

Shaun Illingworth: This begins the second oral history interview with Upendra Chivukula, on November 5, 2019, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth. Thank you very much for coming back.

Upendra Chivukula: Thank you, Shaun.

SI: It's Election Day, so it's the one day you are not busy. [laughter]

UC: That's right, yes.

SI: In this session, we are going to talk about your career in politics, which I believe began in the mid-'90s.

UC: Yes.

SI: Your first appointment was on the Social Work Board, correct? [Editor's Note: This is referring to the New Jersey State Board of Social Work Examiners, which oversees the licensure and standards of social workers in the state.]

UC: Right.

SI: Yes. Before talking about that, in general, when did you start thinking about public service or getting involved in politics?

UC: When I was working for AT&T Bell Labs, we had a large South Asian population. I think I mentioned earlier that we created an Indian Subcontinent Club trying to organize people, because there were issues with respect to affirmative action. AT&T had a group called the AAAA, Affirmative Action for Asian Americans. That was the group. Some of the challenges we were facing at that time is that many of us came in as students. Some of them came on work visas. We really did not know how to advance our careers. We were very good at our technical work, but to advance to management, you needed certain skills. We couldn't figure it out. Through this club, we started telling people that we have to speak up. You don't need to be aggressive, but we have to be assertive. We have to participate. When you have group meetings, people would just wait for their turn, which never came. In this society, everybody wants to put their ideas forward and wanted to show that they're good at what they're doing. I think that's one of the things about the Indian Subcontinent Club.

I was also involved in an organization called Indian American Forum for Political Education, where we were tackling issues. Those issues are still there. One is with respect to racial bias and discrimination and also immigration issues and then Ivy League college admissions, which is still floating around. Recently at Harvard, there was a decision that was made. Then, small minority and women-owned business enterprises at that time. Now, subsequently, other things started to join, like veterans and all that. How do you get a piece of the pie?

SI: Yes.

UC: That's the whole idea. I used to be a secretary of the New Jersey chapter. I was very active in writing white papers and submitting to congressmen and senators in New Jersey. We used to have meetings in Washington, D.C. at the Capitol Hill. We used to meet a lot of the congressmen and the senators. That's how I started doing that.

In 1992, when we had the presidential election going on, Clinton-Gore were the contestants on the Democratic side. I really got involved in terms of trying to get the Indian American population, South Asian population, to participate in the election. I was doing voter registration and various things. That's where I really got into mainstream politics. Of course, before I got into mainstream politics, we had to build the bridges, trying to get out to the community to understand the importance of political engagement and exercising their right to vote. Many of them were not citizens. I remember one time I sat at a temple in Bridgewater. I sat for four hours. I registered one person.

SI: Oh.

UC: Then, they said, "Why don't you go to an evening program?" We had these dance programs during the month of October called Navaratri programs. I went there at night. You had to go there at ten o'clock. People start coming in. There were people coming from New York and New Jersey. I spent almost six hours, and I registered two. It was very difficult. You're talking about 1992.

SI: Wow.

UC: It was so difficult. Things have changed over a period of time. That really gave me an idea of the challenges that we faced as a community. A lot of people had green cards, but they didn't have the citizenship. The people who had citizenship, they were not registered to vote. I wanted to increase the number. That's how I started, in 1992, in the campaign for Somerset County. There were not that many Democrats at that time. I was the vice chair for the South Asian community for the Clinton-Gore campaign. That helped me.

Then, in 1992, I became a part of the Somerset County Democratic Party. Then, the county chair suggested that I join the local Democratic Club in Franklin Township. Well, I joined. They were a very small group of people. The elections in Franklin were held in the month of May, which is a non-partisan election. By the end of the elections, the Democrats were used to losing, they lost, and then would think about, "Another year went by. We haven't made any progress." I was listening to that.

When I joined the Democratic Club, all the positions were taken. This was a small group. There was one position called a recording secretary. It was available. They said, "You have to become the recording secretary because you have a computer." So, I became the recording secretary. I was basically writing meeting minutes and reporting it. I attended all the meetings. That was in '92. In '93, actually, what happened was the chairman of the Democratic Party in Franklin Township quit because he lost the election. All the eyes were looking at me to become the chairman. I said, "Look, I don't know anything about politics. I'm learning. I need some time." They elected me in absentia the following Monday. I just came a few minutes late. I learned my

lesson not to go late. [laughter] So, they were clapping and, "Congratulations, you are our new chairman."

They thought that I'd just hold the title and won't do much, because there's not much to do. I said, "No, I think I'm going to figure out a way to use my engineering and business skills. Let me figure out why we are [losing]." I did some analysis, a root-cause analysis, to try and understand why we're losing elections, even though we had a large Democratic majority at registration. So, it came to me that because it's a non-partisan election, on the top of the ticket, there's no president, no governor, no senators, so what happens was only in the local elections, Democrats were not motivated to come and vote in the month of May. It worked to the advantage of the Republicans, and they kept it that way for twelve years. I said, "Why don't we change the elections from non-partisan to partisan?" They said, "Well, we tried three times, and we failed." So, I said, "Okay, let me try the fourth time."

The interesting thing was, I was an underdog all the way, with my name, whatever things that were on the negative side, I turned them around and used that as a positive. One is being a name like Upendra Chivukula, people could hardly pronounce my name. I had an accent. People could not even determine my gender because it ends in "ah." They could not figure it out. I said, "Oh, not knowing in itself is an advantage." I took advantage of that. Also, I was not known in the community, so I used that as an advantage.

What I did was, it's like a Trojan Horse technique. I wanted to catch the Republicans when they're napping. In the month of July and August, the council was only meeting once a month. I timed it in such a way that I drafted a very simple question to do an initiative and referendum, a ballot question, to move the elections from May to November. Nobody gave me a chance, because we needed about 2,500 signatures to get on the ballot. Then, also [I had] to make sure that the Republican council majority did not stop it. They could have stopped it by creating a Charter Study Commission, and they could have stopped it. Since I was such an underdog, they didn't even think it was worth their effort, so that worked out to my favor. I collected a lot of signatures. Then, I submitted the signatures, and I fell short. I probably fell short by 750 or so. The newspapers were making fun of me, saying, "Look at what kind of chairman, he can't even get enough signatures." I knew what I was doing in that I said, "This is good. The story keeps going. It'll be advantageous for me when I get the question on the ballot." The law allowed for me to get the deficiency of the signatures within the thirty days. I worked really hard to collect the rest of the signatures. I got the question on the ballot.

There were cracks in the Republican Party. I tried to use the different factions to my advantage. My message was very simple. When you have a non-partisan election, the township has to pay fifty thousand dollars every year, at that time, which is a tax burden on the people. The Republicans always say, "We want to cut taxes," so this is an opportunity to cut taxes. Then, we had too many elections. In the month of February, you have fire district elections. Then, you have school board elections in April. Then, the non-partisan election day, and primary elections in June and the November general election. [I said], "I will remove one election to make the election more voter friendly." Also, I said, "In a democracy, we need to increase participation." The turnout in the month of May was hardly sixteen, eighteen percent, which is very low. By moving to November, even if you double or triple, that's a big advantage. I was able to

convince, I got three newspapers, *The Home News Tribune*, the *Courier News*, and *The Star-Ledger*, they gave an editorial endorsement. I used that as a flyer. I campaigned. I raised only two thousand dollars. Nobody believed that I could pull it off. I raised two thousand dollars. The Republican county chair, Dale Florio, had an unlimited amount of money. They used twelve thousand dollars to defeat the question, but I prevailed. In November, we won almost two-and-a-half to one margin. That was a major, major accomplishment in politics. Even Senator John Lynch said, "Upendra, you can walk on water." He was really very appreciative. He said, "I tried to do these things. I couldn't do it. Here you are. You're able to do that." An appreciation from Senator Lynch, at that time, was a big deal. [Editor's Note: Dale J. Florio, Esq. was elected chairman of the Somerset County Republican Organization in 1992 and served for eighteen years in the post. John A. Lynch, Jr. is a Democratic Party politician who served as the mayor of New Brunswick from 1979 to 1991 and as a member of the New Jersey Senate from the 17th District from 1982 to 2002.]

The following year, in '95, there were elections. The question was in '94, and '95 was the elections. My wife was complaining. She said, "You're always spending time outside. You've got to take care of the kids," and all that. The party said, "No, no, we want you to run an election, be a campaign manager." I became a campaign manager. I fielded about five diverse candidates. I trained them. I don't know where I got the strategy. I think I picked it up. I never took a single political science course, a lot of common sense. I told my candidates, "Don't say anything. I'll be your mouthpiece. If they attack me, let them attack. I'm not running for office, so it should be good." I raised about eighteen thousand dollars. I started really early. We had a landslide victory. We had five incumbents who were knocked off in a landslide. That was 1995.

SI: Was that county level?

UC: Franklin Township.

SI: Franklin Township.

UC: We had a mayor. We had a council member. That was my first electoral victory. It was talked about around the state. The Democratic State Party invited me for the convention to speak at the power luncheon. It was state level. I thought it was a real honor, so I was able to do that. I continued. In '97, I had the opportunity to--there was one of the council members who got elected in '95, Jack Shreve, he passed away. I tried for that seat. I got the nomination of the party, so I got appointed to the council, I believe, on June 10, 1997.

When I got on the council there, the previous councilman, Jack Shreve, was the chairman of the Bicentennial Celebration Committee. They asked me to be their chairman. Here I am, an international student coming here and become part of the American fabric and I was the chairman of the bicentennial celebration, celebrating the colonial history of the United States. I put together several programs. I went around Somerset County talking about the colonial history. One of the things I did was, on February 20, 1798, Franklin Township was chartered. I wanted to do fireworks exactly two hundred years later on February 20, 1998. People thought I was really crazy, "In the middle of the winter, you're going to have fireworks?" I said, "Don't worry about it. Trust me. Everything will be fine." It was a balmy fifty-five degree day. We

had very successful fireworks. A lot of that shows conviction, belief and persuasiveness. That was 1997.

I became a deputy [mayor] in 1998. What happened, at that time, we had the council manager form of government under the Faulkner Act, where council members get elected by the voters and then the council elects the mayor and the deputy mayor. In 1998, I was elected as the deputy mayor. In the year 2000, I was elected as the mayor. So, I started to like that. [Editor's Note: The Optional Municipal Charter Law, or Faulkner Act, became law in 1950, offering several forms of municipal government to towns.]

In 2001, there was an opportunity to run for the state legislature. That story was interesting. I was working for AT&T. I was trying to figure out what I was going to be doing. No, actually, I left AT&T and took early retirement in 1998. This opportunity came in 2001. One time, I went to the JFK Democratic Club dinner. One of the former, I guess, it was a chairman of the Somerset County Democratic Committee, this labor leader from CWA, Communication Workers of America, was asking me, "Upendra, I have pledges for 150,000. I'm running for Assembly." I said, "Oh, the very best to you." He didn't stop. He said, "Are you going to run for Assembly?" At that time, I didn't even think about it. So, I said, "Yes, I'm going to run for Assembly." He was not happy.

Then, I went home. I talked to my wife. I said, "Look, I don't have a dime. I don't know that I'll succeed, but I'm going to try." So, I met with some of the Democratic Party leaders. I had several godmothers. One of the godmothers, her name is Hungarian, Helen Verhage. She's a labor leader. I talked to her. I said, "What do you think, should I run or not?" She said, "You should run." I said, "I have a labor leader I am going to be going up against in the primaries." She said, "Don't worry. I'll take care of it." She took care of that one.

The Democratic Party chairman at that time, I think one of the school principals, by the name Bill Grippo, was also thinking of running for Assembly. When I met with him, I said, "Look, I'm thinking of running," and he said, "Yes, I know. I'm also thinking about running." He said, "I don't want to run against an Asian American. We have not had anybody elected to office." He was gracious about that. I got the party nomination.

As politics goes, one of the members of the NAACP, Wandra Ashley Williams, she came and made a lot of noise, saying, "I'm a better candidate than Upendra," after they announced it in the newspaper. Then, they were worried about the party being divided. They called a meeting of all the elders. We talked. She came, and all she had to say was, "Upendra is not electable. He's weak." All the stuff she said, she had nothing to say about herself. She was talking about me. When I had the opportunity, I said, "Look, I have worked hard since 1992. I have proved myself. I have done a lot of good things for the town. I'll continue to do that. All I'm looking for is opportunity. The only thing I can promise you is my hard work and my dedication." So, I prevailed.

In spite of that, I had three candidates running against me in the primary. Two Caucasian Americans, who I got them elected to council. You're talking about the politics. They wrote a lot of nasty things about me. One African American was calling it, "Oh, this is plantation

politics," and all that stuff. He was trying to do that. I won in every district, including African American districts, two to one. The only challenge I had was there was a delay in the redistricting process and I already committed to run for reelection for my council seat. Then, a month later, the Assembly seat opened up. Now, my name was going to appear twice on the ballot, which is a really scary thing for a primary candidate. Luckily, it didn't matter. I won both the primary and my council seat two to one, going back to 2001.

Then, September, 9/11 happened, the World Trade Center coming down and there was a terrorist attack on America. People were worried. There was a lot of distrust among the immigrants. How are you going to convince them? "You have to be careful," blah, blah, blah. Luckily, I put my faith. I had a track record. I worked hard and people knew me. I had a few incidents, but they're not a big deal. I did win the November election, again, two to one. That was 2001.

SI: When you say incidents, do you mean what your opponents would say?

UC: No. Some towns, like Milltown, when I was trying to shake hands and introduce myself, they didn't want to look at me and just walked away. There could be many reasons. Maybe they don't like politics. Maybe they didn't like, whatever. I said, "We have to work hard to overcome ignorance. If there's intolerance, we have to speak up and fight back. If it is ignorance, you have to educate the people." I had a very cool approach to this thing. I was not trying to be a hero, but I was trying to approach it from a very down-to-earth [way]. Some people appreciated that. I had the education. I had the master's degree in electrical engineering. I did a lot of work at Rutgers towards my Ph.D. My English was fine. I had no problem articulating my ideas. I had lots of good ideas.

I was one of the people who came up with the idea of Open Space preservation in Franklin Township. I initiated an Open Space tax towards dedicating the funds, along with the county and the state matching funds, to preserve open space, and we preserved almost twenty percent of Franklin Township, because it's a large town and forty-six square miles. It's got a tremendous history. George Washington, our forefather, his troops, George Washington, on his way back, spent a lot of time in Franklin Township. There's a story about South Middlebush Road. If you ever travel on that road, there are a lot of the first Dutch houses, which are on the National Historic Register. George Washington's troops marched on South Middlebush Road and made a left turn instead of making a right turn. So, DeMott Lane, the British troops were waiting. If they took the right turn, then they would have been massacred. Because they were able to go around and came from behind, they were able to win that particular [battle]. They were able to win. It's very historic. We have what is called Rockingham Fort, which is right on [Laurel Avenue] in Kingston. That's where the troops had their barracks. It's very historic. I learned a lot about colonial history. I did lots of programs. I raised lots of money. I was very fortunate. Also, I was tireless. I really wanted to make a mark, and I worked really hard. [Editor's Note: Rockingham is a historic house that was George Washington's final headquarters during the Revolutionary War. It is located at 84 Laurel Avenue in Franklin Township.]

SI: Before getting into your career in the Assembly, I want to ask about some follow ups in the first period. Before the '92 campaign, where you worked on the Clinton-Gore campaign, had you been a part of the Democratic Party?

UC: Yes. I was a registered Democrat. As I said, I was working with the Indian American community. I think officially holding a Democratic Party position started in 1992. I was a county committeeman. Then, I was vice chair of the South Asian for Clinton-Gore. That's how I learned. A lot of it, I started with the Somerset County Democratic organization.

SI: What attracted you to the Democratic Party?

UC: If you go back and look at the Kennedy-Johnson immigration bill, that was the first time-- before that, Indians, large immigration, they were excluded, just like the Chinese Exclusion Act. This Kennedy-Johnson immigration bill opened it up. Our Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev were all friends. I came to know about all the things about Kennedy. Growing up in India, we knew about these things. Then, the Democratic Party also was a party of inclusion. They were integrating a lot of the minorities to get opportunity at that time. [Editor's Note: In 1965, during the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson, Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act, also known as the Hart-Celler Act, which overhauled America's immigration system, reversing the federal quota system that had severely restricted immigration from outside of Western Europe.]

SI: You also served in this period on the Social Work Examiners Board.

UC: Right, yes.

SI: Can you talk a little bit about that?

UC: Yes. Governor Florio, I worked on his campaign. He lost his reelection. I submitted my name to the governor's administration, to the Florio administration, for any opportunity for me to serve. They said, "We don't have many, but we have one on the Board of Social Work Examiners." I didn't know anything about it, but I said, "Okay, I'll take it." I was so lucky that at that time, the Board of Social Work Examiners were coming up with the rules; there are four categories of social workers. One is somebody who has a BS degree. They call it a BSW, a Bachelor's in Social Work. Then, you have MSW, who has a master's, so that is MSW. Then, you have a LSW, a Licensed Social Worker. Then, LCSW, which is Licensed Clinical Social Worker. I worked on the rules. I was a public member. I didn't have the subject-matter expertise, but as a public member, I was able to influence a lot of the rules. I learned a lot about social work and examination.

Then, when Governor Christine Todd Whitman became governor, she didn't make any appointments. So, I was held over for almost three years. I served for many years. I used to take time off from AT&T. I used to go to Newark, Halsey Street. That's where we used to have meetings. I used to attend the meetings. They used to give me fifty dollars for the effort. It was not so much the money but the aspect of learning and being part of the society.

SI: You started getting into campaigning in Franklin. Tell me a little bit about that. I would imagine you go door to door sometimes and do what they call retail politics.

UC: Right.

SI: Do any experiences stand out from going out and meeting the public?

UC: Yes. I got appointed in June 1997. I had a November election. As soon as I got appointed, the next day I started walking. I must have knocked on close to two thousand doors. What I was surprised by is that that section--I was representing the Fifth Ward. We had five wards and then we have at large. I was a Fifth Ward councilman. When I went to some of the people, they were Hungarians, Lithuanians and Ukrainians, they were really surprised to see me. They had never seen a councilman coming and knocking on their door, at that time. They used to invite me for a cup of coffee. We used to go in, sit down, and talk to them. They wanted to know more about me. They were very happy to receive me. The only problem is that I couldn't spend too much time because I need to walk to so many houses. I was working full time. I had to leave work a little early. Before the daylight goes out, I had to get at least one or two hours of walking every single day. Then, Saturday and Sunday, I used to do four to six hours of walking. Because of that, people came to know who I was.

I remember my opponent, her name was Patty Daniel. She was so close to the PBA, the Police [Benevolent] Association. She had an endorsement, not an endorsement, but she had a lot of support. I remember her signs were put on the lampposts, where it said, "Patty Daniel for Council." She had quite a number of signs. Basically, she thought that because my name was a diverse name, she would [capitalize] on that. There were about a half a percent of Asians at that time in that section. She thought that by putting up the signs, if polls only voted, she would have won. She had about five hundred signs. I beat her by five hundred votes. That's a small number, but the voting population was small, so I had a real good majority. I won that.

My experience, reflecting back, it was really a lot of fun to meet people. Of course, they will give you a list of problems. When I was a sitting council member, I used to take notes and then go fix up the potholes, traffic lights, stop signs, and tax problems, billing problems. Whatever it is, I used to solve them. I showed that I want to earn their vote. It worked out very good.

SI: What were some of the other issues that you recall from serving on the council and then as mayor? You mentioned open spaces and the historic preservation efforts.

UC: Yes. I'm a technical person, being an electrical engineer. For the police, fire, and first-aid communications, we needed to buy some frequency spectrum. I was a part of that committee and worked on getting the right type of frequency, because setting up communications, that's one of the things I did. As mayor, I served on eleven committees or so. Every day, I was in a meeting. I was on the planning board. I took part in planning the master plan for Franklin Township. I also served on the county cross-acceptance committee. Basically, when you have the land use planning, what if a house or a business is on the border of two towns? In our case, Franklin being in Somerset County and the others, New Brunswick or North Brunswick, being in Middlesex County, there are issues with respect to cross acceptance. I served on that committee. I also served on the county's Cultural and Heritage Commission. I did a lot of work with that. Then, there were issues between the first responders and the fire officials, so I tried to smooth out some of the politics with them.

We had issue with respect to Delaware Canal, which later on, I was able to fix it as a legislator. Basically, the Delaware Canal is about twenty-nine miles long, and almost twenty-two miles goes around Franklin Township. We had no representation on the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission. When I became a legislator, I put in a bill to increase the number to make sure that Franklin Township had a seat at the D&R Canal Commission. The governor, McGreevey at the time, he pocketed the bill, a pocket veto. But I negotiated that instead of increasing the numbers, what they agreed is that the next opening will be for Franklin Township. Immediately, there was [an opening], and my opponent, our county chair, I got him appointed to the D&R Canal Commission.

We had Open Space preservation. Farmland preservation was very important. Then, we had Amwell Road. I don't know whether you travel on Amwell Road. It comes from Hillsborough and Millstone. There was a curve. It takes a curve before it meets up with Cedar Grove and Hamilton--yes, Amwell actually is Hamilton [Street]. It goes like that [makes a curve]. There were a lot of accidents that were taking place, so we had to straighten it out. My vote was very important in terms of trying to not spend Franklin Township's money, instead county's money, county's plan. So, we were able to do that. That was a big accomplishment for that.

Then, we had a major issue with respect to what's called Renaissance 2000 along the New Brunswick border. In Franklin Township, there's a pastor by the name of Buster Soaries from the First Baptist Church. They created Renaissance 2000. That area is underdeveloped, and we needed to fix that. I worked with them and tried to help out the Renaissance 2000 issues.

There were some issues with respect to eminent domain. What happened was for the Renaissance 2000, they wanted to take some of the houses for building a ShopRite or whatever it is. That was a big controversial thing. I didn't believe in taking people's homes. I was the lone dissenting vote on that eminent domain.

I have shown to differ from my colleagues. I was a very independent-thinking councilman.

Also, Easton Avenue was very successful in terms of a business district. Hamilton Street was sort of neglected. They needed a lot of help. I made that a very important issue and had a consultant hired to see how we can revitalize the Hamilton Street district. When I was in the state legislature, I almost [brought] a million dollars to help out that. That's one of the things.

There were so many other things I was able to bring money to build. For example, we have a housing authority, they had an upstairs room, and I wanted that to be used for the children. But they didn't have a staircase. So, I brought in some money to build an emergency exit staircase. I was able to do that.

One of the things I take great pride in is that Franklin Township, for many years, senior citizens were fighting for a senior center. I put together the plan. I raised about 200,000 dollars with a team of people and were able to get the council to approve an additional two million dollars, 2.2 million dollars, and we were able to build a Franklin Township Community Senior Center, which is really thriving in the complex.

We also we wanted to create a center of the township, because we have six villages in Franklin. It's a very large town. There's no center point. We already had the municipal complex. We already had the police. Then, we had the senior center. We had the Villagers Theatre. We had the library. We tried to put all the things together. I was a very avid supporter of the library system, so I brought in money for the library system in Franklin and voted for that on the council. I was able to do that.

There's also another organization called the Center for Great Expectations. This is under the Diocese of Metuchen. They were trying to help teenage pregnant mothers or divorced mothers. It's rough aborting the children. They were able to give them prenatal care and postnatal care, and also house them and train them with career skills. That organization, that's down in Franklin. They used to be in Somerville. As a legislator, I was able to bring in about a million dollars to help them. I was able to do that.

SI: I am curious, you mentioned that you had several godmothers. Did you go out looking for mentors in politics, or did they just sort of work with you?

UC: I think it happens sometimes, but I was not looking for anybody. I didn't know what to look for. I didn't know where to look. As I mentioned, Helen Verhage, she's a senior citizen. We were part of the Democratic Party. She had a liking for my approach. Then, I had another mentor from the Indian American community. Her name was Kanak Dutta. She was very active in the Democratic politics. She worked very hard. She actually contested for Assembly in Somerset County wearing an Indian sari. She was campaigning in the 1980s, early part of the '80s. Of course, she was not successful, but she started the process. She was a Democratic National Committee member representing Somerset County. She was raising a lot of money. She was very close to President Jimmy Carter. She was very close to Governor Jim Florio. Then, she worked on the Clinton-Gore campaign, several campaigns. She helped me when I was running for Assembly. The first fundraiser we put together, and she was instrumental in helping me to get going. I always looked to her for advice. She was very helpful.

SI: When you were thinking about putting together this run for the Assembly, you mentioned some of the campaigning you had to do. How do you go about finding a campaign manager? How do you go about setting up an effort like this?

UC: It's like, as they say, a baptism by fire. You learn it on the fly. A lot of things you can learn in politics by watching other people. I did work on several losing campaigns. You learn from what they're doing, and all it takes is observation and following up. When I ran for council, the Franklin Township Council, I raised not a lot of money, I didn't need a lot of money, but I did raise money. I think I pretty much did it myself, the treasurer, everything I did myself. I started with myself. I found somebody. There are volunteers. People are more than willing to come forward and help. That's how I did that.

Of course, when I ran for Assembly, I was part of [17th Legislative District], there's the Middlesex County towns. There were at that time six and then Franklin was one of them, so you had seven towns. Now, you are in the mainstream of things. Middlesex County were winning all the time, so it was not difficult to find a consultant. I also had running mates, Assemblyman

Joe Egan and Senator Bob Smith. Smith has been a very good mentor to me. That's how I found a lot of the consultants and learning from some of the campaigns. A lot of them, I helped. They lost, but I worked hard for them. [Editor's Note: Joseph Egan was a member of the New Brunswick City Council from 1982 to 2010. He has served in the New Jersey General Assembly representing the 17th District since 2002. Bob Smith was the mayor of Piscataway from 1981 to 1986. He then served in the Assembly from 1986 to 2002. He has been a State Senator representing the 17th District since 2002.]

SI: What were the main issues that you wanted to tackle when you got into the Assembly?

UC: In the council, I learned a lot about land use laws. I served on various committees and learned about historic preservation and all that. When I went to Assembly, one of the things I wanted was I would bring a unique expertise, being an electrical engineer and my technical background in working in various fields. When I joined, I was on the Environmental and Solid Waste Committee.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

UC: I wanted to bring my technological focus. I was the vice chair of the Commerce and Economic Development Committee. I was offered Budget Committee. I didn't choose the Budget Committee, because it requires a lot of learning. Being a first-time legislator, I needed to learn. I was also member of the Telecom and Utilities Committee, for which I was trying to come up with some ideas. About three years after that, I became the chair of the Assembly Telecom and Utilities Committee. I always wanted to push the green economy. I was the author of the Solar Renewable Energy Certificate [SREC] legislation for the first time. Solar energy was only a half a percent of the total supply. By introducing the legislation, New Jersey became number two in the country, second to California. Then, I also wrote solar legislation on energy efficiency. We also did on offshore wind legislation, which is very big now. Everybody's talking about offshore wind. I was the author, in 2010, of that legislation. There were several economic development issues. [Editor's Note: Solar Renewable Energy Certificate, SREC for short, is a type of clean energy credit in the form of a tradable certificate in state Renewable Portfolio Standards markets.]

I also was very passionate about helping out the children of undocumented immigrants. I was author of the legislation, the DACA version at the state level, trying to bring in-state tuition to children of undocumented immigrants. There was a bill in the California legislature, I modeled after that and introduced the legislation. There was tremendous opposition in 2003 because universities were to lose a lot of money. As international students, they pay double the tuition. I had several meetings with all the college presidents' board and presented the case. With the help of my staff, I calculated all the numbers to justify why it's a good thing. [Editor's Note: DACA refers to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, a U.S. immigration policy that allows some undocumented individuals, after being brought to the country as children, to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation and become eligible for a work permit in the U.S. The New Jersey Tuition Equality Act, the DREAM Act, of 2013 allows undocumented students who meet certain criteria to qualify for in-state tuition rates at all of New Jersey's public higher education institutions.]

Then also I supported the driver's license, like IDs. That way, we wanted to make sure that New Jerseyans are safe. If you have an undocumented immigrant driving a car and gets into an accident and kills somebody, it's not a good thing. So, I did that.

I remember one time, a mother with her daughter, who had down syndrome, she walked into my office and she said she moved recently from California. California is really very good to address the issue of autism and down syndrome. When she approached me, I said, "Look, I'm an engineer. I'm not very good at all those issues. I'm a technical guy." She said, "No, no, I want you to be the champion of this thing." Then, I introduced legislation to help a lot of the parents of children with autism and down syndrome. It is a tremendous stress for them and at least to provide some relief towards the financial stress. So, that was my bill. I was a rookie legislator; I didn't have enough clout. In spite of that, I negotiated to increase the federal poverty level from 175 percent to 300 percent, so that more people can benefit with whatever the current benefits are.

Then, there was the Early Intervention Program, where the counties get involved if a child is classified or [has] the learning problems, so I worked towards that in my legislative career. Then, I started a technology caucus. There, I was able to include both the Democrats [and] Republicans. Also, I made use of my languages and my diverse background. I created a legislative caucus on international languages. We do have the law which allows for heritage languages. If you're speaking Greek, Chinese or Indian languages, those are heritage languages. They may not be taught in the school system, but they can be taught outside in a temple setting or a church or a community center setting. If they get their accreditation from the state government, they can negotiate with local school boards to get three credits for the language that they learn. So, that's a law. I was trying to promote that, and so I was successful in that.

SI: Let me go back to the green energy initiatives that you were behind. I would imagine that those would get some pushback, particularly from Republican legislators. Using that issue as an example, how do you navigate getting these things through the Assembly?

UC: That was very interesting in that I was the chair of the committee. I had all the Democratic votes. Republicans, the concern they were expressing was cost related, but deep down, they couldn't argue about the environmental challenges that New Jersey faces. The New Jersey Republicans are not like Midwest Republicans. They're different. They understand the challenges. When you have the number of respiratory illnesses because of air quality, water quality, all the problems that we have in New Jersey. There was actually a law that was passed in 1999, the Deregulation Act, that separated generation from distribution. At that time, they created what's called a Class I and Class II Renewable Energy Certificates. This was done under a Republican governor. There was a willingness there, but I took it and I pushed it further. I did get a lot of pushback on that. At that time when I introduced the legislation, it was 2008. We were going through a recession. There were not many jobs. The solar industry was able to create a lot of jobs for that time. Yes, we were subsidizing using the rate payer's money, but the solar industry became very important for the landscape in New Jersey. [Editor's Note: In the late 1990s, the State of New Jersey decided to implement energy deregulation to allow its residents to choose a supplier of electricity or gas. Under the deregulation laws in the state, the supply

portion of a consumer's electric bill is separate from the delivery portion, enabling customers to shop around for the best price. The electric and natural gas distributors deliver the supply through their respective wires and pipes, regardless of where the stores are purchased. Utility companies are responsible for responding to outages and emergencies, regardless of who the supplier is.]

One of the things I did as a committee chair was I was not afraid of the opposition. I gave everybody a chance. I held hearings in a very bipartisan manner. People can speak and they can understand. I could challenge some of the facts they may have. It took effort. When I was in the legislature, McGreevey was governor. Then, Cody was governor. Then, we had Corzine as the governor. Then, Chris Christie for governor. Even under Governor Christie, all my legislation was signed into law, except for three or four. That shows that I had the right idea. I was able to advance a lot of good ideas. They respected me for that.

SI: That brings up a question I was going to ask. What are some things that you tried to get through that didn't get through, maybe some of your disappointments in that job?

UC: One of the major disappointments is that the property taxes in New Jersey are quite high. The underlying problems, everybody knows. Legislatures, governors aren't able to solve that problem. I teamed up with Senator Bob Smith. We had a legislation that [came] up with what is called a county-based administrative school district. Basically, you are not doing anything with the curriculum. Local governments have home rule. We take pride in home rule. We were able to address that issue; curriculum we'd always keep it separate. But all the administrative functions, whether it's transportation, information technology and all those things, can be centralized and based in more of the current county. The fiscal note on that legislation was saving 660 million dollars every year. That will have saved a lot of money towards property taxes. Unfortunately, it didn't get anywhere both under the Democratic and Republican administrations. I felt disappointed that it was a good idea, but because of self-interest and the people trying to protect their own basis, they don't see the big picture. I think the property tax situation in New Jersey is a runaway train. It's a matter of time. It's going to be really totally out of control. As it is, we're not able to solve that. That was one big disappointment for me.

At the same time, we had an organization called Celebrant Foundation. The Celebrant Foundation started in New Zealand and Australia. They were performing marriages, end of life services, and all that. If you get married in a Catholic Church, when you are divorced, you are not able to get married again in a Catholic Church because of their doctrines. This organization was able to do that. They reached out to me and wanted me to introduce the legislation to enable them to perform marriages. Marriage is a big business in the U.S. A lot of people are bound to make a lot of money. When you're trying to introduce one more organization, it's a very tough thing. I told them, "Look, I'm an engineer. I'm not so much into marriage and all this stuff." They insisted I do it. It was the Christie administration. I introduced that towards the beginning of the Christie administration. It took me about six years before I was able to get it through--it's a long story--get it through the legislature in both houses. Then, it ended up on Governor Christie's desk. It was sometime around November timeframe. [Editor's Note: Celebrant Foundation and Institute is a non-profit that was founded in 2001. It is headquartered in Montclair, New Jersey. It educates and certifies officiants.]

In January, it was the lame duck [period], basically, because new legislators were going to take over. The governor was also reelected. He's going to start his second term. I told the organization, "I got it, as I promised. I got it through both houses of the legislature. It's up to you now. You've got to go to Governor Christie." They said, "Oh, yes, we can take care of that." The next day, they came back. They said, "Look, we can't even get through the front door." Then, I come up with an idea. I said, "Maybe I should not look at it as a social issue but look at it as an economic development issue." So, I talked to the governor's chief counsel's office. I told them, "If you look at it, the judges are very busy. They don't have time to perform weddings." At that time, this was same-sex marriage and all that stuff there, and some mayors were not willing to do that. I said, "Look, all these things are there. Having another organization officiate weddings is a good thing. They get the training, go through the education. They do all the things and perform the wedding. That way, we don't want to worry about delays and all that. It's creating more jobs, and that will help the state." Somehow, I was able to reach the governor with that message. On the day he was getting sworn in, in Trenton, in the War Memorial [Theater], he tells me, "Upendra, I just signed two of your bills." I was so happy he did that. He had national aspirations and the bills called for this organization to perform same-sex marriages. I didn't think that was going to fly.

SI: Yes.

UC: What I'm saying is that when you have a good idea and you have the conviction that it's the right thing to do, you can convince people. I was able to overcome a lot of the Republican opposition to that.

SI: I was going to ask, as you noted earlier, the Republican Party here is not the same as other parts of the country, but these social issues do come up. Do any of them stand out in your memory as particularly fierce battles?

UC: Yes. Before the Supreme Court passed the law, we had [battles], several times, about the same-sex marriage bills that came in. That's a tough thing. Then, the funding--Republican administrations in Washington tried to cut the funding for Planned Parenthood. Those were some of the challenges. I had met with Catholic Church members of Saint Matthias Church in Franklin. I was very respectful. I explained what are the things.

Then, there was a major issue when McGreevey was the governor. It was in 2002-2003. The Metuchen church, some of the people confronted--the issue was stem cell research. There are two types of stem cells, one is the embryonic stem cell and adult stem cell. Adult stem cell research was going on, but it was not quite successful. Embryonic stem cell research wanted to invest money and do that because there was promise of curing Parkinson's and other diseases by creating these new stem cells into the system. We were in the church. We were coming out. One of the parishioners challenged me and said, "How could you support killing life?" I said, "We don't have all the answers. That's why it's called research. We're trying to experiment and do and find out all the things." That's what happened. Stem cell research was a big thing. We had a cancer center here at Rutgers, and Superman came. [Editor's Note: Christopher Reeve,

who starred in the 1978 film *Superman*, was paralyzed in a horseback riding accident. He was a champion of those suffering from spinal cord injuries and an advocate of stem cell research. Reeve participated in the 1998 "Wall-Breaking Ceremony" that helped launch the W.M. Keck Center for Collaborative Neuroscience at Rutgers.]

SI: Yes.

UC: I was there at that time. We were trying to advocate. He was wheelchair bound. He could have been helped with the promise of getting the stem cell research. We talked a lot about cancer research.

I also served on the Health Information Technology Commission. I was a co-author of the legislation, trying to address some of the healthcare costs and having a database where we can start helping out some of the advances in health technology. Those were some of the things I did. There are so many things.

SI: I am not going to ask you to get into all of them. The stem cell issue, I think that in the Corzine administration, they tried a bond initiative.

UC: I think it was started in the McGreevey administration.

SI: Yes.

UC: I think the Corzine administration, they were able to go forward, but still it did not make that much [difference]. This is a national law. [Editor's Note: The Stem Cell Research Bond Act appeared on the New Jersey statewide ballot on November 6, 2007 as a legislative referral and was rejected by voters.]

SI: Yes.

UC: That has not changed, but there was progress. In life, nothing is impossible. If you wait long enough, it's probable. When we were watching *Star Trek*, flying saucers, all the space travel and all that stuff, it was science fiction, but now we have man walking on the moon and going to Mars and circling around Saturn and Saturn's rings. Yes, it's fascinating.

SI: What about any involvement with higher education legislation? Was there anything that you were particularly involved in? I have your record, but I do not know which ones you were really pushing or if you were just voting along with the party.

UC: In higher education, the institution is one of the things that I did work on. Then, some of the other legislation in terms of promoting STEM education and trying to make some of the county colleges getting funding, getting scholarship for the Stars Program, Stars I, II, where some of the youngsters who financially may not be able to afford at least get the free education through scholarships. I worked on that. I'm trying to remember what other things I've done. [Editor's Note: The New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS)]

Program is an initiative that provides New Jersey's highest achieving students with free tuition at their home county college.]

A lot of the research--I worked with the biotech industries and technology councils. We did a lot of the legislation in that sense, trying to support them and provide adequate funding. I was inducted into the New Jersey Tech Hall of Fame, and the Biotech Council also recognized me as Legislator of the Year.

I really pushed for international languages. Language education [in] higher education was also important. 9/11, President George W. Bush recognized about twelve languages, it started with ten international languages, for Homeland Security, Hindi being one of them, Bengali, Hindi, and all that. We started talking about the importance of languages before 9/11. That's why the heritage languages and all that was there. We continued that. Through the language caucus, we were trying to bring the language issue to the forefront. There's an organization called ACTFL, and all those things I had spoken about, provided a lot of encouragement in terms of Spanish as a very important language.

SI: Now, you also served as a delegate to the national conventions.

UC: Right, Democratic National Convention. Yes, I started when President Clinton, for his reelection in 1996. I was selected as a delegate, went to Chicago. Then, in 2000 and 2004, I was an alternate. That was John Kerry. Then, 2008, also I went to the [convention that nominated] Obama. I went in as a Hillary Clinton delegate in 2008. In 2012, I was an Obama delegate. I think it was an interesting experience because there were very few people from the Asian community who were selected as delegates. I really enjoyed that.

I think a lot of it is optics also, trying to show that the Democratic Party is diverse and inclusionary, so you're including Asian Americans. The last two census, you look at it, Indian Americans, Asian Americans are the fastest growing population. At one time, it was Hispanics; now, I think in New Jersey at least, they were faster than Hispanics in terms of the growth. That was a very interesting experience, being a delegate and going through the electoral process and getting selected.

I was very lucky in 2004, I was also selected as an elector. I was a member of the electoral college. That was interesting. I cast my ballot as an elector for presidential candidate Senator John Kerry. Of course, he did not win the national election. That was another feather in my cap, that I was not only a delegate but also an electoral college member.

SI: You also ran for Congress.

UC: Right. In the legislature, I contested in seven elections. Seven terms, I got elected seven times. I was elected two times to the town council in Franklin, and that means I had in total eleven elections. In 2012, I ran for Congress in the Seventh Congressional District. Congressman Leonard Lance was the incumbent. I raised a million dollars. I worked very hard. I got in the race very late. I got in in May of 2012. Sometimes, for a congressional election, you need about two years of planning, fundraising. Between May and November, I raised almost a

million dollars. I surprised myself with that. It was a tough district for a Democrat. Also, some of the parts in Hunterdon County and Warren County, they hadn't seen many Indian Americans with a name like Chivukula running for Congress. It was not very palatable. That was an incumbent. He was serving well. [Editor's Note: Republican Leonard Lance served in the U.S. House of Representatives from New Jersey's Seventh District from 2009 to 2019.]

Also, Hurricane Sandy hit on October 29, 2012. That knocked off more than a week of the campaign. An incumbent has all this advantage. For a challenger, the last seven days were also quite important in terms of bringing voters to the polls. So, it was a tough election. I was running against the odds. But in 2012, I ran [and lost]. In [2018], we have a Democratic congressman in Tom Malinowski. So, my effort was not wasted here. [laughter] [Editor's Note: Tom Malinowski currently serves as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from New Jersey's Seventh District. In the 2018 midterm elections, he upset Republican incumbent Leonard Lance.]

In 2014, I was not prepared. After a tough 2012 campaign, I thought that was enough. Suddenly, Congressman Rush Holt from the 12th District said he's not running again. So, there was a primary. It started as a five way, but it became a four-way primary. [Editor's Note: Rush Holt, Jr. is a Democratic Party politician who served as the U.S. representative for New Jersey's 12th Congressional District from 1999 to 2015.]

My argument to the Democratic Party was, "Look, you have African American congressmen and you have Hispanic American congressmen. Why not give a chance to the growing population of Asian Americans?" New Jersey politics are county-based politics. It's a lot of power play. I didn't get the opportunity, but I thought if I didn't run, I may never get a chance to run again and I have to try. My calculation was that I had the endorsement from the Somerset County Democratic Party. There were about eighteen thousand Indian Americans, Asian American, registered as Democrats. I said, "At least I could try and get fifty percent of them." Franklin Township also had eighteen thousand registered Democrats. If I could get half of them, then I would win the election. I fell short. Franklin Township was not used to primaries. Things are changing, but at that time, there were only four thousand votes I got from Franklin Township. Out of the eighteen thousand registered Democrats of the Indian community, Asian community, only two thousand came. So, I fell short on that, but I was respectable. I got twenty-two percent of the vote. We had a strong candidate, African American, who had Trenton and Plainfield. Those were heavy African American districts. So, you have to [overcome] that. Since Middlesex County didn't support me, I didn't get that. I ran against the line in all the counties except Somerset County. I did win a lot of the towns from where I was a legislator, North Brunswick, South Brunswick. I did well in East Brunswick. I did well in Plainsboro, I think West Windsor. But it's a question of total votes, how many you get. That was my 2014 [election]. That changed me from being an elected official to the current job as appointed official as a Commissioner of the Board of Public Utilities.

SI: What motivated you to want to go to Congress?

UC: The last congressman, when I was running, at that time, was from California. That was in the early 1960s. I said, "East Coast, we have not elected anybody." I said I wanted to try that,

because I had established myself in the state. I had done a lot of legislation [that had] a statewide impact. I thought at the national level I could provide more impact. So, that's the reason. I thought I was qualified, and I had a good platform to run on. The Asian population was growing in New Jersey. I thought I could be a good representative. [Editor's Note: Dalip Singh Saund (1899-1973) served in the U.S. House of Representatives from California's 29th District from 1957 to 1963. When he won the election in November 1956, Saund, nicknamed "Judge," became the first person of Asian descent elected to serve as a United States Representative.]

SI: We started the conversation talking about how there was very low voter registration among the South Asian community. How do you think the community has changed over your tenure in politics? How have they become a force, or not, in state politics on different levels?

UC: A lot of youngsters, because the last names are very long, just like mine, they've got the confidence. Last names don't matter. They're long. That's not the issue. More and more young people started coming forward. In New Jersey, we have several mayors and we have freeholders. We didn't have any Assembly members from the Indian community. When I left, one more person came in after me. Now, we have two. We have one State Senator in Vin Gopal and one State Assemblyman, Raj Mukherji. [Editor's Note: Vin Gopal has represented the 11th District in the New Jersey State Senate since 2018. Raj Mukherji has represented the 33rd District in the New Jersey Assembly since 2014.]

For example, look at Edison. A third of the population is Asian. In Middlesex County, in towns like North Brunswick, it's a very large population. The district, when I started, the 17th Legislative District, it had about maybe eighteen percent minorities in the district, eighteen, twenty percent. Now, it's more than fifty percent, and when you look at it now, we have three Caucasian Americans representing a very diverse district. We have two Caucasian Assembly members and one Caucasian senator. Similarly, in Edison, in that district, we have a large population, and we don't have representation. So, this is the message I would like our community to know, that it doesn't matter even if you fail, if you don't win in the first attempt, you need to encourage more people to run, learn the process, and try. As they say, "If you don't succeed at first, try, try, try again." This is a long journey. We have to elect people to the state legislature, Congress, Senate, and governors, lieutenant governors. If you look at the lieutenant governor, we could have a lieutenant governor, but we don't have, because minorities are contending for that. We have to be present. As they say, you have to be in it to win it.

SI: You mentioned the South Asian Political Forum.

UC: The Indian American Forum for Political Education.

SI: I was just curious, in general, first what that involved and how long it had been active in New Jersey before you became involved?

UC: It was a national organization. It's non-partisan, basically more educational. They were educating a lot of the congressman and senators. The New Jersey chapter, we had a national president from New Jersey and he encouraged a lot of the local activities. We had a chapter, he invited me to be a part of it. So, we worked together. That coincides with the Indian Chamber

of Commerce that we started. It's thriving now, a lot of the businesspeople. I think people have realized that we need to be politically active, so that was the message. Even though it's trickled into it, I think now it has become extreme and people are realizing that we can and we will.

We have an Attorney General from the Asian origin, South Asian. We used to have a Commissioner of Health. We had a Commissioner of Transportation. I'm on the Board [of Public Utilities] now. So, we have made some progress. But I think the real progress we need to make is at the local level, where you have school boards. A lot of people are contesting for that because of education; the Asian community really thrives on education. With our know-how, with our educational background and with our technological background, we can bring up our automation, bring up our artificial intelligence to streamline a lot of the services. We can improve customer service. We can improve learning, STEM education. We can really make New Jersey an innovative state, as the governor would like to see innovation. I think Asians can really show up and make a big difference.

[RECORDING PAUSED]

SI: Going back to your time in the Assembly, what did you find most surprising in terms of how things got done? Maybe another way to put it, what do you think people would be most surprised by, in how things get through the Assembly?

UC: In terms of legislation and all that, I think it's very parochial politics because dynasties are there. A lot of it is county-based, county organizations. In politics, there's a lot of money involved. There are a lot of special interests. They push you one way or the other. Leadership, most of the time, they're good. Sometimes, they cave into some of the things, which may or may not be the way to go about it. That is the biggest challenge. Leadership will push you one way or the other, but you may have to stand up to the leadership and do the right thing.

Also what happens, a lot of the legislators I have come across, they are not professionals. The New Jersey Legislature is a citizen legislature. So, they'll bring expertise, their own thing. The term is only two years. They're always fundraising. So, the amount of time--you have to spend time between the constituent service, you have to spend the time for creating legislation, and trying to play the politics, fundraising, campaigning. It involves a lot. You make 49,000 dollars, which it's hard to live in the State of New Jersey. It's a part-time salary. You have to find other things to do. Basically, your effort is going to be diluted. There are very few full-time politicians there, because you have to make a living to live in New Jersey.

Then, you have the politics between the administration and the legislature, and even between the two houses of the legislature, there's politics. You have to navigate through all the politics. It's like swimming with the sharks type of thing. You have to be very diligent. You have to be cautious. You can't make promises that you cannot deliver because one person alone cannot deliver anything. You have to work with a group of people in the legislature, as well as the administration. It can be done, as long as you have public service as your main focus and you try to do the right thing. You can persuade people to your way. At times, you may not succeed, but you can. Understanding the process, I think that's the message. A lot of people that serve in the legislature don't really understand the process. Getting elected itself, there's a process. Being an

effective legislator is a process. Getting your legislation passed and signed by the governor, it's a process. Sometimes, you have to be very persistent and you can't give up. Those are the lessons I learned.

SI: You also served as Deputy Speaker.

UC: Yes, Deputy Speaker.

SI: What are the responsibilities there, and how does that change your role?

UC: The Deputy Speaker, every so often, when the Speaker is not available, you can run the Assembly meeting in the main hall. Also, you are important in the process. Because you're a chairman of a committee, you bring certain expertise from that committee and explain how it plays in the overall thing. Especially with respect to budgetary priorities, you can bring out some of your ideas to the front.

You are not the only Deputy Speaker, and some of them try to have more people engaged in the leadership. You have a [Speaker] Pro Temp. You have a Majority Leader, you have assistant majority leader. You have a whole bunch of positions. It's one of inclusion; you try to engage more people and solicit more ideas, how to make the Democratic caucus effective. So, you contribute towards that a lot.

I remember one time, I was sitting in my district office. I get a phone call from Trenton, saying, "Assemblyman, we need you to come here. We have a delegation that's come from China, mainland China." It happens to be Xi Jinping, who is the current president of China. [Editor's Note: Xi Jinping has been the top leader in China since 2012, when he became the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China. In 2013, he officially became president.]

SI: Yes.

UC: At the time, he was the number three. The protocol was broken because the Speaker of the House was supposed to receive him, and he couldn't make it, for whatever the reason. So, I had to rush myself to Trenton and receive Xi Jinping. I remember there was a lot of unhappiness because of the protocol issues.

SI: Unhappiness from the Chinese?

UC: Yes, because they're very big on protocols.

SI: Yes.

UC: If somebody is supposed to receive them and that person is [not] there, he's not received, and I'm the substitute for the Speaker. Then, I used this as an icebreaker, I said, "Look, Mr. Xi Jinping, this is budget season in New Jersey. Speaker Roberts has a responsibility to balance the budget. He goes around picking pockets to balance the budget. You should be happy he is not here because your pocket is spared." [laughter] That brought a little bit of a smile in him.

[laughter] So, that was all a spontaneous sense of humor trying to do that. [Editor's Note: Joseph Roberts served as the Speaker of the New Jersey General Assembly from 2006 to 2010. He represented the Fifth District from 1987 to 2010.]

You get opportunities like that. Because of that, that evening, we had a reception at Kean University. Subsequently, he signed an agreement between Kean University and University of Wenzhou, a city called Wenzhou, W-E-N-Z-H-O-U, a city where Wenzhou-Kean University was formed. I got invited to be on the board of Wenzhou-Kean University. I can't be on a board of a New Jersey university because of conflict. So, I was able to be on that. I had the opportunity to travel to China more than five times. [Editor's Note: Wenzhou-Kean University opened in 2011. Wenzhou University and Kean University jointly operate the university, which is located in Wenzhou, China in Zhejiang Province.]

SI: What are the issues you face as a board member there?

UC: I think Kean University, the president, Dawood Farahi, he and the unions don't get along, which is a major issue. There were a lot of obstacles put in his path. I think it's a phenomenal thing that the Chinese government invested two hundred million dollars to create a brand new campus from the ground up, trying to provide a United States-style international education in China for the Chinese native speakers. It's a world-class education. That was a very successful thing. I think in terms of working with the Communist government representatives, they have their local interests. We tried to take the faculty from New Jersey, and naturally, U.S. salaries are much higher than the Chinese salaries, so you have to work through those issues. I think it's a lot of sales and marketing, trying to say, "Why a world class education? American education, how it is different? How it is beneficial to the Chinese economy?" So, we have to do the sales thing about that. I think they were really impressed, the Chinese government and Chinese officials, they were impressed with the world-class education. How is it that the United States is able to produce so many Nobel laureates and China has a tough time doing that, what is that? It's not just the water in the United States; there's something more than that. What is it? What drives the innovation and what drives the research in operating in the United States, and how can they bring that to China? I think that's why they're fascinated with that. [Editor's Note: Dawood Farahi served as the president of Kean University from 2003 until his retirement in 2020.]

SI: Were you involved with any other efforts to kind of create a link between New Jersey and somewhere else in the world?

UC: Yes. I think a lot of the times when I traveled to India, it was a lot of trying to promote the United States in India. I remember one time, I was sitting in the U.S. Consulate in Chennai. We also have a counterpart for the Department of Commerce in Chennai. They were telling me, "Assemblyman, we use your name a lot in promoting U.S. interests in at least the southern part of India." I would tell them, "Look, the United States is a great country. They elected one of your own to be in the state legislature." I think, in that sense, I was useful in promoting the U.S. economy. Also, I was one of the first to be elected. Even Congressman Rush Holt, he was in India on the day, it was January 8, 2002, I was getting sworn in. A lot of the reporters were asking Congressman Rush Holt about an Indian American serving in the state legislature. He

talked a lot about that. So, the ties between the U.S. and India, they naturally have improved because I was a spokesman being a U.S. citizen-legislator. I talked about a lot of the issues.

Of course, there were some challenges I have faced as a legislator. The IT, information technology, did a lot of outsourcing and offshoring. A lot of the unions had a tough time accepting that. Even though businesses were not just going to India--IT outsourcing was in the Philippines and other parts of the world--India was main in the news and so there was a lot of anger [at] India. The unions got upset with me. They actually jammed my email system. They thought that I was promoting Indian businesses in the U.S. I was speaking as a global businessperson, so that was misunderstood. I think it's like water flows from a higher level to a lower level. The businesses always look for where they can get the cheapest labor possible. That's the way the world economy works. So, I had to deflect a lot of the criticism at that time. Not that I had a company, I was taking jobs overseas, but I was talking about how the United States needs to focus on nanotechnology and all those things. We have the technological edge in those areas, and if we really invest and create those high-paying jobs, that will be beneficial to us.

SI: You were also honored by the government of India.

UC: Right. Yes, 2010, I believe, or '11. Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa on January 8th timeframe. They have created what's called Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. Pravasi Bharatiya means non-resident Indians. It's a day of non-resident Indians. They had people from all around the world who were non-resident Indians, and so this is commemorating the return of Mahatma Gandhi. On that day, the President of India will award certificates of recognition. I was chosen in the year 2010, I believe. [Editor's Note: Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is a celebratory day observed on January 9 by the Republic of India to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community towards the development of India. The day commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to India on January 9, 1915.]

SI: Did you go to India?

UC: I had to go to India with my wife. We went. At that time, Pratibha Patil was the president. There's a ceremony you go through, and I got the award from that.

SI: Going back to one of the bills you worked on or maybe introduced, the bill would give restitution to victims of hate crimes after 9/11.

UC: Right.

SI: I would imagine that would be a difficult bill to pass, or was it?

UC: It did not pass. I don't think it passed. Did it pass? I don't think so.

SI: I do not think so.

UC: We were trying to give a million dollars or something like that, so budget constraints. It was a difficult bill, but I think it was the right thing to do. A lot of people, their only mistake was they showed up for work. They are not involved in anything. The families, some were well to do, but many of them were not. That World Trade Center attack left many widows, many children without their father or mother. Assemblyman Neil Cohen was the one, I believe, he and I came up with that thing. Maybe I'm confusing with some other bill, but I think this bill might have passed. [Editor's Note: Neil Cohen served in the New Jersey General Assembly from 1990 to 1992 and then again from 1994 to 2008.]

SI: Yes.

UC: I was thinking about something else, where we had the Mumbai attack. There were some people attacked in Mumbai and trying to help out. [Editor's Note: In November 2008, over a period of several days, multiple terrorist attacks were carried out in Mumbai, India, during which 175 people were killed.]

SI: Okay, this was providing tuition assistance to children.

UC: Yes, this passed. This passed. As I said, they lose their parents, at least one of the earning members of the family, it puts them in financial hardship, so I think [we tried to] help out with whatever we can.

SI: Before we talk about your time on the board, are there any other areas of legislation that you want to talk about or that we skipped?

UC: The environmental legislation, the Global Warming Response Act, trying to reduce the greenhouse gases by twenty percent by 2020 and eighty percent by 2050. That was one of the things that went through my committee. Then, we had RGGI, Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and a RGGI Solutions Fund. We were creating a cap-and-trade program. I think New Jersey was one of the first to create a cap-and-trade program for carbon, and that was the legislation that passed in 2008. I was the author of that. Now, under current Governor Murphy, they're bringing it back, writing the rules, some tweaking, but same idea is continuing. [Editor's Note: The New Jersey Legislature passed the Global Warming Response Act in 2007 and updated the law in 2019, with the goal of reducing emissions by twenty percent below 2006 levels by 2020 and eighty percent by 2050. Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, or RGGI, is a program designed to help states reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.]

Like that, I had several environmental legislations. I talked to you earlier about solar. I talked about biomass. I talked about hydro. Hydro [hydroelectric power], zero to thirty megawatts was Class II, and I made zero to three as Class I. That way, I increased small-scale hydro to be incentivized. [Editor's Note: This is referring to Class I and Class II renewable energy in New Jersey's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS).] It's much better, I think. I did that. Let me see, economic development. Transportation, I had some legislation on transportation, trying to eliminate some of the toll booths. We had too many toll booths on the Parkway and tried to create an [alternative]. Some of the things, they did not advance a lot.

Also, I did a couple of things for the Asian community as part of that Celebrant Foundation legislation. At one time, we had the Christian pastors and ministers and the Jewish rabbis were able to officiate weddings. So, that bill, I was able to have even the Hindu priests can officiate the wedding. They have to go through a certain accreditation process with the state, the Department of State. Then, there was one, when you look at the statutes of religious corporations, the statutes [were] quite old. They only recognized two religions, Judaism and Christianity. Somebody said, "Oh, how come you don't have ..." Even though other religious corporations were recognized through rules, they were not in the statute. When they reached out to me, I said, "Look, I'm the only practicing Hindu American. Predominantly, everybody else is Jewish or Christian. How do you expect me to do that?" But I was able to get the legislation passed almost unanimously. In both the houses, I was able to do that. That also brought sort of a level playing field for all the religions.

I was also involved in video franchising. Basically, New Jersey has the law where each township, if you want to get cable, there's Comcast, Cablevision, you've got to go town by town to get the franchising agreement, fifteen years or whatever it is. It took a long time. We have 566 municipalities. When Verizon reached out, there was a bill created for video franchising. It's called System-wide Video Franchising. You have a state franchise, you don't have to go town by town, to accelerate the broadband deployment. So, I was involved with that. I got the legislation through. I created a Universal Service Fund to help with some of the low-income customers. That was one of the things I did. [Editor's Note: Universal Service Fund (USF) is a New Jersey program to help make natural gas and electric bills more affordable for low-income households.]

Also, I served on the National Conference of State Legislatures, which is a national body of the fifty state legislatures. I served as the chairman of one of the communications committees and also as an executive board member. I worked on various task forces, like energy taskforce, Real ID taskforce. I don't know if you have a star, a yellow star, on your license. You don't have it yet. [Editor's Note: After May 3, 2023, one must have a REAL ID-compliant driver's license to fly within the U.S., unless using a U.S. passport or another federally approved form of identification.]

SI: Yes.

UC: There's a new [identification], it's called a Real ID. You will need that beginning October 1, 2020 in order to use your driver's license ID for flying.

SI: Oh, okay.

UC: Until that time, you can use a current one. You've got an extension of a year. That's called a Real ID-compatible driver's license. There's a yellow star on the top right-hand corner of the license. I was on the taskforce for that. I was on the military affairs task force. I served on several task forces and introduced resolutions at the national level. I also served on the Council of State Governments on the eastern region. I served there as the co-chair of the energy committee. I tried to bring about regionally, looking at all these issues. Let me see, what other things have I done? My main thing I accomplished was supporting education, K through twelve,

trying to support higher education, telecom, utilities, and autism. I did a lot of initiatives on autism and down syndrome. I did all that.

For the Asian community, we had an Asian American Heritage Month, the month of May. We did a line dance on the Assembly floor. We did that. We did the Korean tae kwon do. We had a Diwali celebration and had a resolution declaring that month between October 15th to November 15th Diwali month in the State of New Jersey. We got that thing done. We also had the Indian Consul General from New York come and address the New Jersey Legislature after the Mumbai terrorist attack. I was able to do a lot of things like that. I was also president of the Asian American Political Caucus for two years, working with Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Filipino communities. I worked on that. It's been a busy life.

SI: Yes. Now, you mentioned how New Jersey is a part-time legislature. You had retired from AT&T. Were you doing any consulting work?

UC: Yes. I think the first five years, I was pretty much a full-time legislator. Then, I had to do some consulting to supplement my income. So, I was doing some IT consulting and doing some marketing for IT companies. I was doing that. The other thing, I had to make sure that clearing the ethics, make sure that I couldn't do business with any of the companies that came before us, so I had to be following up on all those things.

SI: How did the opportunity come about to join the Board of Public Utilities?

UC: After my loss of the second congressional run, the Middlesex County Democrats, the party was not happy. The way it came about was Senate President Sweeney wanted me to go to the board because I had the subject-matter expertise. He thought that I could bring about change in the Board of Public Utilities. So, he reached out to me. I talked to my wife. She said, "Yes, I want you to. You have eighteen years of elected office. Now, you can put time into helping out. You can work in the board and bring about some regulations." A lot of the work I had done as a legislator, they were coming up as regulations, so I think I could help out. Then, I had several meetings I had to go through. There were some people opposing my appointment. Whatever the reason, I had to overcome some of those obstacles, and I got appointed.

In doing my nomination process, the Koch Brothers sent a representative to oppose my nomination because I was so much into green energy and renewable energy. That was the thing. I was at the forefront of a lot of issues. Even the nuclear safety, I held a hearing after Daiichi Fukushima in Japan. I held a hearing among the industry, bringing the people. I even brought a commissioner from Washington to come and join us, Joseph Kelliher, the commissioner, to address the issue if such a thing can happen in New Jersey or not and what precautions are we taking. You name it, whether it's nuclear, thermal, solar energy. [Editor's Note: On March 11, 2011, the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear powerplant in Okuma, Fukushima, Japan suffered a nuclear meltdown, following a tsunami caused by an earthquake.]

I also have several legislations with respect to microgrids. We are creating, for example, Rutgers University, in Piscataway, they have CHP, combined heat and power plant. Princeton University has a microgrid. Rutgers is creating a microgrid. Princeton has had a microgrid. Hurricane

Sandy, when the power was lost, the microgrid in Princeton was able to not only take care of Princeton University, they were also able to power Princeton Township. So, I had legislations supporting microgrids and CHPs. I also created one legislation trying to help out a low-income families. This was legislation taking some of the Societal Benefit Charges, money in the Clean Energy Fund, and allocating about twenty million dollars or so towards people, because we were going through a recession at that time. People who are low-income, we have what's called a LIHEAP, Low-Income Heat and Energy Assistance Program, from the federal government. The people who were above the federal poverty level, but they were in between jobs because of the recession, lost jobs, they were unable to pay their heat and electricity bills, I created that fund of twenty million dollars to help them offset some of the costs they had to pay. That was one of the contributions I had.

SI: Can you explain what your day-to-day work is as a commissioner on the Board of Public Utilities?

UC: Yes. The board, we have five commissioners, and one of the commissioners is designated as the president by the governor. I was appointed in 2014. Until 2018, it was a Republican governor, the beginning of '18. So, we had a Republican commissioner who was the president of the board. Then, after 2018, a Democrat was appointed as a president. Also, it switches; the party of the governor will have three representatives on the commission, and the other two are minorities. My first three years, I served as a minority.

The day to day is we have one board meeting a month. All the work [is] preparing for that board meeting. So, we'll have several briefings on the agenda items, docketed items. Day-to-day work is going through the emails and talking to industry representatives. We do have a ex parte rules. We can't talk to the people. I have a confidential aide who is able to talk to them. I can't talk to them directly. If I talk to them, then I have to recuse myself from the vote, because it's a quasi-judicial position. We have certain rules; you have to follow certain ethics rules.

Attending several events. Sometimes, they have a ribbon cutting. Sometimes, educational, informational events, I attend and speak as a commissioner on the board and talk about board issues related to the statutes and the regulations. I talk about all these issues.

Also, I was a member of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners [NARUC]. At least three times a year, we have travel, in February to Washington, D.C. The summer, it could be in any city in the United States. November is the national conference. Some is educational, so we attend that.

I continue to serve on the telecom committee, so any issues with respect to that. Sometimes, I go to the Mobile World Congress. Right now, it's a big thing, 5G communication, wireless communication. Even though we don't regulate wireless communication, the wireless is such a big part of our day-to-day life. I'm trying to understand the issues and also look at broadband deployment and addressing the issue of digital divide, if something like that exists. It depends on the different states. We had a pretty good coverage, on the digital divide, and what you have to get, the digital devices, for the people to have the Wi-Fi connectivity, all those things, looking at

that. We also are a member of the MACRUC, Mid-Atlantic [Conference] on Regulatory and Utility Commissioners. They have three meetings, so we try to attend that.

Time really goes by fast. I don't have to do campaigning. I don't have to do the fundraising, but it's intellectual work. So, I try to learn the industry, read papers, read reports, and form opinions, keep track of the staff, come up with the new ideas. That's how my day goes.

SI: Do you think you have been successful in moving the green policies, in which you were challenged by this Koch Brothers initiative?

UC: Yes. We have come a long way. I think, especially last year, we were able to advance the offshore wind proposal. We already have 1,100 megawatts. We have a bid for that, Ørsted, the project is called Ocean Wind. They're going to be building, and looking at maybe '24-'25 timeframe, we should have offshore wind. [Editor's Note: Ocean Wind is a proposed utility-scale offshore wind farm to be located fifteen miles off the coast of Atlantic City. It is being developed by Ørsted in conjunction with Public Service Enterprise Group (PSEG).]

In the Solar Renewable Energy Program, we've got a transition going on, discussion about transition, when we hit the 5.1 percent. That is going on. We also have microgrid pilots who have done that. We are working on community solar, 750 megawatts. That's in motion. Also, energy storage, we're trying to see how we can deploy 650 megawatts of storage by 2025 and two thousand megawatts by 2050, trying to come up with the ways to do that. Also, Clean Energy Programs, we have direct install, comfort energy partners, small buildings, SmartStart programs and trying to do a lot of recycling of refrigerators and air conditioners and all that in a very sensible way. We have programs on that. [Editor's Note: In April 2020, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) declared that 5.1 percent of the retail electricity sold in the state was generated from solar power and therefore ended the state's Solar Renewable Energy Certificate (SREC) Registration Program, in accordance with the Clean Energy Act of 2018. In July 2021, the BPU voted unanimously to implement a new solar incentive program, the Successor Solar Incentive Program, or SuSI, which aims to double the state's solar capacity by 2026.]

We also work with an organization called Sustainable Jersey. Through them, we reach out to all the municipalities and try to do that. We have several waterway initiatives, trying to see how we can invest in the water infrastructure, a program called DSIC, D-S-I-C, Distributed System Improvement Charge. We've tried to do the investment in water as well as wastewater. After Hurricane Sandy, we started Energy Resilience Bank, trying to invest in resilience projects. During Hurricane Sandy, close to 19,000 poles came down. We need the vegetation management to make sure that doesn't happen. Also, through energy resilience projects, at hospitals, wastewater treatment plants, university complexes, we're trying to create microgrids, so they worked on that. So, we have our pledges full.

Also, we have to work with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, FERC, look at the wholesale electricity. You have what's called a BGS, Basic Generation System, auctions and try to manage a three-year supply. You can hedge, so that with rate payers, you don't have to bear the cyclical day-to-day price fluctuations. So, we work on that. We had recently the nuclear

zero-emission credits. That was one of the initiatives that we had. The Clean Energy Act of 2018 called for energy efficiency, requiring the utilities to bring about two-percent reduction in energy demand and electricity demand, and 0.75 percent reduction in natural gas. Working with the utilities and try to come up with programs, one of the major things we are working on is to how to come up with effective measurement and verification. It's a very important thing, because you are dealing with rate payer money. You want to make sure that utilities, who are natural monopolies, do what they say they're going to do, and then how we verify that and implementing some of the programs related to that.

SI: Under the current administration, has that affected how you work with the federal level?

UC: Yes. I think we are putting more resources working with the federal government. We don't really directly work with the administration, but we work with a so-called independent agency called FERC, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, for water, wastewater, natural gas and electricity. For telecommunication and broadband issues, we work with the Federal Communications Commission, FCC. We work with those agencies directly, not so much with the administration. We do have interactions with our congressional delegation, who bring about legislation or hearings to address issues of importance to New Jerseyans.

SI: Do you have terms as a commissioner on the Board of Public Utilities?

UC: Yes, I was appointed. I started in October of 2014. My current term ends on March 31, 2020. Then, it's up to the governor to nominate me and the Senate has to confirm. So, I have to go through the process next year.

SI: What do you see as the most important things for New Jersey to do in the next few years?

UC: We have a very ambitious energy master plan. The governor is saying, by 2030, we'll be fifty percent clean energy, clean meaning renewable and nuclear composition, and by 2050, a hundred percent clean energy. We have to bring down the energy demand through energy efficiency. At the same time, the governor has assigned a memorandum of understanding to deploy about 300,000 electric vehicles by 2030. So, we need to get there. No, it's by 2025, so it's six years. We only have 2,005 electric vehicles. By 2030, we have to get a lot of vehicles. It's going to be quite challenging. When you have electric vehicles charging, our electricity demand is going to go up. What are the types of fuel mixes, like is it nuclear, solar, wind, all the things? A portfolio, how is it going to look in 2030? A lot of visionary thinking, looking at 2050, what kind of technology breakthroughs are going to be coming through? When we started offshore wind energy, it was one-megawatt windmills. Now, we have twelve-megawatt windmills that are there. So, that is going to be very important. We need to go forward. We have lot of initiatives that are there.

In the absence of a federal energy policy that is clean or anything like that, we need to make sure that the states are the laboratories of innovation. So, we have a tremendous responsibility to come up with the different programs. New Jersey, as part of the ISO, which is the independent system operator, PJM, we have neighboring states like Ohio, Pennsylvania, there are a lot of coal and natural gas. How do you balance? How do you make sure that the in-state generation in

New Jersey is not affected adversely? So, we have to work on that. Those are some of the challenges. [Editor's Note: PJM Interconnection, a regional transmission organization, coordinates the movement of electricity through all or parts of Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia.]

SI: Is there any part of your career in public service that we skipped over or anything that you want to elaborate on?

UC: Well, let me see. The FCC had a group that is for communication systems and reliability and information, CSRIC. So, I was able to serve representing NARUC on the CSRIC committee. So, I spent a year trying to look at the cybersecurity issues. I was trying to see how we can create more professionals in cybersecurity education and what are the cybersecurity challenges, so I worked on that. Now, I'm also working on a National Council of Electric Policy, which is, again, looking overall to see what kind of policies we need to come through in terms of education. I also serve on the international committee, trying to understand the international picture on energy issues. I'm also serving on critical infrastructure, trying to look at what are the critical infrastructure [issues] with respect to water, electricity, and all that. How do you protect our infrastructure from manmade or cyber disasters? So, those are the types of things that I've been working on. [Editor's Note: The Communications Security, Reliability, and Interoperability Council (CSRIC) provides recommendations to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) about communications systems. NARUC is the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners.]

SI: To go back, you mentioned the Koch brothers sending somebody to oppose your nomination to the board. In general, how much of a factor have both industry and ideological opponents to green energy been in whether or not things go forward?

UC: It's ironic, going back to my legislative time, I can understand why the Koch brothers wanted to oppose me. They have an organization called [Americans for Prosperity]. That's what they call it. They didn't like the solar panels on the poles. I was one of the people, even though I had not directly done anything with that, it was a board action that created that. I was pushing--one of my colleagues that was a retiring Assemblyman, a Republican, he had a bill on creating biodiesel. Basically, the concept was we have different types of grease. You have black grease, brown grease, and all that stuff. A lot of the kitchen grease is called yellow grease. You can process it and then mix it with the diesel, and you create what you call biodiesel. I knew biodiesel was expensive, but because he was retiring, I said, "I will advance the bill through my committee." I visited a couple of places where they were doing the yellow grease and things like that.

The Americans for Prosperity, the ASP, that is the Koch Brothers' organization. They were angry at me. They called me the "Biodiesel Man." They created a cartoon character with my face on it. The "Biodiesel Man" they created, and they were publicizing all that against me. When I went before the confirmation process, before the Senate Judiciary Committee, they came out. They had one of the senators, who's a supporter of the Americans for Prosperity, they gave him a list of questions to ask of me. I knew the senator himself; he didn't have firsthand

knowledge of all those issues. I didn't want to make it an issue. I answered all of the questions in a reasonable manner. So, that senator did not vote for me, but I had the majority vote anyway.

I think what it is is that I was quite outspoken. I challenged the people who were against green energy. I challenged them. I said, "Look, we have to do this. We have to create a path, so that we can get there." I remember, I was going back to some press clippings, press releases, that we were urging President Obama to act. It was in 2010, and I was urging Obama to act on clean energy, have his Environmental Protection Agency be more active in trying to create green solutions. So, I think maybe that could have attracted opposition. I was not passive.

SI: Well, I think that is all I have for today, unless there is something else you want to add.

UC: No, that's good. We covered a lot. If you think of anything, call me.

SI: Yes. We will have the transcripts for you in a little while.

UC: Okay.

SI: We can see if there is anything to add, but thank you very much. I appreciate it.

UC: Thank you, Shaun. I appreciate it.

-----END OF TRANSCRIPT-----

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