start. I can remember I sat at my desk and took phone calls from prisoners--

Amy Mansue: <laughs> I was just going to say that.

Rick Sinding: --doing corrections policy and you were downstairs in Brenda's office, back up in Carl's office, running around, going over to the Human Services Department office and the Health Department office. How did working in a governor's office differ from working in a congressman's office? Let's start with that and then we'll go to the issues that you were dealing with.

Amy Mansue: Yes. I'm not sure exactly how much work there was or that I just had shpilkes so I couldn't ever sit still and that was a way to keep moving, but the awesome responsibility in a governor's office. In Congress you had to corral people, you had to move the bill through the process, you had to do all these things in

order for it to happen, you had to bring-- cosponsors would bring colleagues along, but in a governor's office there it's stuff that happens every single day that will never show up in the press and never show up as a piece of legislation... You have to own, big, hefty policy issues that impact people's lives.

And that's the fundamental thing as we've gone through these last decades that I find so disheartening is the lack of respect for what government does, for the people who serve in government and just the awesome responsibility to actually run a business that now is whatever it is, \$30 billion or whatever the state budget is at that time. Our piece of it in Medicaid and-- in human services and health and Medicaid being the largest part of it I mean people literally would live or die depending on what your policy decisions were. And look, I was 25 so I was a kid and thought this was just an amazing both opportunity and more importantly an obligation. And that came from him; that came from how he took this job so seriously and there was so much to do. I mean really when we came in there were things that had been unattended for years and maybe unattended because we had different philosophic bents on what should be done and maybe unattended because people had made other decisions about how money would be spent, but there were real critical issues within that human-service and health spectrum that really needed time to be addressed.

Rick Sinding: Can you tell us what a handful of them were?

Amy Mansue: Yes. So I think about the health issues, right. At that point, we had about 1.2 million people uninsured in the state of New Jersey. You had people coming to hospitals to receive care that [governor/Senator Codey](#) had led an effort to create the Uncompensated Care Trust Fund at that point, which was literally going bankrupt and the need was so much greater, and there was just a confluence of issues, which is what created the first Healthcare Commission-- not the first but the Healthcare Commission of the Florio administration that led to the landmark restructuring of the individual health-insurance market, the small-group health-insurance market. We did loan redemption for physicians in underserved areas. We did the licensure of nurse practitioners and physician assistants to be able to provide more primary-care services.

I mean there was just a flurry of things that came out of the Florio administration and as I look back many of those tenets were the things that President Obama used as part of the foundation of the ACA-- of the Accountable Care Act to restructure the markets that we now face today. And it's just interesting to see all those struggles and battles and things that we went through and then some 30 years later see them as the foundation of the framework in some part for what I think and-- will go on to show as a major solution to many of the issues that the uninsured have faced in the United States.

Rick Sinding: For the first six months of the administration, all the focus was on first automobile insurance, then assault weapons, then the Quality Education Act and then taxes. Those certainly dominated the public view of what was going on in the administration but you're talking now about a whole bunch of other issues that may have made it into a handful of newspapers or certainly into the trade press that's dealing in healthcare but not a whole lot of public attention being paid to those issues if I'm not mistaken.

Amy Mansue: Yes, but that goes back to where I started, which is running government is really serious business, and so while you're looking over here at the shiny object there are literally tens and thousands of people every day who come to work to care for our most vulnerable and do in large measure work that never gets seen but makes a difference in people's lives.

Rick Sinding: Did it become progressively more difficult after those first six months to get legislators to buy into the ideas that you were trying to get going? Was the blowback from the first six months serious enough so that you found yourself having to struggle to get the kind of cooperation that you would have gotten very early on in the administration?

Amy Mansue: Yes. Look, it was bad. I mean there was no joy in Mudville for sure and it was fed by the public sentiment around how angry everyone was on a whole host of issues. I mean look, I could live to be a hundred and I'll never forget that day the NRA was out there and those rocks came through the windows and just the venom that people had on the issue and it was frightening; I mean those were frightening times but the louder people got the more undaunted he was. And so if you couldn't man up and stand with him then you should leave and he was pretty clear about that not directly, but the only person who was more clear about that was Brenda [Bacon]. Yes. We had a job to do and we had come to make a significant difference in healthcare and we weren't leaving until we did, and so while yes, all of those things were true they-- it was "And so what?" We knew what the crisis was. We knew that the individual insurance market was literally going to fail. We had one carrier left in that market. It was in a death spiral. Literally, the only people who were insured were the sickest people so the premiums continued to go up. It was an unsustainable situation and at the same time small employers had found themselves unable to buy insurance, literally being locked out of the market. So yes, you guys were over there doing auto insurance but there was a whole bunch of work going on trying to figure out how to put together these pieces in a way that could come out the end of the day with at least something to start with that you knew you would compromise from.

Rick Sinding: What framework came out of that?

Amy Mansue: So the Blue Ribbon Commission, which probably is one of dozens that have happened over the course of governors, it came with this-- what-- I can't remember how many pages; I can see the book as clear as day but let's say it was 500 pages with a position and a framework under each of those positions after a year worth of work and then that then fed into the Healthcare Reform Act that then we literally took through gaining sponsors, gaining-- negotiating with the senate and the assembly to try and find the right bill so it—

Rick Sinding: Did you staff that Blue Ribbon Commission?

Amy Mansue: Yes, I did.

Rick Sinding: Was there clear direction from the governor's office about where you wanted it to go?

Amy Mansue: Oh, yes. I mean come on; it was Jim Florio. <laughter> Whether we got there or not was a different issue but oh, yes, you know what your parameters were. I mean other issues would come up along the way that sort of were new to us but-- and the staff-- it was Sonia Delgado from Senator Codey's office, myself and then Kelly Ganges from the Assembly, and we staffed that body and then worked with the members to try and find the right framework to get ourselves a piece of legislation and we did.

Rick Sinding: When did that legislation get enacted?

Amy Mansue: The bill passed June of '92 and enacted-- and signed right after the budget and then the implementation started in the two years following. I think my timing is correct.

Rick Sinding: It got adopted in the session where the Republicans had a veto-proof majority. That must have taken some doing.

Amy Mansue: I'm hoping my dates are right but I'm pretty certain they are. Yes. I think we brought people along. Actually, you know what; it was signed in '91 and then we made modifications in '92 to address some of the cleanup, again which I would argue-- fast forward on a federal level today-- if we had made-- if we had had a situation where you could make cleanup around the ACA people wouldn't be as crazed about it as they are but then—

Rick Sinding: Was there significant opposition?

Amy Mansue: Oh, yes; it was terrible. One of the business associations, New Jersey Business and Industry, was with us all along. They were going to help us along with a payroll tax that would have funded the individual insurance market and we literally had the deal up until the last minute and six days out they walked away

from the table and it was brutal. And so we ended up-- not unlike the federal level did a party line vote in the deep of the night, Democrats-- held the Democrats and I think one or two Republican votes and actually that was what [Republican Assemblyman] Dick Kamin said...It was ten thirty or eleven o'clock at night and we had finally gotten everybody to the vote and they called the question and we knew we had the votes to get out a committee and he's banging his fist on the table, "In the dark of the night, you're putting this legislation through," and then that was the night that Betsy Ryan, who now is president of the Hospital Association, and I almost got shot. I think that was the night because we-- Brenda had said to us, "You go back in through my office" and so we came in through the back hall not understanding that the-- I think this is the right story-- that when we went in through the back hallway and opened the door we set off all the security alarms without the alarm going off, the silent alarms, so as we came up to go up the back stairway by the deputy chief's office the troopers were coming down thinking that they had an intruder but fortunately nobody got shot...but it was one of those "Oh, my goodness. How did we get ourselves into this story?"

Rick Sinding: That did evidently occur before the Republicans took control of the--

Amy Mansue: Yes, it must have. Yes, '91 then.

Rick Sinding: --but the Republicans did not undo it--

Amy Mansue: Yes. They made some modifications but nothing major. At the end of the day, you had to do something. Again so the history repeats itself, right. It's not unlike the situation that we're in. You can complain about how the Affordable Care Act wasn't the right thing to do and the President did it the wrong way and all of those things, but at the end of the day if you look at the charity-care dollars in New Jersey we have more people insured by Medicaid, we have a stable system more or less, and we have seen the dollars in reference to what the state has to put up go down from a charity-care perspective and people actually have real insurance. They may not be perfect but they do solve problems.

Rick Sinding: One of the things that Jim Florio seems to be most proud of is that in that second two-year period when the Republicans had a veto-proof majority Senator Wayne Bryant introduced a welfare-reform package that was adopted. Were you involved in putting that together?

Amy Mansue: I will say that Brenda did that on her own. It was her passion and she too was a social worker who actually saw what happened in Camden when payday came that-- I can remember Mother's Day is what it used to be called, the first day of the month-- and people would line up to get their checks and she saw the perversion that happened in the system by some of the policies, that the welfare laws encouraged people to not actually go pursue jobs and do those things,

and she and Senator Bryant that was their passion. They took that on themselves and actually as you know ended up going to D.C. and served as the national framework for President Clinton's reforms.

Rick Sinding: Right. At what point did you move over to [the Department of] Human Services and why?

Amy Mansue: So Brenda left at the end of '92-- I believe that's correct-- and then at that point the policy office re-shifted and there was an opportunity to go over to Human Services and so I did that in '93 but not before she took Betsy Ryan and I to D.C. with her to serve on the Clinton transition team. She was the member and we staffed her to do the human-service legwork on the transition books. It was really an exciting time and really-- and I remember Brenda's office was right next to Sally Ride because she was doing the work on NASA obviously so it was a really-- again just a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and just really being in the right place at the right time.

Rick Sinding: Was welfare reform one of the key points that you were pushing for the incoming Clinton administration?

Amy Mansue: And the restructure of the health-insurance system and really looking at Medicaid and Medicare and the things that you could-- that we learned from our time in New Jersey that could have been applied at the federal level to really make things much different and much better for states in how they worked.

Rick Sinding: Now Human Services, this enormous agency of state government, I think [Bill Waldman](#) had been the deputy commissioner for a million years and then moved up to become--

Amy Mansue: Commissioner.

Rick Sinding: --commissioner so you had some pretty big shoes to fill when you came in as deputy but of course they were his shoes and he was the commissioner.

Amy Mansue: Yes. I mean first of all he's just an amazing human being and a really wonderful mentor. I had under me Medicaid, the Divisions of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, which is my passion and where I spent a great deal of time, the then Office of Education as well as the Commission on the Blind, and it was really-- and it was a big portfolio, some would argue too big for a 29-year-old, but it was a very humbling experience to see the work that those staff did day in and day out, especially those who were caring for the folks that lived in the institutions then.

Rick Sinding: This was a major transition for you from staff to administrator. How difficult is that to do? I've often wondered. A lot of people particularly in government who start out on a congressional staff, a legislative staff, a gubernatorial staff and then very suddenly get placed into a position where tens of millions of dollars' worth of programs are reporting to you. How do you make that transition?

Amy Mansue: Yes. I would say two things-- I would-- or three things. God rest his soul, [Ray Bramucci](#) who was then the Commissioner of Labor, would say to me, "Mansue, you understand that you're not on the B-team. Right?" I'd say, "Commissioner, what's the B-team?" "Be here when you get there and be here when you're gone" and those are the people that come in every single day and actually run the place no matter who sits at the top." Bill Waldman would say, "You understand that if I was gone for six months probably by the sixth month and one-- first day they would actually notice I was gone but otherwise the place would just keep on running" and there is something to be said for that. Actually trying to make change within that departmental structure, any departmental structure, because of that layer of both the work that they get done-- the important work that they get done but as well as the entrenchment is no easy task. And I would also say that I was blessed and have been blessed with parents who never let me believe my own stuff so I was really clear about what I didn't know and I was-- I-- it was-- I tried and hoped to be very respectful for the folks that did that work every single day in and out. And I knew what the governor wanted done, I knew what we needed to do to complete the work that we'd already started, but there was also really-- there were a thousand things that happened every day that had nothing to do with what's on a governor's agenda, any governor, and you needed to make sure that you gave the support to the people that were there to get that done.

Rick Sinding: Fighting fires seems to be sort of the main activity that assistant commissioners, deputy commissioners, commissioners are doing on a day-to-day basis.

Amy Mansue: Yes. I mean look, the stuff that happens every day-- again I can't even begin to tell you just the craziness, the-- especially within the facilities, whether it was the Division of Mental Health or the Division of Developmental Disabilities within the institutions. I mean they're little villages where people live day in and day out and they have sort of an ethos about them, and keeping people safe in those environments, staff as well as patients that's no minor feat and we do it like it's just a matter of course but it's a really big deal. I remember at that time we had sheltered workshops where people with disabilities would come each day and they'd do an activity and at that point there was some effort to move people with disabilities to work but it was a relatively nascent thing-- a relatively new thing. And so these other sheltered workshops where you'd give people tasks like

putting buttons in a bag and doing those things and at the end of the day staff would dump out all the bags so they would be able to do them the next day and-- I don't know-- every few months somebody would lose their minds, a patient, and they'd become violent and they would tip over the bags and tip over the things and the staff would say-- get-- and we'd get these incident reports and hopefully nobody was harmed. And I would read these things and I'd think "If I had to do this all day and then you dumped it out at the end of the day, I'd be throwing stuff too. I mean there'd be no way." It didn't make sense to me but that was just part of the process, right, and we were trying to give people meaningful work and while I would argue whether it was meaningful or not it filled people's days and—

Rick Sinding: Did you change that?

Amy Mansue: We did. We put more people into supportive work and we tried to create meaningful work and tried to identify in their IHP, which was an individual plan that controlled their day, what was important to them so not everybody had to do the same thing, but- you're still responsible for thousands of lives... You may remember the year, I won't, but one year there was a possibility that the state was going to strike and we were doing strike plans and we were trying to figure out if CWA and ASPE walked out what would happen. And quite candidly when we did all of the math and looked at the machinations and tried to figure out how many managers would come in and actually be able to run things, what we found was that with the CWA staff, which was really more-- not totally but largely behind-the-desk folks, we could last for a few weeks. We could only last for 24 hours without the ASPE staff and the National Guard would have to come in because those were the people that staffed the institutions and those were the people that made \$25,000 a year. And when we went back to the table I looked at Brenda and I said, "We need to settle with ASPE whatever it takes. You do what you want with CWA at the end of the day but we can't actually keep people safe without them."

Rick Sinding: Let me take you back to when you were in the governor's office because there's one thing that you said that sort of jogged a memory. There was some grumbling in the governor's office staff about the fact that for at least the first six months and probably for the first year there were a handful of people-- Brenda was one of them, Carl Van Horn another, Doug Berman certainly and I guess [Steve Perskie](#) for at least the first few months-- who reserved unto themselves the right to make all the decisions and that only the issues that they wanted to deal with ever got to the level of having a decision made. Did you by virtue of the fact that you had pretty much unfettered access to Brenda feel as though your issues were being heard and your decisions were made or did you share some of that frustration?

Amy Mansue: I was 25. I didn't have any decisions <laughs> that really were mine.

Rick Sinding: But there were issues that were coming to you on a daily basis that you must have said, "Hey, somebody's got to make a decision about this" and you would bring it to Brenda and the question is were decisions made on those; were they deferred; were you frustrated; were you satisfied? You were 25.

Amy Mansue: Right, and so I was frustrated all the time. Right? Yes. Maybe this is one that history's been kind because what I remember is the flood of issues. It was just trying to keep above water with all of the things that were going on and you're right. I guess there were things that we thought were important but again you're only in your piece of the world; you don't have a context for the larger issues that are being faced like the state budget, like some of those things that we were just-- I did-- I knew my piece of it but I didn't understand how it fit into the larger context. I mean what I really remember the most was sort of the Camden County circle where you sort of had to have that zip code in order to get in. And again I just was riding the coattails of Brenda so I didn't find that and I also had lots of friends from the congressional district so I was able to work it a couple different ways.

Rick Sinding: Did you feel as though you had a personal relationship with the governor because of having worked for him in the congressional staff?

Amy Mansue: Yes.

Rick Sinding: Do you think that made a difference in terms of the influence you had?

Amy Mansue: No. <laughs> Not one bit. I mean look. As you've said already, this is-- what the governor cared about was hard work and he didn't have personal relationships-- I mean in this context-- I mean I had the privilege to work for another governor [James McGreevey] who did have a lot of personal relationships and those people clearly that had personal relationships with him interacted much differently than those of us that came on later, but that's not how Florio worked; this just wasn't his thing. His thing was "Do you have a job? Do you get the job done? If so, then you add value to my team and I want you here. If not, then that's okay too."

Rick Sinding: Was his management style as governor essentially the same as his management style as congressman?

Amy Mansue: Yes. You mean the blue pen with circles around it? <laughs>

Rick Sinding: The way you mentioned it was that he had a sense of what he wanted to have done and that was clearly enumerated but at the same time he wanted to have--

Amy Mansue: Yes.

Rick Sinding: We haven't talked about the extent to which he wanted to have input from people in terms of his own decision-making.

Amy Mansue: Yes. I mean he wanted to understand the issues and it wasn't a cursory understanding of the issues; it was a "I want to see the bill. I want to see the detail" and he would read it. I mean he would peruse it and he would find things within it that quite frankly we had either missed or not given the same weight to that he had.

Rick Sinding: You wrote a lot of memos.

Amy Mansue: You know what? I think that my role more than any other was I gathered a lot of facts, not only did the policy stuff but who's where on what issue; what can they be moved on; what matters to them; can we find a way to work that in. That's as much of the deep policy stuff that Brenda and Carl were doing is I would say I was on the ground trying to get a sense of where the constituents were in order to bring people together.

Rick Sinding: When you went to Human Services what were your marching orders?

Amy Mansue: Don't let anything bad happen.

Rick Sinding: That sounds very familiar.

Amy Mansue: Yes. I mean look. We knew we were going to be in the fight of our lives to try and get reelection and we knew that the reelection was critical in order to fulfill some of the things that we had started because we didn't get everything done that we had hoped to do although we certainly did a lot in retrospect, but the issue-- the-- at that point 101.5 and the "Dump Florio" was still out there and still palpable and the last thing you want is anything bad to happen and Human Services was a place where lots of bad things can happen.

Rick Sinding: Did anything truly bad happen during the time that you were there that rose to the level of embarrassing the governor?

Amy Mansue: No.

Rick Sinding: Where were you on election night 1993?

Amy Mansue: I was in-- I guess it was the Hilton, whatever the big hotel was. I had spent the day in Ocean Township actually down in Monmouth County doing GOTV and then ended up at the Hilton to hear the tally.

Rick Sinding: Did you leave government before the election?

Amy Mansue: No. I just did lots of nights, lots of weekends. My ex-husband called it the night of the Wailing Wall. He said it was like being at a mass funeral where all of you were crying because it was clear at that point where we were; even though it was close we knew. We had a sense of what was on the ground and it was painful; I mean it was absolutely painful. Yes.

Rick Sinding: Had you given any thought to what you were going to do after?

Amy Mansue: Not a freaking clue. I was absolutely convinced that somehow-- which is why as we sit here today this election that we're facing now is so frightening to me because I feel that same tenor in the water that there are a group of who can't imagine that anything will happen except one candidate winning and then there are a whole bunch of people who are so angry at the establishment and everything that that person stands for that they don't really care who they're voting for.

Rick Sinding: I'm sure, however, that you don't want to put Christie Whitman and Donald Trump in the same category--

Amy Mansue: No, of course not.

Rick Sinding: I just want to make that clear.

Amy Mansue: However, there were a lot of Whitman supporters who had been with us and felt betrayed by the governor on a host of issues and that was very difficult; that was very difficult to sit across from people who had been with you to watch them support someone else. Actually, I got a chance to watch Governor Whitman last night on TV talk about how difficult it is to participate in this election and she went on to I guess answer Kent Manahan's question to talk about the Libertarian Party, which I thought was such a sad state of affairs because this is somebody who really was at her point in her party a person that people turned to and really looked to for policy advice and now she's not in that same realm within the party and I think that's sad. [Governor Whitman subsequently announced that she will [vote for Hillary Clinton](#).]

Rick Sinding: Briefly, let's talk about what you did between Democratic administrations because you're going to come back again and we're going to talk a little bit about what you did for another governor. What did you do throughout the Whitman years?

Amy Mansue: Before we go there I would just say there's something that happens to you when you're in a department that you actually believe that you add so much value that you get to stay, and until the day I die I will not forget being

asked for my resignation and having to write that resignation letter and just the pain that I felt not from being out of a job but from not being part of that department. Even now it was palpable because you get embedded in a way where you really are trying to do good for the people of New Jersey. And when that new governor comes in and says, "You're out" I mean it's ridiculous because of course you know you can't be in because they've got a whole cadre of their own people but it really is-- it's a very difficult thing so that was a harsh-- a naïve moment I guess in my life but I-- a harsh reality and that's-- when transitions happen, I think nobody necessarily appreciates just how difficult that is.

Rick Sinding: Let's talk about that transition. You must have been fairly actively involved. Who oversaw the human-services transition for the Whitman administration? Do you recall?

Amy Mansue: I don't recall.

Rick Sinding: Were you involved with them--

Amy Mansue: Yes, feeding them—

Rick Sinding: Would they come to you and--

Amy Mansue: Yes. We were feeding them information. I mean Bill Waldman was - most likely stay on and—

Rick Sinding: But he didn't have any authority to name his deputies and assistants?

Amy Mansue: No, no, no, no, of course not, but he was the contact for the information and honestly you want to keep people like me away <laughs> because you're trying to position yourself with the new administration, and there was a-- look; there was a great excitement around Governor Whitman. Being a woman and having [Judy Shaw](#) as the chief of staff and all of that was a very, very exciting time for the people who were in it. And so in retrospect it was obvious that I wouldn't be one of the people who stayed.

Rick Sinding: Had you had a previous relationship with Judy or with [Hazel Gluck](#) or any of the others who were in that inner circle?

Amy Mansue: Yes. Judy and Hazel both were tremendously kind to me over-- during the Florio administration and we became very close friends and have since-- and have continued over the last 30 years.

Rick Sinding: Did that make the transition for you any easier?

Amy Mansue: I wouldn't say "easier" or "harder." I often say to Hazel that she stopped me from running into traffic more than once and for that I will be forever indebted because I was-- I guess I've always been headstrong; I didn't always see-- in my effort to get something done didn't always understand the full impact of it. And Hazel was one of those people who would say, "Hey, you. Come talk to me. Let me tell you what you're getting ready to open the door on."

Rick Sinding: You do a very good imitation of her.

Amy Mansue: <laughs> I love her to death and she's one of those people that the state of New Jersey is better for her having been in it for sure.

Rick Sinding: What did you do for this period after the transition?

Amy Mansue: So I went to work at HIP New Jersey, which is a nonprofit HMO, and I was there for eight years. It actually ended up teaching me a tremendously valuable lesson because HIP had the best customer-satisfaction ratings, the best quality scores in reference to healthcare, had great patient satisfaction, and because the business expanded too quickly and we got into markets that we didn't really understand fully the implication they went bankrupt. And that was actually a very difficult time during the-- I guess it was the Whitman-- end of the Whitman administration at that point where you lost a-- I would say a valuable asset, and as you fast-forward today if we had that health plan, which was a large-group practice model, it would have been perfect for doing some of the things around population health that are happening now. And so that was actually a very hard, difficult lesson that no matter how good all of those things are and how many members you have if you can't pay the bills it doesn't really matter.

Rick Sinding: You're out there now in the regulated community after being a regulator.

Amy Mansue: Correct.

Rick Sinding: You must have had a significant number of dealings with the Whitman administration from the point of view of somebody who had to deal with the regulatory system and had some interest in legislation so you're not a stranger to that activity.

Amy Mansue: Yes, but my role then was really running the business so while there was some interaction I worked under the president as basically a chief of staff, an assistant, so I was learning; that was her commitment. Vicki Wicks was the president at that point and her commitment to me was that somebody had opened the door for her and taught her the business and that she was going to return the favor, which again just shows you how lucky I've been throughout my

career. That's probably the one thing I should have said that I didn't say is I can trace back everything that's happened in every place I've been in my career to working for Jim Florio, and so therefore I trace it back to my time at Alabama...This opportunity that I got to do my graduate work there and work directly for him and then literally every job I've had he has either opened a door or helped close the deal. And I just can't even imagine that some kid who shows up on his doorstep having no relationship in south Jersey, having-- he didn't know me from Adam -- that he would give me such opportunity.

Rick Sinding: How did that opportunity manifest itself later on? Was it his personal intervention that caused you to go to work in the McGreevey administration or the fact that you had worked for Florio, which was a qualification?

Amy Mansue: Yes. I would say that it was a couple things. One, it was the opportunities he and Brenda gave me so I met Vicki Wicks because she was the chair of the Essential Health Services Commission, which was one of the commissions that was created as part of the Health Care Reform Act so I got to work directly with her; she knew who I was because of that. Brenda had given me a lot of latitude in that respect so I got to then develop that relationship that would lend itself to that. I go to HIP; HIP ends up going bankrupt. I end up going to HIP New York; I'm working out of New York. I get the call from Hazel Gluck who says, "What are you doing in New York? That's the silliest thing to do. You need to come back to New Jersey. You're a Jersey girl. You got to get back here." And she opened a door to go work at a for-profit, privately held company, Cablevision, and do contract work for them, run a region for them, and again—

Rick Sinding: That's not healthcare at all.

Amy Mansue: It's not healthcare at all but it gave me a segue back to New Jersey through somebody I'd met through the Florio administration, which was Hazel.

Rick Sinding: What do you think prompted Hazel Gluck to call you for that position? Do you have any idea? Did you ever talk to her about it? "Why me?"

Amy Mansue: Yes. Hazel represented them and I think she wanted somebody she could work with. No, I don't think I asked. I mean at that point-- now this is more detail than you want but-- I didn't even have cable. I didn't have a cable box <laughs> and it was ridiculous for me that I would be doing this job but I think they needed somebody who could work both sides of the aisle and could go to local communities and could negotiate contracts and figure out how to bring social-work skills again, right, bring people to the table, figure out who wins, who loses, how you make a deal. And so I ended up working with somebody at her firm. Paul Matarera was the mayor of North Brunswick and I—

Rick Sinding: And a Democrat.

Amy Mansue: --and I know from the Florio administration so again all these worlds collide and then I did that for a little while and then [Jim] McGreevey won [in 2001] and Gary Taffet, who was the chief of staff-- or was going to be the chief of staff called me and he's like "We are not hiring you" because all the HIP stuff had happened, right. We had gone bankrupt; the state sued. I was named in the suit; it was a big hot mess. Gary's like "You cannot work for us but we need somebody to help us set up the governor's office and you've done that before and we know you sort of and so go-- come in for six weeks and set up the governor's office and"--

Rick Sinding: You were the transition person setting up the governor's office.

Amy Mansue: I was a staffer on the-- sort of-- I think I was Dr. No, "No, you can't do that. No, that's ridiculous. No." That was my role and then I was supposed to go back.

Rick Sinding: That's interesting because you're doing this at a time when there was a governor's office but the governor's office was being run by the President of the Senate because Christie Whitman left a year earlier so Don DiFrancesco was the acting governor or governor--

Amy Mansue: Governor, yes.

Rick Sinding: I'm not sure exactly how that worked. How much of what was going on was being directed out of the governor's staff at that point and was that transition just like any other transition or did it differ because of the fact that the incumbent governor, the person who had been elected previously, was no longer in that seat?

Amy Mansue: Oh, no. Donnie was governor; I mean there are two ways about it. I mean he was-- he ran it and his staff-- he was engaged and no, there was no less of anything, and again that was helpful because we all had known each other and worked together when he was in the senate and so that-- all those things had helped, but yes, I was only supposed to be there for six weeks and then go back to Cablevision.

Rick Sinding: One of the things that transitions always involve is there's a transition director and there's a transition team and those teams go around and interview people in the various departments and they create these papers and submit the papers--

Amy Mansue: Yes. I didn't do any of that.

Rick Sinding: --somebody looks them over. You didn't do any of that.

Amy Mansue: I didn't do any of that, no. I was really working on the governor's office piece of the equation.

Rick Sinding: On how to set it up structurally?

Amy Mansue: Uh huh, structurally, who was going to be in it, who you needed, what the structure looked like, who was going to fill their-- fill it with that kind-- those kind of sort of administrative technical issues.

Rick Sinding: You were reporting to--

Amy Mansue: Gary.

Rick Sinding: You were making recommendations on who he should hire and how to structure the office?

Amy Mansue: Yes. With Governor McGreevey, he had so many people that he wanted to hire it was really about "This is the structure and this is what you could do with certain people if you chose to." It was not about—

Rick Sinding: You had names presented to you and had to figure out who's going to go into which box?

Amy Mansue: Yes, which is not uncommon, many of the governors-- because there are so many people that it takes to get you elected governor—

Rick Sinding: Jim Florio certainly had the same. Carl Van Horn was his policy guru and Brenda was his healthcare person and so I think there was a fair amount of that in any administration. You went in there having been told there's no job for you.

Amy Mansue: No, absolutely, which was fine; it was actually pretty liberating because then I could just tell them what I thought and didn't have to worry about it.

Rick Sinding: And go back to Cablevision? Was that your plan?

Amy Mansue: That was absolutely the plan. That was Cablevision's plan too.

Rick Sinding: What happened?

Amy Mansue: I don't know... Somewhere in the process Taffet looked at me and he said, "You know you can't go back. Right? You know you have to stay"...

Rick Sinding: --oh, wow.

Amy Mansue: Yes, and it-- I-- it was not my intent because at that point it would have been-- it wasn't healthcare, it wasn't policy, it would have been pure deputy chief of staff-type appointments and scheduling and that kind of craziness so-- and I didn't-- that was not in my thought process at all but it's—

Rick Sinding: But you did it.

Amy Mansue: I did it. I did it for Gary for 12 months and then Jamie came in-- Jamie Fox came in and I stayed for six months thereafter and then I—

Rick Sinding: Jamie had been deputy chief of staff in the Florio administration--

Amy Mansue: Right. He had helped—

Rick Sinding: --so you're doing the job that he had done--

Amy Mansue: Different portions of it. He had different things reporting to him. Part of it but yes and obviously the McGreevey administration was very different than the Florio administration.

Rick Sinding: In what way? Tell us some fundamental differences.

Amy Mansue: McGreevey was all about the outside, right, all about pressing the flesh, all about the parades, all about the flag raisings, all about the constituents, not that he didn't do policy because he certainly did and did a lot of it but the frenetic-ness of it was just the-- I can't even begin to describe the amount of time and energy and just events, pure, unadulterated events every moment of every day.

Rick Sinding: Scheduling must have been a nightmare.

Amy Mansue: Right. I remember working very hard during the-- and then look. I was older, life had come and gone in some cases, and I remember working hard during the Florio administration but not like McGreevey; I mean not the constant pace and just one after another after another after another. And look, I was in a very different role so maybe it was that way under Florio and I just didn't see that.

Rick Sinding: Were you dealing with the agencies as well?

Amy Mansue: It evolved into the agency work later but not initially. I was just on the sort of senior team trying to do appointments work and staff those type of-- find the right people for those types of jobs and—

Rick Sinding: But your heart must have still been in healthcare and human services.

Amy Mansue: Sure, but honestly there wasn't time to do those things. I mean it was just a very different animal is the only way I can describe it.

Rick Sinding: Having made the move from HIP to Cablevision and you're no longer in healthcare, now you're in the cable-television field, and then going into the governor's office where you're in an administrative capacity, not dealing with healthcare, did it ever occur to you that that's the direction that your profession would take or did you see yourself at that point ready to think about whether you would ultimately be back in healthcare or whether you would be going in a different direction?

Amy Mansue: Yes. When you're young you say, "This is how my life is going to run."

Rick Sinding: Yes, but you're not as young anymore as you were the first time around.

Amy Mansue: No, but that's my point is you have a thought process about how you're going to go through life and what opportunities are going to come and they're going to come in a straight path and they don't, right, and life doesn't happen as you think it would. You love and you divorce and you end up in different places than you thought you would be and so I don't know that I could say that I had a plan at that point to be frank. I knew that I didn't like commuting into the city. I knew that being at Cablevision certainly was a tremendous opportunity. We did very well when negotiating contracts, Paul Matacera and I, and with my bonus I was able to set up a scholarship at Alabama for students to do their graduate work in D.C. because the chance to have somebody else have the experience I had and so that door that then got opened could be opened for others. And so I think at that point in my life it wasn't really a "Where is this taking me?" It was "You know what. This is a great place to do some service again." Still I love government. In my heart of hearts, I believed so much that government really was there to help people. I don't believe that anymore unfortunately, not today.

Rick Sinding: You don't believe the government is there to help people or you don't believe that the people who are running government are there to help people?

Amy Mansue: I don't believe that the people who are in government that want to help people can actually do it without a great effort. I went on to work at a children's hospital and my philosophic—

Rick Sinding: Don't be modest. You went on to run a children's hospital.

Amy Mansue: But my philosophic approach really was that you bring issues to government and you try and solve problems together and then you make it better

for everybody. You can't bring issues to government anymore and make it better without a risk that you end up playing gotcha. There isn't a level of partnership that can happen in the same way and not because of the people; it's because of the environment. Everybody is so fearful of being in a situation where they're going to be accused of doing something inappropriate or wrong that it creates a hostility between those being regulated and the regulators that really is damaging in every aspect. You see it between the government and business community. I mean Lieutenant Governor Guadagno for all of the unbelievable work she's done to try and bridge those gaps I still think that except for those businesses that are looking to have EDA help them either come in or stay, in large measure people don't see government as the place they go for solutions.

Rick Sinding: Now you're speaking from your role as chair of the board of the chamber of commerce.

Amy Mansue: Yes, and what a kick that is, right, going from working for Congressman Florio to sitting as the chair of the state chamber. Who'd a thunk, right?

Rick Sinding: Yes, there's a certain irony there.

Amy Mansue: Yes, the second woman. Anne Estabrook was the first and I'm probably the only Democrat. I don't know.

Rick Sinding: The first nonprofit.

Amy Mansue: The first nonprofit, yes.

Rick Sinding: I have one more question about the McGreevey administration, maybe two. You talked about how he was more of a press-the-flesh guy and more out there. Florio may have preferred a little more to be in the office dealing with memos, dealing with policy. How about their management styles? How did they differ in terms of the way in which they basically ran the governor's office and ran the government?

Amy Mansue: McGreevey was very engaged in the people, right, and who was doing what and what we were doing and he had some very key initiatives about things that were critically important that he'll never get credit for, the restructuring of the DMV and making sure every first-grader can read and the whole move around E-ZPass and I mean things-- the thing I would say that was most different-- and I know I'm not answering your question about management but the thing I would say was most different is McGreevey was a mayor, right, so as a mayor he wanted to know what was going on, is the trash being picked up? What's happening

with the roads? He did the policy but it was about the operation of government that really drove a lot of what we focused on.

Florio was about the policy, right, "I want to set the policy framework and then I want the cabinet officers to implement that policy" and it's inherent in what they do that they would do the other thing, but McGreevey was driven by "Let's make sure that those other things work," right. And I don't know that those were management styles but I think it was how they philosophically saw the office that then dictated how everything else happened. So neither good nor bad, just a different philosophic perspective about how it's motivated and structured.

Rick Sinding: Were you in the McGreevey administration up to the point where he resigned?

Amy Mansue: No, I left before that; I left in September of 2003.

Rick Sinding: Why?

Amy Mansue: So I had known that I probably-- it was time for me to leave the McGreevey administration and I started looking for a job. I had said to Harvey Holzberg, who I'd met through the Florio administration who was then the president of Robert Wood Johnson Health System, "I'm looking and just want you to know. Here's my resume," blah blah blah, and probably a month went by and he called me and he said, "Look. There's this job open at Children's Specialized Hospital, which is the largest pediatric rehab hospital in the country. You will not get this job. We want somebody who's run a children's hospital before. Obviously, you're not qualified for that but there's this big search firm that they've hired out of Philadelphia. They only do health-- or primarily do healthcare work. You should put your resume in with them and that way at least you'll get known to the headhunter and they can hook you up with somebody else," true story. <laughs> I connect with the headhunter; we agree to meet at Ponzio's in Cherry Hill, a diner. She's sitting at the table. I walk in. She takes one look at me and she has a visceral-- literally a visceral reaction to me. The hair goes up on the back of her neck; her face flushes. I mean look. There are plenty of people who don't like me because I've done things wrong but you don't not get to like me because you're seeing me for the first time. And it was the coldest, meanest interview that I have ever been on and I thought babe, you don't even know me; you don't get to block me without knowing me. So I made it my business that I would make sure I would get in that top five to get before the board not because I wanted the job but because I wanted to prove her wrong.

Rick Sinding: How did you do that?

Amy Mansue: Good old-fashioned politics, who was on the board, who did I know, who-- what-- basic lobbying 101, and I learned everything I could about that hospital, and again I-- Harvey had already told me the rules; I wasn't going to get the job. I was fine with that but I was just so angry at her lack of fairness or my perception of her lack of fairness. So then I get there. I make the top three. I know that there were people pulling for me and the other two candidates had experience that I didn't have but the organization had lost its CEO, he had passed away very suddenly, had a massive heart attack, and when I went in for the full day of interview with staff social work 101. This was not an organization that needed to be told what they did wrong; it was an organization that was in mourning. I knew I didn't know anything about running a children's hospital but I knew how to get stuff done and I knew how to bring out the best in people and I knew how to be a partner, and at the end of the day-- I tell people this story all the time-- I think the staff said, "We want her because she doesn't know what the freak she's doing" and 13 years later it was a great run.

Rick Sinding: What happened to the headhunter? Do you have any idea?

Amy Mansue: I don't care. I never saw her again.

Rick Sinding: You ran the children's hospital for 13 years and then it became absorbed into this new Robert Wood Johnson/Barnabas Health System that now sort of runs the whole state pretty much.

Amy Mansue: Yes. I don't like the word "absorbed" but our parent companies merged; Robert Wood Johnson Health System and the Barnabas Health System become the Robert Wood Johnson/Barnabas Health System which, as you point out, is the largest health system in the state of New Jersey. For an organization like Children's Specialized, which is a pediatric rehab hospital, the chance to be part of a system that now has 25,000 births every year is a real opportunity. We know at Children's Specialized that if you have the chance to identify kids who may have a developmental delay before the age of three you will change the course of their life. They will have an opportunity to learn and live in an entirely different way and so the chance to be part of this system and really integrate care at every level is just something that is very rare and we're very excited about all the things that can happen. One of the consultants said to me not too long ago, "It's one thing to be the biggest. The question is what you do with that strength and if you really leverage it to do what Barry Ostrowsky" who was the president of the system "has talked about, which is to improve the health of New Jersey citizens, not to just care for them in hospitals but really transform health when you're now serving 2.1 million of the 8.2 million people that's a chance to make a difference in a really critical way" and for a kid from Plainsboro, New Jersey, it's not a bad—

Rick Sinding: By way of Alabama and Washington.

Amy Mansue: Yes, but at the end of the day my colleagues will tell you I'm a Jersey girl. I can put on the Alabama charm when I have to; it just doesn't last very long <laughs> and at the end of the day what I do care about is making sure that we leave the state in a better place than we found it and that's part of what the Florio legacy is about.

Rick Sinding: I've got to leave it there; I can't think of a way to top that except maybe to ask is there anything that I should have asked you that I didn't or anything additionally that you want to leave us with?

Amy Mansue: No, I think that you covered it but I think I would be remiss if I did not say that it really should not be lost on anybody and especially those students who are coming up - and which this great building teaches some of the best and brightest - that that one interaction, that one chance to work for somebody maybe when you don't have the title or maybe when you don't make as much money as you think you should-- I mean Jim Florio paid me \$13,000 as a graduate student and really thought he was doing me a favor-- it can change the course of your life. And so I know the title and power and all those things influence people when they make that first decision especially with their first job, but sometimes taking an opportunity to listen to your gut and be with somebody who has a moral compass that could really impact how you live your life it's worth it; it's worth the role.

Rick Sinding: Amy, thanks very much.

Amy Mansue: Thanks, Rick. It's been a pleasure.