

*Tri County Care Management Organization's interview with Senator Kip Bateman.*

*TCCMO: Other than your family, who else influenced your decision to become involved in politics?*

KB: It's interesting. Women in my life have played a very important role. Years ago, I worked for Congresswoman Millicent Fenwick, who is just an incredible congresswoman, an incredible person, and I did an internship in her office then I ran her congressional re-election campaign. I was also her driver! The stories that she used to tell were fascinating. She played a big part in my career. And then later on in life, Christie Todd Whitman, because I basically followed her to the freeholder board. And then when she ran for Governor, I ran for the Assembly. So those two women had a lot to do with my career. And they were very instrumental in helping me along the way.

*TCCMO: What accomplishment are you most proud of during your time of service?*

KB: It's really hard to point to one particular accomplishment, but I was very proud of my environmental record, and I was able to do many good things in a bipartisan manner, primarily with Senator Smith. And the one that I think will be legacy is the constitutional amendment for permanent funding for open space, farmland preservation, historic preservation and blue acres. Because to me and to everyone, the environment is so important. And this is a permanent funding source into perpetuity. So it wasn't easy, we had we tried for a number of years different scenarios, and we finally got it passed. And actually it passed in 21 counties by a 2:1 margin.

*TCCMO: Do you know how many bills you sponsored or co-sponsored?*

KB: In 28 years? Yeah, hundreds. Many to do with the environment and early on, a lot of banking bills. When I was chairman of the Banking Insurance Committee, a lot of business-related bills. But then I got to the Senate, primarily my focus was on the environment.

*TCCMO: Do you feel like are there any contribution that you can point to in the areas of mental health, substance use, or youth services that you're proud of?*

KB: Well, you know, for years, I was on the Youth Services Commission (in Somerset County) and I was able to get increased funding for that, and a lot of that money went to good causes – mental health and other causes, senior citizens. I also did some bills on the mental health parity issue. I realized how important those services are to the individuals, so I tried, when possible, to get increased funding for those programs.

*TCCMO: Was there an event that stands out in your head as something that you were grateful to participate in during your years of service?*

KB: Well, I was able to meet many of the presidents of the United States. They were all special.

But when the Pope came with President Clinton. And then I was also a delegate to the National Republican Convention. That was exciting.

*TCCMO: What do you think was one of the biggest challenges that you had to overcome in your years of public service?*

KB: I think the biggest challenge was when we (Republicans) lost the redistricting about 20 some years ago, and we went from majority to minority basically overnight. So then instead of being in charge, I was in the minority and so I really had to develop relationships with the other side of the fence, and that was the biggest challenge. When I first went down there, my dad said, "You make sure you make friends on both sides of the aisle, because you're not always going to be in the majority." And he was certainly right on that. And so, when I was chairman of the Banking Insurance Committee, I did. I did a number of bills with Democrats, and I developed relationships, which really helped me later on in life because when we went in the minority, they remembered, and they were very kind to me, and I was able to put together some very significant bipartisan legislation because of my relationship.

*TCCMO: How would you define your leadership/governing style?*

KB: I'm one who prefers not to fight, but to compromise and to again build relationships, friendships. I'm not a big, you know, bomb thrower, and I never would attack anybody personally because we're just doing what they think is right. I think I was a consensus builder. And I think because of that, I was successful in a lot of my legislation. So, you know, I think that goes a long way in being an effective elected official. And I think it certainly has helped me throughout the years.

*TCCMO: Now that you've left public office, in what ways will you still support the community?*

KB: Yeah, I'm very active. I'm a charter member of the Rotary Club. I'm very active in my church, very active in the food bank. And one thing that our Rotary Club does every week is we have a soup kitchen in the Presbyterian Church, where we cook and distribute meals to roughly about 100 people every week. I'm still active with a lot of my volunteer positions like Midland Board and Rotary, and I'm an Elk. I try to give back where I can to the community, so I'm going to be very busy still doing it.

*TCCMO: What advice would you give to youth (like the youth that we serve), who might want to become involved in their communities?*

KB: Well, to get involved, I mean, because really the future is going to be theirs, they're going to be responsible. The sooner they get involved, it's better to be inside the tent making decisions than outside looking in. And I think it's very rewarding to get involved in volunteer efforts and community organizations, you feel good about yourself. Sometimes I look around at some of these organizations and, unfortunately, it's more older people than younger people, and that's a concern. And you know, you want to be able to look back and say, "I hope I made a small

difference.” And I think that the youth of this state and this country, I mean, they have a lot of challenges ahead of them, but the sooner they get involved, the better for everybody involved.