

**[Patricia Sheehan was appointed by Governor Brendan T. Byrne as Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs and later served as Executive Director of the Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission (now the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission). Prior to joining the Byrne Cabinet, she had been elected as mayor and council member of the City of New Brunswick. She also was employed for many years in government relations and other management positions by Johnson & Johnson.]**

**Don Linky:** My name is Don Linky. It is July 5, 2006. We're here at the Eagleton Institute of Politics on the campus of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, in New Brunswick. This is another in the series of interviews for the Brendan T. Byrne Archive conducted for the Rutgers Program on the Governor. Today we'll be talking with Patricia Sheehan who's served as Mayor of New Brunswick, as a Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs, and as an executive with Johnson & Johnson. Mrs. Sheehan has been one of the pioneering women in New Jersey politics and we'll be talking to her today about her career and particularly about her relationship and involvement in the administration of Governor Brendan T. Byrne. We're here, it's July 2006, I'd like you to reflect before we get into the specifics of your career and of your participation in the Byrne Administration and other political roles, but how has New Jersey changed in your professional career from the 70's until now, and is it for the good or the worse?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well I suppose it's like any other industry, there's some good and there's some bad. I think that there's an immediacy and frankly a meanness in government and politics today that – we, in the 70's didn't have to suffer from or for to – this instant communication, the email, the blogs, all of the self gratification that comes by instant response doesn't allow much time for reflection or considered response or working out details, and in some ways I think we had that luxury. We also had an opportunity to disagree but not to kind of go for the jugular on each and every issue. There was some respect for private life, there was some respect for positions other than your own, and I don't think we see very much of that today. On the other hand, certainly we're able with not only the technology in terms of communication but in terms of construction, in terms of education to expand our reach. I just don't feel that we're doing it as much for the citizens and that there's still a deep down public service citizen representation, I think that's fading away.

**Q:** Also, as we talk today, the state government for the first time in its history has actually shut down its operations because the Governor and the legislature can't agree on a new budget. In terms of the government, state government today, versus the state government in the 70's, again, are we better today, are we worse today? Is the governor's role weaker than it was in the 1970's during the Byrne Administration? Are you unhappy about the situation, particularly today as we sit with a state government that can't operate because it has no money?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well I think we're in uncharted waters. I mean this has never happened before. We did a of brinkmanship, we didn't always get the budget in on midnight of June 30 or 12:01 a.m. on the first, however the law reads, so perhaps we fudged a little on the time but everybody got a budget in. I mean this is unheard of, it's unconscionable, I'm sure there's enough blame to go around for everyone. I don't think its one party or another, one governor or another, less powerful, more powerful, I think it's appalling, but by the same token I've never faced that situation nor did Brendan. I don't know how it's going to come out, I was never good at a crystal ball, but I think that real people are suffering real pain and perhaps it was glossed over with the holiday weekend, people didn't really understand that this was going to have a direct and immediate impact on them, and as usual, people are going to suffer and they should be able to expect more from their government, not this in poor suffering.

**Q:** Again, given the luxury of time and the perspectives that these past 30 or so years have given us, what do you see as sort of the lasting accomplishments of the Byrne Administration, and also perhaps, some of the disappointments? Things that may not have gotten done during Brendan Byrne's time in office.

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well certainly I think the accomplishments are out there for all to see starting with the fact that we always had a budget; I have to emphasize that point in these days. But when you think about casino gambling, you think about the development of the meadow lands, you think about the protection of the pine lands, you can't but not think of the income tax. I think that Brendan was able to build on a little foundations, if you will, and go forward in a very dramatic way that didn't lose sight of the fact that we had people to serve and that in many instances not having to act, or not being able to act, or being unwilling to act would have meant permanent differences. I mean once the pine lands was gone there was no bringing it back. Once the meadow lands was left to warehouses and rutted roads it would have taken 20 more years to bring it forward. Left to an unwillingness on the part of much of the country there would have been no Section 8 housing without the administration of Brendan Byrne, not only here in New Jersey but anywhere, because Washington clearly didn't want it to work. They were out of the public housing business and they'd set up a program that they were able to say was going to provide an alternative that was bigger, better and cheaper, and what they meant was they weren't going to build any subsidized housing. So I think those were just some, off the top of my head, key issues that made a difference because people sincerely wanted things to be better for someone besides themselves.

**Q:** What about disappointments? The Byrne Administration famously passed the first state income tax in New Jersey, there was probably some thought at the time, well the state's fiscal house was now put in order, that we had bitten the bullet, and use any other cliché you want, but today, 30 years later some of the same issues, some of the same political debates are going on. Was that a disappointment that that issue just doesn't go away in New Jersey? That it continues to linger.

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well it's an ongoing disappointment. Property taxes are too high in New Jersey; the reliance on the property tax is too strong in New Jersey. If you work a minimum wage job today in 2006

and you work 40 hours a week and then you have a part-time job somewhere else, you can't afford to live in New Jersey, there is no housing for you in New Jersey. So the fact that we had an income tax, I think we really believed that that would make a difference and that didn't happen, so here we are 30 some years later, and the problem is not only not better, it's worse and I have to say, and I come out of local government, and home rule is the sacred cow, but if you have 611 school districts and 566 now, municipalities and 21 counties, all of them with an infrastructure that is in fact paying a living wage. You can't have somebody's 25-foot by 100 lot supporting all of that and we don't seem to be able to fix it.

**Q:** What about the state of cities, the Byrne Administration placed a high priority, particularly through your own Department of Community Affairs on revitalizing New Jersey city's, sitting today in 2006, there's obviously been some improvement in some of the cities, but other cities, Camden, perhaps Paterson, probably aren't much better then they were in the 70's, do you think that's another disappointment?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well, it's certainly a disappointment to me personally that we haven't reached nirvana. My commitment, my charge if you will, from Brendan, was the community, all of the communities, but particularly the cities of New Jersey. I followed after Governor Hughes and established the department with Paul Ylvislaker and the mission was to aid and abet the cities and I was Mayor at that time and so there was no other place in state government that I felt either that I was qualified to be in or that I wanted to be in. I can say that certainly we haven't done enough but I think that – I think things are better. I think they could have been worse. There was a general move to the suburbs, not only of families and homes, but of jobs and highways, and a distinct move to turn their backs on the cities. I mean by and large, society was content to have the cities be warehouses of the poor, the disabled, the handicapped, the neediest in our society were left in the cities without any recourse in terms of providing the kinds of services that – it's a little bit like the child that leaves home, having been cared for and nurtured and provided with all the amenities, now they're on their way out to start their own lives and their own families and they don't look back, and that's virtually what happened to the cities. I mean you talk so much today about unintended consequences, there was nothing better in my judgment than the GI Bill and the VA mortgages. I mean we owe the young men and women who fought in World War II a debt of gratitude certainly, but in effect, that slammed the door on the cities. The housing stock in the cities was not eligible for a VA mortgage. The car and the new highways meant people could leave the cities and so the cities had provided the water, the sewers, the infrastructure, the hospitals, the library, the schools, everything for the surrounding area and now suddenly the government was subsidizing the housing and the roads, and the education and the jobs for people to move out of the cities to have a bigger and better life, and that's all to the good, but they never looked back. I know you talked earlier about Atlantic City, well the people in Atlantic City who could not be needier, but when you look at the demographics of the population and you have the old, the elderly, and the disabled, and the handicapped, and the mentally disturbed making up 60, 70, 80% of your population it's all very well to say, oh well why don't they get a job? I made it, why don't they make it? They don't have any resources to make it and so – and we had a sentiment that the city's were bad places and let's close our eyes and walk away from it, and so 30 years ago we had a lot to do, and 30 years later there's still a lot to do, but I think there's a recognition and certainly when you see Jersey City and the Gold Coast, when you see New Brunswick, when you see the iron bound forest hills in Newark, there is an indication I think, eternally optimistic about the cities, that if

you have a mix in population and you have some opportunity to be involved and participate things get better and I think we're seeing some of that. So, no it didn't work, there was no nirvana, but I think we held our thumb in the dike long enough, too long, but nonetheless, things didn't get worse I think in many cases they got better and are continuing to thrive, or in some instances, beginning to thrive.

**Q:** You're a native New Jerseyan?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Yes.

**Q:** You were born 1934 in Newark?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Indeed.

**Q:** Why don't we get somewhat personal, what was your family background and what were your early memories of New Jersey and the places that you lived?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well my mother and father were both immigrants, they were each born in Ireland. They met in Newark and lived in Newark all their lives. I've always lived in New Jersey, well that's not strictly true, I went to school and worked for several years in Washington, D.C. but I'm truly a Jersey girl and quite proud of it. I didn't realize how proud I was of it until I went away to school and met young women from around the country and everybody talked about what was so great from where they were from, and I realized that no matter what they said we had it in New Jersey. We had mountains, we had the beach, we had the cities, we had access to New York and Philadelphia, we had tomatoes, corn, and blueberries, we had farms, and so I discovered when I went away that New Jersey really had everything and that's where I wanted to be, and that's where I've been ever since.

**Q:** What are your early memories of Newark?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well, one thing is that you could get anywhere by bus, which we were all inclined to do. I grew up in a Catholic parish and there was a network of what we called in those days, CYO clubs, and I didn't know we were poor because nobody I knew had any money; we all did the same thing. They had dances with records, vinyl, 78 or whatever records, and they stamped your hand and for a bus ride and a quarter there were Friday night dances, and Saturday night dances. There were shows at the Mosque Theatre. There was a newsreel theatre in – on Broad Street in Newark, my father was not a movie fan but he would descend, or condescend I suppose, to go to the newsreel theatre. I was not a fan of newsreels but they did have a cartoon and I was sure of a candy bar so that was often a Sunday outing. Weequahic Park; I mean it was a whole – I mean I grew up so long ago that it could be all insepia. You did things by bus, there was no television, radio was the thing, there were truly

neighborhoods, I mean everybody knew you and you were accountable to everybody as well. Certainly there were no street gangs, Mrs. so and so up the street, Mr. so and so in the corner store wouldn't have permitted it, neither would the police officer; there was a neighborhood policeman, so it was a whole different life. I don't think that has anything to do with Newark or New Jersey per se, it just that I'm getting old.

**Q:** How strong was the Irish identity at that time in Newark? Did you hang pretty much with other Irish-American families?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Not really. It was more a melting pot neighborhood. I think, certainly my mom and dad did, there were a whole variety of clubs in Kearny and Harrison that were dedicated Irish-American clubs of one kind or another and many of – at least in my mother's case, many of her friends had immigrated as well, and so she had those contacts and in my dad's case, his father and one of his aunts were the only two out of nine that did not immigrate to New Jersey, so there was a big gang of Quinines around in Newark and Trenton, and in Patterson, and so there was – I say – I think you could say we were ghettoized to the extent of our family and their friends, but we grew up American. I mean I think the most important piece of paper that my father owned was his citizenship papers and there was no – it was more the neighborhood and it was mixed, different ethnic groups. There were – and that's a difference that we've talked about many times in terms of the school systems and the Americans generally who are not too good in languages. In my day, most of the non-English speaking families had a grandmother or a grandfather who did not speak English, whether it was Italian or Polish, or German, which happened to be the groups where I grew up, there was one and you never learned that language in school. Those kids were discouraged from mentioning that and it wasn't until they had children of their own that they began to have children who would learn another language and so there was a big drive to be assimilated, I supposed that's the word.

**Q:** What did you father do for a living?

**Patricia Sheehan:** My father was in construction. He was a union man with the 696 Local out of Newark, sprinkler fitters, plumbers, and so on and very proud of that as well. My mother did not work outside the home, but she kept us together, it was just the three of us. Of course they're passed on now.

**Q:** Do you recall how your father's union membership and activity affected you? Was that something that maybe pushed you later in life into a political career?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well it was something he was very proud of and certainly I was. I can remember several times, just to show you how times have changed, he was often on the negotiating team and while he did not share any confidences or secrets about contract negotiations, I do remember a time that there was a standoff, if you will, it took a while for the negotiations to be worked out because the union insisted

that the men, it was all men, had to be paid in cash and of course we were coming into I guess the checkbook era and it was simpler, easier, and safer for the jobs to use checks. But the problem with checks was that the only place, if you weren't a check person, the only place you could cash them was in a bar and that put the paycheck in jeopardy, and so that was a union issue. I mean its hard to conceive now when you talk about internet and ATM cards and the rest of it, but the protection of the membership and the workers was something that certainly was beat into my head and that's just a kind of off side example. In terms of politics, he had a real dilemma in that I was his daughter, so (a) I could do no wrong and (b) I was certainly fit, able, and smart enough to be anything I wanted to be in his eyes; pretty hard standard to try to reach, but on the other hand, a concept that was totally alien to him was what he called petticoat government. So in many ways I was just as well pleased that he lived in Newark and I lived in New Brunswick and so the question of whether or not he'd vote for a woman didn't come up, so he always suffered from the dichotomy.

**Q:** Well you're born in 1934; do you have any vivid memories of the depression? You said that you didn't realize you were poor because everyone was at the same level, but did the depression affect you or did your father keep his job through the depression?

**Patricia Sheehan:** My father worked through the depression as far as I know. I don't – more of my recollection of the depression is from comments my mother would make years later in things like that Antiques Road Show. She would often make a comment; oh she couldn't wait to get rid of that when she could afford to buy a replacement set of dishes. So I would watch on Antiques Road Show this depression glass going for hundreds of dollars thinking my mother threw it in the trash, so I think in terms of the depression now, I think it's anecdotal from second or third hand I don't really have any tragic or happy or sad memories of it. It's – I guess I'm glad I missed it.

**Q:** Well let's move forward. How about high school? What memories do you have of that?

**Patricia Sheehan:** I had a scholarship to Benedictine Academy in Elizabeth and I have wonderful memories of that. Took the 49 bus from Newark and coincidentally I was grateful enough for the opportunity and happy enough with the experience that 25 years later my daughter went to Benedictine Academy and I'm happy to say that we've all survived the experience. It was a single sex education which in Elizabeth, in those days, was not unusual because the public schools also, they had Jefferson High School for the boys and Bruriah for the girls, and I think that it's certainly a concept that I support. We wore uniforms, there was more then a little discipline, and lots of unreasonable rules but again the concept that women were fit to be educated and educated very well, and could go on and do or try to do anything they wanted to do was a concept that was fostered and I think had a very positive impact on me. Jefferson to Benedictine as well and made sure there was a social life. We had boys from St. Benedict's Prep in Newark and Seton Hall Prep in South Orange for little mixers and tea dances, and we went to their ball games. I can't say that any of the young men ever came to our ball games but we managed the

reverse. I was fortunate, I had a good education, and I had the support to encourage you to try new things and do different things and it worked.

**Q:** Now I guess I get from what you say that the academy was very supportive about going on to higher education?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Oh yes.

**Q:** What about your family? Was there some remnant of the old sort of European and Irish thinking that women's place was really in the home and that you can educate girls but only to a certain point?

**Patricia Sheehan:** No, there was really none of that. Neither my mother nor my father had a college education, but it was the typical immigrant story that the next generation would do better and have more opportunity and that was clearly the case. Somewhere along the line I discovered that one of the things they call first generation Irish is "narrowback" and the genesis of that is that the first generation came over and built the canals and the railroad, and the bridges, and tunnels, and all that kind of thing, Erin go Bragh broad back, heavy construction and the next generation went to school and improved themselves, or hopefully would improve themselves. Hence, the derogatory term, I mean it was not a friendly term of narrowback. No, there was no question about that, there was support for that. As I say, my father wasn't quite sure about petticoat government but he certainly was sure about education and like many who did not have the opportunity, he was self-educated in many ways and he'd talk about current events or he'd talk about history or he'd about literature, he was a constant reader.

**Q:** Now you mentioned you received a scholarship to go to the academy. When it comes to the point of deciding about college was money a significant factor?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well I'm sure it was. I mean speaking for myself three kids later, it is a factor and yet you want as a parent to have the best opportunity you can and I was fortunate, or my parents were fortunate, or we were all unfortunate, in that I was an only child and so I could pretty much – and there wasn't – I mean I was appalled when my own children were going to college, the competition and the anxiety. There wasn't that same kind of anxiety, it was pretty much if you could get your pennies together and pass the application test you could get in. I mean it's not like it's the earth shaking decision it is today and so I don't think there was any question that I was going to go to college, and certainly Benedictine fostered that because they all went on. If they did not go to college there were business schools, Drake and Gibbs were business schools and of course nursing and so the philosophy of Benedictine was that you had these four years in basic and that outfitted you to go in numerable directions, whether it was business, whether it was nursing, whether it was a college education. There wasn't the county college system opportunity then that I think has become. Speaking of progress through the 70's an absolutely wonderful venue for young people.

**Q:** How did you come to make your own decision about where to attend your higher education?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well it went all over the lot. I – single sex, Catholic girls school, and for some very pertinent reason at the time, Indiana University was on my list. I can still remember getting the catalogs and thinking they'll never find me; ever, ever find me. I mean I had 51 classmates graduate and I'm looking at Indiana University where there were more than 51 people in any individual class I think. So it ranged from that, I finally decided I didn't want to go that far away. I was fortunate in that I could go away but I had never been out of New Jersey and I wanted to break that home front but I wanted to be able to get there if I had too, and so I pretty much limited myself to the East Coast and Boston, St. Elizabeth's here in New Jersey. I can't even remember them all but Trinity was in Washington, D.C. and that had a particular lure for me. A fascination, I suppose, it was the roots of my caring about government I don't know, but Trinity became the final absolute first choice and some of the others I followed up with applications. Some of them never got past the catalog stage; I can't even remember them all now, and so Trinity it was. I kind of forced myself to admit what I was. A young woman from a very small high school and Catholic, practicing Catholic, and so I guess I went for the comfort zone.

**Q:** Well why was Washington such a draw to you? How did you develop that initial interest in government?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Oh Don, I have no idea. I'm a born sightseer, tourist, and had been to Washington. I'm certainly a city person, all of the – any of the places that were off the beaten track were dismissed almost out of hand. Broad and Market Street in Newark and the carbon monoxide; had always had more appeal to me than the pinelands. Much as I didn't want to have them preserved I didn't want to work, or live, or go to school there. I sneeze and break out and so on and so forth. So I'm a city person, I like buses, I haven't been on a bus in ages, but I like to know the bus is there. I like to be independent, I like to go to the theatre, I like – Washington has it all as far as a city is concerned. Interesting to note that my children, I guess I've passed it on, two of them went to school in Philadelphia and one of them went to school in Washington, so we're all city people at heart.

**Q:** What were the courses that most interested you?

**Patricia Sheehan:** I majored in History and Government. I probably was better or – well I take that back. I would say that English probably came easier, but History was more of a challenge, absolutely useless in languages, worse than useless in Sciences and Math, and ended up with History and Government.

**Q:** Now as you near graduation, what are your thoughts about what comes next?



**Patricia Sheehan:** When I neared graduation? A job; I'm part of that era. You certainly didn't think in terms of career, you thought in terms of a job. I thought I would like to stay in Washington. I took some courses at George Washington University and at Seton Hall during summers so that – although I did not have an Economics Major I then had enough credits, because I fancied the Department of Labor, I just felt there were a lot of opportunities in Washington and in fact worked in the labor personnel section of the Air Transport Association. I guess that was my second job in Washington, but working was definitely on my agenda.

**Q:** What's the next major step in your career and lifetime chronology?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well I got married, came back to New Jersey.

**Q:** That's pretty big.

**Patricia Sheehan:** That was pretty – it was very big.

**Q:** How did you meet your husband?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well actually he's from – was from this area. He was born in St. Peter's Hospital here in New Brunswick and I met him in New Brunswick at a family party for one of my cousins, well actually second cousins and Dan was just out of the Army, it was a compulsory draft in those days and he had served his two years in Japan and was starting Georgetown Law School and I was going into my senior year at Trinity and so that's how we met.

**Q:** New Brunswick in those days was similar or different to today? Talk about New Brunswick when you moved back.

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well it was considerably smaller and in – well probably in difficult straits although I didn't know it at the moment. I mean everything was smaller.

**Q:** This would have been what year approximately?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Let's see that would have been around '58, '59 just prior to the 60's. Rutgers was here as they are, have been, ever will be, but -

**Q:** But a much different Rutgers at that point?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Yeah and much smaller and much more insular. There was not a lot of interaction between the town and the university. I think most of the people that I met from Rutgers, putting aside sports, that was a whole different question -that Rutgers was outside of Princeton or outside of New York. I mean they'd cut their tongue out rather than say it was in New Brunswick, New Jersey. The town and school had a wall that everybody threw bricks at it except for the teams. The town was very, very loyal to the teams at a time when the students weren't very loyal to the teams. I mean I – you would meet more people from New Brunswick at a Rutgers game then you would at a city – or in those days City Commission Meeting.

**Q:** What was the ethnic mix at that time?

**Sheehan:** It was very ethnic. Italian community, very strong Italian community, very strong Hungarian community, a smaller or lessening I guess German/American community; of course an Irish/American community and a black or African/American community that were well established and in many cases been here for several generations. In many of the ethnic families the – what had been the mom and pop was now the grandma and grandpa, or the great grandmom and great grandpop and they were still here, and the children had gone elsewhere for other opportunities. So it was aging population, it was an aging city, and – but it was still very much a community neighborhood kind of – even the churches – I mean I'd never been to a place where every group had its own religious house of worship and very, very insular in that regard. So it was a small town, and a normal town.

**Q:** Now you gave up your job to move back to New Jersey I assume?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Yes, I did.

**Q:** Your job in Washington; did you think immediately about looking for another job in New Jersey?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Oh yeah, I was working at the Educational Testing Service and took the bus from New Brunswick to Princeton. I was in the research department of ETS, I had a very interesting time, it was a fun job.

**Q:** How long did that last?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Probably not more than a year. I left when I had my first child.

**Q:** When you gave birth do you think possibly that's the end of your career outside the home? That you would rather be a stay at home mom or was that not something that you really thought about?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well certainly when the children were very little I did not think about that one way or the other. I don't think it was a conscious decision until I was widowed and then turned out that education at Benedictine and Trinity was a little more vital for me than perhaps some of my classmates, and I had to raise three children.

**Q:** You talked about that and the choices and the personal sort of conflict that that must have brought.

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well it wasn't a personal conflict, it was a difficult time. I was fortunate in having a strong family support. I mean I was a young widow with three children, so it was – I mean you can't say it was conflict, it was difficult.

**Q:** How did you handle that financially?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well my husband was a member of a law firm and the law firm was generous in terms of a settlement, so that I could stay home until the children were – well at least the youngest was ready for school so I had some income coming in and Social Security. It's not only old people, its widows and orphans that benefit from Social Security. About the only thing they don't benefit it from is the IRS, they don't care about widows and orphans. I don't think they care about anybody but certainly I had a lot of support.

**Q:** You're getting I guess more involved in New Brunswick and your neighborhood and talk about sort of the activities that you had as a single mother in community activities.

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well I don't think they differ much from anyone else. There was the PTA and there was the church and the Women's Club, obviously Junior Women's Club, Alumni Association, hospital auxiliary, all the things that in a society where women are not generally in the workplace, which is very different from today, I was in the clubs and organizations that were committed to improving our lifestyle or our community, or surroundings, whatever.

**Q:** What were the politics of New Brunswick at that time?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well it was a commission form of government, just like Newark was that 1912 community. There were five commissioners, they were all men, and as a matter of fact the year before my husband died he was appointed to the City Commission in New Brunswick.

**Q:** What year would that be?

**Patricia Sheehan:** That would have been 1960 and that was very much the system as you will often see it today, you appoint someone to a vacancy so they can run as an incumbent, and I think you've heard that a few times, a few places and that's what it was.

**Q:** Of course in the 1960's, New Brunswick and other cities in New Jersey begin to – toward the end of the decade at least; suffer some urban unrest and riots in some of the larger cities. Did you see that coming or was it a surprise to you?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well by the time that began to actually percolate I ran for office myself and we were asleep, again, it was still the city commission, so there were five of us, we called ourselves The New Five. They called themselves The Good Five, we called them The Old Five and so we were elected in May of 1967, which when you mention social unrest you will recognize that that summer was a very difficult one, particularly in Newark, which led the way, so we had a difficult time. I don't know that we knew enough to see it coming, if you will. We had several advantages on our side in that we had no outside agitation either from the New York media who called every hour of the day and night to know about the bloodshed and the guns, or in fact, staged it as they did in Plainfield, so we had no outside agitation in that regard. We didn't have busloads of people coming from anywhere. The situation in New Brunswick was our very own home grown situation. They were our kids that were acting up on the streets and we were able, I think, because we were new and despite difficulty, we were able to make some inroads and create some peace and some oasis. Again, not alone, the clergy I mentioned earlier how many there were and how many different backgrounds there were, they came together and they were unbelievable in terms of support and assistance. The families, particularly the African American community, many of those families had been here for two or three, four generations so there was a stable middle class black community which I don't think existed in some other places perhaps, and that was a help. Things were in terrible shape but it was not only the minorities or the unrepresented citizens of the community that were impacted, they all were, unless you were a white middle age male that went to the Elks Club on Thursday afternoon you had no say in what happened in New Brunswick, New Jersey and so I think had the opportunity in a very difficult situation to ask for and to receive assistance from all segments of the community because they couldn't blame us for what had gone before and maybe they have a part of making things better.

**Q:** To back track a bit, do you think your involvement in politics and in electoral politics was first generated by your husband's interest or was it something that you had held at least in the back of your mind for many years, particularly your attraction to Washington and going to college there and being so close to the government and government agencies in your early career?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well no, I think I would have to say it's probably the death of my husband more than anything else because like any other young couple, newly formed young couple, we could have settled and done and gone most anywhere. We could have stayed in Washington, we both knew and had gone to school in Washington, we could have gone to New York. He did graduate work at NYU, he got his SJD

and whatever the advanced degree after the LLB from NYU and we loved going into New York, so we could have gone anywhere and it was really his choice that that anywhere be New Brunswick, New Jersey and in some ways I took it as a personal affront and here we are, three kids and now he's gone and I'm stuck with New Brunswick, New Jersey. But also, New Brunswick, New Jersey was stuck with me and I had a sense that if this is where he wanted to raise his children well I had an obligation to at least try to help to make a contribution to make it and better place to settle, so I suppose that would be the instigation. It certainly had an impact on my willingness to run and it's easier to run when you have no concept of the fact that you might win and I certainly didn't think that there was any opportunity, any chance in your wildest dreams that the electorate in New Brunswick would vote for a woman.

**Q:** Who were your mentors politically at that time?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well George Shamy, who was my husband's law partner, or one of my husband's law partners, was very much involved and in fact put the slate together. I think that he was probably more influential than anyone in getting me to run on the theory that I could add something to the slate. My husband was well known and loved and there were still people that remembered him. I have often said, have mouth will travel, so I was not afraid of speaking my mind and I thought if I could add something to the slate in terms of bringing people out, getting people involved who perhaps had not been involved in government before, that was all to the plus. If we wanted to in fact really change and then I could go back home and raise my kids because I'd never get elected.

**Q:** Talk about that first campaign, what was it like? What did you learn? What did you do well? What did you do badly?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Oh it seems like such ancient history now. I think the thing that we did the best was talk to the people. I mean we went door to door every night and we talked to people, and it was certainly the hardest thing I did. I never rang a doorbell that my stomach didn't give a lurch and I was never, ever abused or mistreated in any way. I was always greeted with politeness and sometimes enthusiasm but sometimes not, and it's a wonderful experience. I think part of this whole television world that we live in is sad and unfortunate because I don't think – I think candidates get caught up in that now and they don't talk to real people and hear about real problems and think about real concerns. When it's in your face what do they call it? Retail politics. What did Tip O'Neil say, all politics is neighborhood politics or something to that effect, so I think that's a good experience and it certainly was the thing that we did best. We were not remote, we weren't arrogant and we really wanted to provide some public service to the citizens of the community where we were all committed to stay and raising, we were all young, we all had young families, and New Brunswick was very much on our minds. We weren't moving to the suburbs, we weren't moving back to Washington or Philadelphia or wherever, and New Brunswick has all kinds of attributes that are positive. What it didn't have was an obligation or a sense of commitment from anybody else but New Brunswick. I mean let the cities burn, that's really what is an attitude of far too many people. I mean 60% of the land area was tax exempt, 80% of the children in public housing were under

15, 25% of the taxpayer homeowners were over 65. I mean there were a lot of institutional problems that needed to be addressed and needed to have other layers of government provide assistance. It wasn't just an old boys club puttering along. I've got mine and the heck with everybody else, so it was an existing campaign.

**Q:** What were the powers in the political establishment in New Brunswick and Middlesex County at the time?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well General Wilentz was by far the county leader.

**Q:** David Wilentz?

**Patricia Sheehan:** David Wilentz, David T. Wilentz and I think what is interesting, and I'm not sure I knew it at the time, I certainly knew it later, was that he provided a great deal of assistance by staying out of it. I think that if he had supported the incumbent team to any degree we would have had a more difficult time than we did, and he just did not become involved at all, nor did his organization. It was a non-partisan community so the elections were a theoretically non-partisan, although New Brunswick is very much a Democratic town. George Otlowski was on the Board of Freeholders and everybody stood back and watched the – I need to think of them as a young Turk but watch the young folks take on the old folks and I think, as I say, it was a tacit admission of support, although I don't think anybody would ever have admitted that.

**Q:** Do you have speculation as to why the organization people did sit on the sidelines? Was it dissatisfaction with the incumbents?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well that would be my guess because from my perspective, or our perspective, nobody was satisfied with the incumbents. I mean they'd been in office, not all of them, but certainly that organization being called an organization for 27 years, and so they had two public meetings a month at 10:00 on a weekday morning, so even if you had an issue, a problem, a concern, even a congratulatory note, you had no way if you were working or caring for a family or surviving, that you could get to it, so it was – it wasn't providing even the basic services anymore. The garbage didn't get picked up, the snow didn't get removed, it was like it had been abandoned.

**Q:** How much of a factor was the civil unrest at the time? Was it held against the incumbent administration that they hadn't kept the peace?

**Patricia Sheehan:** No, because my sense of timing as it is, is I really came in time to have the four square. I mean it was a fault of theirs to the extent that like every other community they weren't ready for

it. I mean there was no such thing as police training; there was no such thing as modern equipment. I mean when things became difficult, I think there were something like four, six, less than a dozen anyway walkie-talkies in the whole police department and half of them didn't have batteries. One member of the whole department was the only one that had ever been to FBI school, so they didn't have the tools and the equipment; the snowplow was 37 years old. They didn't have the tools or the equipment to provide the service that citizens have a right too much less the willingness to provide it.

**Q:** To your surprise, you do get elected.

**Patricia Sheehan:** There are people in this town that are still surprised; come on its 30 years later.

**Q:** How did you juggle your family responsibilities and the new public role?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well they were all in school at that point which was very important and I and a – it was before daycare. I often think of that when I see the opportunities for young mothers now and young children as well, but I had a cadre of loyal, wonderful babysitters, went through several families where there were multiple women in the family and I worked my way through all of them. I had family support, in case of emergency my parents were in Newark, Dan's parents were in Highland Park, and I think that's how we muddled through. It wasn't easy but I had always been involved in meetings of one kind or another. I now have found they were evening meetings.

**Q:** What were your specific responsibilities in government?

**Patricia Sheehan:** I was the Mayor, so I had all the honorary things in terms of cutting ribbons and speaking for the community. I had the planning department; let's see we had a Department of Public Safety and that was one commissioner; Public Works was another commissioner; I had the Planning Board, I had the library, I had the Board of Adjustment, a lot of appointments to make and speak for the town in terms of negotiating with various groups within the community. Established the first ecumenical prayer service ever in the community; had the first Citizens' Recreation Committee; had the first clean up in the garbage – Garbage Day Cleanup; I mean little kinds of things. The first interoffice memo, they didn't write things down. Had the Chamber of Commerce come in and do almost a time and motion study, discovered to buy a box of pencils as the Mayor in New Brunswick. In the 1960's somebody handled a piece of paper 12 times.

**Q:** What were the factors -

**Patricia Sheehan:** Ridiculous.

**Q:** particularly as a woman in times when women were in a relatively rare in elective office, that you got selected to run for Mayor as opposed to another member of your reform team?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well the person that was serving as Mayor when we ran had not been first in terms of the election on that particular slate of five people, so that became a rallying cry for our insurgent group if you will. He who gets the most votes should be the Mayor, that's an indication of public support, and as a matter of fact I was called on it at one of the debates, we had innumerable debates, you had four people together, we would come and we would say, what do you mean he, and I said, oh well he or she and laughed, and I in fact did get the most votes and we carried through on campaign promise number one and I was Mayor.

**Q:** At that time, do you recall how many other women were mayors in New Jersey?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Practically none; Cecile Norton was the Mayor of Sea Bright and Katherine Elkis White had been the Mayor of Red Bank and we were a little bit of a trio team at various Democratic functions and so on. I really had a much stronger relationship and I'm happy to say it didn't have a gender reflection with the mayors of the cities. Tom Dunn and Art Holland and Ken Gibson, I mean although I was a smaller city, we spoke the same language, we were facing the same kinds of problems, we had the same suburban fantasy. Mr. Blanding's builds his dream house attitude to work against – we had the populations most in need. I mean if any place in – when they came out of the county jail after a term, no matter where they had originally come from, those inmates were brought to the Welfare Office in New Brunswick or in Newark, or in Jersey City and so I mean everybody was dumping on the cities and so as I say I think I established a fine working relationship in Newark and in Jersey City and – well don't have time to repeat the point.

**Q:** You talk about your memories of some of those mayors that you just mentioned, what their personalities were like, how they were similar or different in the way they ran their cities?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well I think we were a besieged group. Besieged on all sides and our federal government had pretty much turned against the cities and I'm proud of my association with them and working with them. I found them all to be dedicated. I mean some of us were not as smart as others, some were smarter than others, but I don't think any of them – I mean it was a privilege to me. They were dedicated to their community, and more particularly, they were dedicated, truly dedicated to making things better for their people. There was a sense of their people and I don't mean that in a derogatory way at all and they were, or tried to be statesmen and stateswoman with a sense of beating on the legislature's door, to be heard from, to be responded to, to tweak things so that we weren't undone, and I think by and large we were effective and we had friends on both sides of the aisle, and the Mayors were on both sides of aisle. Some were independent, primarily they were Democratic, and some of them had unfortunate ends in terms of perhaps getting off the track, but when they served as Mayor they truly served their cities. I'm very proud of them, proud to be part of that group.



**Q:** At some point, you also become, outside your public role employed by New Brunswick's most famous private employer, Johnson & Johnson, talk about how that came about.

**Patricia Sheehan:** I worked at Johnson & Johnson prior to being in public office. I worked for them once my children started school and I'm proud of that association as well. I mean I don't think any corporation is perfect, but I think one of the outstanding hallmarks of Johnson & Johnson is that they want to be right. There was never, ever any sense of get the job done, but don't tell me the details, there was never any sense of our public were saying this in public but we're really doing this on the sly, and so I'm proud of that association so it was important to me.

**Q:** What were your various positions at J&J?

**Patricia Sheehan:** I started out in human resources and did wage and salary surveys, job evaluations, college hiring rates, the kinds of things that were in the personnel department of those days, and as I say, now they call human resources. Along with it everything changes, sometimes the more it changes, the more it stays the same, but it was in the personnel field and that's what I had worked in with the Air Transport Association as well, so I'd had some experience in that.

**Q:** In your public role, did you find it helpful or a problem to have this employment with J&J? J&J's so large that I assume that their municipal issues are somewhat incidental to their overall operations, but was it something that became a political liability to you when you were up for election?

**Patricia Sheehan:** No, I think – I'm sure you've heard as it's been said over and over, and often times different ways, but nonetheless the hallmark of Johnson & Johnson is what they call the credo, and one of the main tenants after children, and nurses, and doctors is the community. They're located with a facility, or where their employees live, which suggests the surrounding area to a particular facility, so they have a long history of corporate citizenship and they were certainly generous with their time in terms of allowing me time. I would like to think, and hope that perhaps they were proud of me, but there was no sense of conflict, there was no sense of well now you're the Mayor and we're your paycheck every month, because the Mayor is the only 24-hour a day part-time job around, although not all of them are part-time anymore, at least in terms of remuneration. No, there wasn't a conflict, there were certainly times when we didn't agree with each other. We being the city administration and the Johnson & Johnson, but by and large they're pretty good corporate citizens. I don't think there's a place in the world that wouldn't be happy to have a J&J facility as part of their tax base. They weren't our largest landowner; their land was really miniscule when you think about the land that the hospital's and this university took up and off the tax growth. They were a significant employer, but again, not even the largest employer, the two hospitals did more than that aside from the government, but they were a player in the program, but I'm not sure that they played any differently in New Brunswick then they did anywhere else because I was Mayor either for me or against me.

**Q:** As Mayor, I assume you start to get drawn into county and state wide politics and personalities; you've already mentioned David Wilentz of the long time Middlesex County Democratic leader and former Attorney General and Prosecutor in the Lindbergh kidnapping case, a very famous person in New Jersey history. Did you have much personal contact with him?

**Patricia Sheehan:** I didn't have much contact with him. I had much more contact with Governor Hughes and with members of the legislature. Fortunately, for me as a new mayor in particular, Governor Hughes had established the Department of Community Affairs just really prior to my coming and so Paul Ylvislaker was the first Commissioner and as any first Commissioner, or any Commissioner for that matter, you want to make a little bit of a record and have some success. Here was this new mayor just up the road a piece who wanted to do a job and had no resources, and Paul had all kinds of resources, and so it was a very happy marriage in terms of inter-governmental relations and I mined that field for every nickel I could get. As I say, Governor Hughes, I'm happy to know personally and he was very supportive as was his family, so I became involved in state politics, but primarily at the state level, with as I say the legislature and with the Governor. That being said, seemed in retrospect, I don't think I was smart enough to know it at the time, but the hands off, if you will, of General Wilentz, was in fact an endorsement or at least a tacit support because I think perhaps he could have cut us off at the knees, and instead welcomed us gracefully. I mean we had – this was an outstanding accomplishment for us to win, total neophytes to win over an administration that had been in for 27 years and we had a victory dinner to end all victory dinners representing all people. I think the tickets were, just to put it in perspective with 2006, I think they were \$10 at the Green Briar which you may remember was the political place to have events, or the only place big enough to have events. In any case, both General Wilentz and Dick Hughes were there and the General said several times in later years, it's the only time I was ever at a dinner where anybody made the Governor wait until 1:00 in the morning to get to the microphone, but we had a lot of other more important voters to have a chance to say something.

**Q:** What more memories do you have of Governor Hughes?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Oh Governor Hughes was fantastic. When he was leaving office and Governor Cahill was coming in, the cities were still in a difficult time and he called me down to Morven to meet Bill Cahill and more to the point for Bill Cahill to meet me, and understand that New Brunswick, home of Rutgers, home of J&J, was an important place in New Jersey and that he wanted to be sure that Bill knew that if I needed help that the Governor's office would provide it, and that's certainly a memory that's going to go on, and on, and on because as I say, Governor Hughes was never further then a telephone call away in all our most difficult times.

**Q:** Let's take a short break.

#### Break ####

**Q:** Pat, before our break we talked about your election as mayor in your first term. You then stand for reelection. What had changed in the time before your first election and the second time you ran?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well, I guess the most critical thing is we changed the form of government from the Faulkner Act Commission form of government where you may recall each of the five elected commissioners have a specific department, in both administrative and legislative impact. Five independent fiefdoms, if you will. So the form of government was changed to a strong mayor and council. So when we ran for reelection, I had to run individually as mayor. There was no hiding behind, it's like getting mixed up among the five somewhere, and it was an important hurdle for me to see that it could be done, that it was for real, that they did intend to have Patsy and represent them and so that was the biggest difference. The other difference is that we tried to show that we had, in fact, made changes. We hadn't corrected and placed everything and we hadn't constructed the Garden of Eden or anything like that, but things were better. People were more involved. Citizens could be heard at City Hall. We had a meeting at night as well as a meeting in the morning and we had involved more citizens from various areas than had ever been done in the city, and so it was a vindication of all our efforts and we put in a lot of hard work and we were endorsed and reelected. So it was a coup for us.

**Q:** In your second term, you dealt for most, if not all of that term, with the Cahill Administration, a Republican administration. How did that differ in terms of the relationship between the municipalities and the state government?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well I think overall it was more difficult. Not through Bill Cahill's doing, because I think at heart he was an urban person as well and was very good to the cities, but one of the basic differences I think between the two parties is that the Republican base was in the suburbs, and the needs of suburban New Jersey were paramount, whereas the Democrats' base of support was in the cities, and they were more willing to respond to those needs. Personally for myself and for New Brunswick, I can't say enough about the support that we got from Bill Cahill. Governor Hughes, before he left office, made sure that I met and had some time with the governor, the incoming Governor, Bill Cahill, and that we were trying to do good things in New Brunswick and he helped us all and he did.

**Q:** Of course the Cahill Administration initiated some of the things that later in your career became significant, such as the Meadowlands plan and the initial concept for the Meadowlands. But the Cahill Administration did run into political problems which jeopardized and ultimately defeated his attempt at reelection. What were your thoughts as you saw the troubles besetting the Cahill Administration?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well I think that for me personally, and I don't pretend to be any astute political analyst, but I think Bill Cahill was beaten in the primary by fellow Republicans and there's a question certainly I'm sure it's crossed Brendan's mind as well as others, that had Bill Cahill not been defeated in the primary, he might well have won a second term and Brendan would not have had an opportunity to be governor. I think that, you know, it's the classic shooting yourself in the foot.

**Q:** As the election in 1973 starts to heat up, at least a few candidates get in early in the race, Brendan Byrne is the relative latecomer to enter the primary race. What were the politics of Middlesex County in terms of the gubernatorial primary in 1973?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well as far as I can remember, and I'm victim of senior memory moments more than most I suppose, but Ed Crabiel was a senator from Middlesex. That was at a time where being a senator, senatorial districts, it was before the one-man, one-vote, so there was much more identity in our county and I'm sure in others with your legislators and we supported our own. Ed Crabiel.

**Q:** How did that message get percolated? Was it just understood that he was the Middlesex County person? He was the senator and we all get in line, or was it something more direct, that the county chairman either directly or through surrogates says, "Do this, or else?"

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well it's probably a combination of all of them, and I can't put myself in a position to tell you what happened where or when, but speaking as an elected official, speaking as someone who was involved in Democratic politics, someone who's an arch Democrat all her life, I can say that, you know, if you have a candidate that you know personally, respect, and believe in, and he represents your turf and is running for another office, it's almost automatic that you would want to support him and I think Ed Crabiel was an outstanding legislator. I think he served the citizens of Middlesex very well and went on to serve in the Byrne administration. So while there may have been pressure from somebody on somebody, I certainly wasn't aware of it. I think it came out of the commitment to the Democratic Party and I'm not saying that I would support a candidate just because he or she was a Democrat, but I am saying that if there was a candidate that was a Democrat from my neighborhood, that's where my affiliation would be. So I think that's pretty automatic.

**Q:** Well in fact, late in the process right before the filing deadline before the primary, Brendan Byrne, then a sitting judge, resigns from the bench and enters the race. What was your first contact or experience with him as a candidate?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well, it was at a mayors meeting in Princeton at the University there and it was I guess "meet the candidates" night, or "meet the candidates" afternoon. I can't really remember in detail, but he was, and I'm not sure as I think about it, that there were a number of candidates. Maybe seven, and I'm not sure that all seven of them were there, but certainly a majority of the candidates were there, and they each spoke individually and then there was a question and answer period, and as you say, Brendan was really brand new to the campaign. At about that same time, I'm fairly sure that that was one of his first public meetings with critical organizations.

**Q:** How was he as a speaker or as a candidate?

**Patricia Sheehan:** He was terrible. I would think, I don't know, but I would think that coming off the bench, he was not used to speaking. I don't know. I shouldn't even say that, but my guess is when you speak, and I don't have a law background, but when you speak from the bench, everybody listens. I know that from my various stints as a juror, and when you're one of five or six candidates seeking support, it's a whole different thing, and as I say, he became seasoned very quickly, but that was not a good experience. I don't think I've ever asked him what he thought about it, but I imagine he thinks the same. It was a baptism, and he went on to clearly be prepared and able to get his message across.

**Q:** Did you have any other contacts with him after that first session at the mayors meeting?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Not really, except to the extent that after the primary, when the candidates were chosen by both parties, I worked my tail off as a Democrat for the Democratic ticket, but it was, you know, not a one-on-one. I don't know that Brendan knew I was working and I certainly had no real contact with him, except at those events. You know, the Middlesex County Democratic soiree or the railroad station in downtown New Brunswick. I mean, if our candidate was in my town, I was there, so I contributed some little bits of support.

**Q:** Did you see much improvement in his campaigning performance?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Oh yeah.

**Q:** He had done the election campaign.

**Patricia Sheehan:** Oh, absolutely. He had only one place to go and that was up, and he went up very well.

**Q:** And of course his opponent, surprisingly, was Congressman Sandman, who had defeated Governor Cahill in the Republican primary. Did you feel that it was pretty much a lock that Brendan Byrne would be elected governor, given that Congressman Sandman was viewed as a representative of the right wing of the Republican Party?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well, I'm of the school of thought it's never over 'til it's over, and until the votes are counted, I'm never sure of anything. But clearly, as I said earlier, I think the Republicans shot themselves in the foot. Sandman was a terrible candidate and certainly was no threat to Brendan in New Brunswick, New Jersey, that's for sure, or in Middlesex County for that matter. I think that there was no question. I mean, there was no question that we were supporting him and I think that Ed Crabel was a factor in that support as a candidate that lost: Hey, I ran in the primary, I lost, now we all get behind the winning candidate, and I think that that was an important influence on us all. I mean, he didn't go home and lick

his wounds and say, oh, you know, you beat me so I'm not going to help you. That wasn't part of it. That's not the Democratic way.

**Q:** On issues, Congressman Sandman was fervently an anti-tax candidate. Governor Byrne famously fudged the tax issue by saying he didn't see the need for an income tax "in the foreseeable future." In retrospect, given Brendan Byrne's large lead over Congressman Sandman, would it have been better for him in that general election campaign to be a little more forthright on the need for a broad-based tax in New Jersey? Would that have helped him avoid some of the political problems later that impugned his credibility and his honesty?

**Patricia Sheehan:** I don't take any of that very seriously. I mean, there's nobody running for office that's going to say they're for taxes, and even if there were some out there after the debacle of Jim Florio with the tax issue, you're not going to find anybody at all, even in little pockets. I mean, it's a fact of life that there are taxes and it's a fact of life that they only go up. So I think he's fudging, as you call it, was rather astute. The fact of the matter is that we all worked very hard for the income tax and I think all of us are disappointed that, as we worked hard for the lottery, that despite those efforts and despite the imposition of those taxes, that we still haven't solved the property tax problem in New Jersey, which is unconscionable, and it's particularly unconscionable as we speak now because government's at a standstill, which no one can justify. So I think that being honest and forthright with the people, I mean, I think Governor Corzine has been very clear on this. What we have isn't going to work and we've got to somehow, unlike the current federal government, not continuously burden our children and our grandchildren with today's problems.

**Q:** Governor Byrne gets elected in November, 1973. You're now in the third year, I believe, of your second term as mayor.

**Patricia Sheehan:** My second term would have ended on December of '74.

**Q:** I guess there's consideration as to what you might do next, as I understand it, although there wasn't a term limit in New Brunswick, it's sort of an informal understanding and you had pledged that you would only serve two terms or was it something somewhat softer than that?

**Patricia Sheehan:** It was a lot softer than that. I felt reelection was very important to justify and ratify my serving at all. I felt that reelection was important for that, but because the administration that we defeated had been in for so long, I had the sense, at least personally just speaking for myself, that they began to feel that the office was theirs, as opposed to the office being a place to serve the citizens, and so I had resolved, in my own mind at least, that I would not run again for a third term to widen the divide and emphasize the contrast between the new administration and the administration that we had defeated. I

thought it was important for people to recognize that the mayor served the people. It wasn't that the people served the mayor. As I say, that was a personal idiosyncrasy with me.

**Q:** At some point during the transition period, as the Byrne administration prepares to take office, your name comes up as a potential member of the administration. How did that come about?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well I'm not sure, to be honest, how it all came about. I can only speak for myself, and as I indicated earlier, the City of New Brunswick and the Office of Mayor and Pat Sheehan, and more or less the head writer, had forged a very close relationship with the Department of Community Affairs, and the mission of the Department of Community Affairs coincided with what I saw as my mission as Mayor of New Brunswick, and so I thought it was a perfect fit, and it was an office that I very much wanted to have, and Senator Ed Crabel and Assemblyman Bob Wilentz were both very much in my corner. Whether they initiated it or my efforts with them caused them to initiate it, or whether it came from some other direction, I really don't know, but I wanted it very badly. I felt I had the experience and the résumé to support it. I certainly knew the mayors. I didn't quite know all. Within 567, but I knew them throughout the state from various committees and organizations that I represented or been on and it was a job I wanted and Brendan saw that I got it.

**Q:** Who were your key contacts with the Byrne team that you spoke with and were interviewed by?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Other than the Governor and Jerry English and Ed Crabel, who was very much a part of that team, in fact I think he was already Secretary of State by the time we got to Department of Community Affairs. Those were certainly the key people.

**Q:** You didn't deal with Dick Leone at that point?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Huh-uh. No. Not 'til later.

**Q:** We'll talk about that later. Now when did you hear that you actually were going to be nominated and by whom? Was that the Governor himself?

**Patricia Sheehan:** I would imagine. I don't know. I'd be only making it up. I was nominated in February and sworn in at the midpoint in February of '74.

**Q:** Do you recall what the Governor told you his idea of your job was?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well, knowing the way I babble, I probably had more to say than he did, but my sense of it is that I got all kinds of encouragement from him to provide service to the cities in particular, and in truth, to all the communities, but particularly to the cities, and also to serve as their voice at the table because if the cities and the towns of New Jersey didn't have me at the table in terms of the cabinet, they didn't have anybody, because the mission of each of the other departments was much more defined and much more established because the Department of Community Affairs hadn't been around that long to be rigidly boxed in as to what it could do and not do, and at that point there was still the vestiges of many of the federal programs. The Great Society Action, and so on, which meant that there would be a resource, so we're back to "have mouth, will travel," and he seemed to be pleased with that.

**Q:** As you took over the administrative controls of the department, what did you see as the main goals you wanted to accomplish and the main problems you were facing at that time?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well I think as any new commissioner, you had problems in terms of knowing exactly what the responsibilities and the opportunities, as well as the roadblocks, are within your department. Meeting the people. I mean, there was no wholesale. Everybody out on the street. Start new. Discovering where the strengths and the weaknesses were. By and large, in my experience at least in state government, is that it's made up of really dedicated, smart, able, hardworking people who get burned out very quickly because the system of government is so rigid that it works against decision making, it works against innovation, it works against working hard. I mean, my department, like every other department, had young people, old people, people at various levels of civil service, and they all got treated the same. So sometimes your enthusiasm for work gets beat down if you look and all around you are people who are making more money and working less time and so on. So I think that the system of government works against and we have much better and more dedicated employees with government than we deserve to have, and by the same token, having that been said, if there are bad apples, you have to work around them because there's no way that the inefficient, ineffective, dishonest person is removed. So it's a difficult system. I mean, I think any of us that have come against tenure or civil service or whatever, understand that protecting employees from the crazy notions of a commissioner is important but it also prevents innovation and so on. So I felt I had the best department there was, probably because it was the newest and things weren't all engraved in stone and it's a constant battle to get things done and I think a commission has to support the directors and the employees and know who they are and share their vision, and I think it worked very well.

**Q:** Even before Governor Byrne was sworn in, he was drawn into the controversy over the financing of Giants Stadium and the Meadowlands, which at that time is viewed as the lynchpin for the overall development scheme. There was an attempt by New York to sort of undermine the financing. I know that some of this happened even before you took office as Commissioner, but what was your memories of that or your perspective in terms of the fight over the Meadowlands?



**Patricia Sheehan:** Well, it's come to mind recently in a number of different ways with the mega-mergers that we're seeing so that I'm not sure. We were talking about that just recently. I'm not sure that in 2006 that could've been pulled off, because it was the banks, the banking institutions in New Jersey, that saved the day, and we don't have that anymore. It's the same way with the housing bond issue. That came a little bit later in my term as Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs. I mean, I spoke to this room, the silence would've been deafening, and it wasn't until Tom Stanton from First Jersey stood up and said, "I'll take 10 million" that the dam burst and we had a housing bond issue in New Jersey. I can't emphasize how important that was in terms of making things work and providing safe, clean, sanitary, decent places for people to live, and same was true earlier, at the time, with the whole concept of the Meadowlands and the stadium, and it was very important that those financial institutions felt and believed and knew that New Jersey's well-being was important to them. Making money was important. Serving the citizens of New Jersey was important, and I'm not so sure if you were in a white tower in North Carolina that you would have the same impetus to take the risk, and it was a risk.

**Q:** Housing became a very large issue in the Byrne administration, partly because of the New Jersey Supreme Court's decision in the Mount Laurel series of cases. As an ex-urban mayor, how did you react to the Mount Laurel litigation and the Supreme Court's decisions?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well I was much more down in the trenches. As Commission of Community Affairs, I was also Chairman of what was then the Housing Finance Agency New Jersey, HFA, and also the Mortgage Finance Agency. I was not Chairman of that, I was a member. Our mission was to get housing built and Mount Laurel, although that was a key issue statewide, for us it was kind of auxiliary. It was going to make it possible to have, we thought or were told, to have a balance of housing in New Jersey. I mean, back to my days as mayor, there were several mayors' discussions one time or another who said, you know, crying about the property tax, that their children, their policemen, their teachers, couldn't afford to live in their towns. There was no available housing. For a new couple starting out, or as I say a policeman, a fireman, teachers, couldn't afford to live in many of our towns back in the 70s. So you know how much worth it is now. So our business was to find groups. A lot of them were church groups, a lot of them were entrepreneurs, to rehabilitate housing and to build housing, and the direct impact of Mount Laurel was really peripheral to that.

**Q:** Another area that your department, over time, became drawn into was the role of the state in regional and statewide planning. During the Byrne Administration, at least one bill was introduced to create a state regulatory authority that would have control over larger developments like regional shopping centers, industrial parks, and the like. It didn't go very far in the legislature. In fact, I think in order to get the bill printed, the Governor had to prevail upon his ex-law partner, Senator Greenberg, who was here earlier today, to put his name on so the bill could actually get a number and be introduced and printed. It didn't get very much further than that. But there are professional planners within your department, I guess, who were for this, but you were an urban mayor. New Jersey has a very strong tradition of home rule. How did you deal with these debates over what was the proper role of the state in county and local planning?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well we did have a planning department within the Department of Community Affairs and with David Bardin and with Joe Hoffman and I can't remember. I think there was someone else involved in it. We had chaired within and between interagency committees, if you will, the drawing up of a regional plan for the state, and I couldn't help but smile to myself when you said you couldn't get legislation to have regulatory authority. We couldn't even get people to sign off on the state plan, and it was one that certainly made a great deal of sense to me since I was part and parcel of it, but in substance, in lay people's terms, it was kind of, you know, lining up where we were right at that moment and at least delineating areas that we should not be into and stressing areas that it made sense to develop or redevelop and be able to say, hey, if you looked at this plan and you wanted to build your shopping center or your apartments or whatever it was, in an area designed for growth where the infrastructure was in place and there was water and sewers and roads and a way, it was near a rail line or it was near a bus line, we would help you do that. But if you wanted to go out to Farmer Jones' field where there were no water, no supplies, no infrastructure, open space that they had four little league teams playing on, and the only green trees within 50 miles, we're going to do everything we can to deter you and we're sure as goodness are not going to help you where this development should not be, and that was kind of the general sense of it, and I don't think, even to this day, I don't understand why people, other than developers out to make a buck, wouldn't sign on for it. But we were never able to get anybody to agree to it, and every once in a while now you see with brown fields again making perfect sense, if they can be made safe, that you develop where development is and where infrastructure is and you don't develop where the birds and the ducks and the geese and the deer and the antelope play. If you drive around New Jersey, I had occasion last week to go to Vineland for a luncheon meeting. It's astounding the countryside that we still have and the Brendan Byrne Forest that we drove through, and then if you're at Newark Airport and driving to New Brunswick or taking the train to New Brunswick, you think my goodness, there isn't a tree within a zillion miles and somehow we can't get ourselves together enough to protect what we have and put development which would help everybody. But that's my soapbox and it didn't work 30 years ago. It's still not working.

**Q:** As you joined the cabinet, what were cabinet meetings in the Byrne Administration like? Useful? Not useful?

**Patricia Sheehan:** I think they were useful. I think it kept us in the loop, which I think, you know, I can't speak for Brendan, and he may well have chafed at it: Oh my gosh, I've got to spend two hours with these folks again. But he came across as wanting to share: this is where it's going. Well, this is where I'm having a problem. What are you doing about that? And it gave each of us, or at least I should only speak for me, giving me a sense that I was part of this administration. I mean, there are always leaks and rumors and inside scoop. Most of our newspapers and commentators all have their little thing, and I would guess that if you spent a couple of years reading about things you thought you should know in the paper, you would be pretty discouraged, disgruntled, or bitter, and certainly the cabinet meetings precluded that. Not that we knew or had to know everything that was going on, but in the broad picture where Brendan wanted us to go or what was holding him back from accomplishing this or that was at least shared so that we could understand that our crisis, whatever that was and we were always dealing in crises, was just a little piece of the picture in this other area that we didn't really know much about, was

critical at the moment. So I think in terms of sharing and openness and drawing us in, they were effective. Did they solve the problems of the world? Were they helpful to him? I'm not so sure.

**Q:** Apart from formal cabinet meetings, how was your relationship with the Governor's staff? We've heard suggestions during this series that at least in the first term, when the structure was somewhat less clear as to who was in charge, there was no formal chief of staff, there were few people who, perhaps, acted in the Governor's behalf without talking to each other or so forth, did you see that confusion? Or how was your personal perspective on the Governor's staff relationship with the individual departments?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well I don't know and I can't speak for any other administration because I was only in one administration, but I think that the individual departments, or the individual commissioners, had a much better relationship with the Governor than they did with his immediate staff. Part of that is akin to the receptionist in your doctor's office. I mean, she can be a rogue or she can hang up on you or she can yell at you or she can give you an appointment or she cannot give you an appointment and you still really love your doctor and she's not doing that on her own, I mean, and I think there was some of that and my guess is it's probably in all the administrations. There were some who, you know, "Drop everything, this is the Governor's Office," and you'd run, like, goodness and find out that it was some intern using the Governor's Office to show how important he or she was and, you know, can report when he goes back to class, or she goes back to class in September, that I, you know, had cabinet offices at their beck and call, and I think that's fairly standard in any kind of a group. Those near the rich and famous wear that aura and I don't think it's very serious. I don't think anybody gets fooled more than once by that. I think there were some in counsel's office or the Governor's Office or the Secretary of State's Office who had, at any given moment, their agenda, the Governor's agenda, and you weren't always clear which was which. But I can't say that I had overwhelming problems with the staff. Probably no different than anybody else's. At least until I know they're cabinet officers, we'd often be tearing our hair out if one or the other. I had incredible problems, as I guess everybody did with the Treasurer's Office, or the Budget Office.

**Q:** Let's talk a little bit about that. The Treasurer initiated a proposal to restructure the executive departments, which included consolidating the various units of your department, Community Affairs, with other executive departments, and that put you in a very difficult position, didn't it?

**Patricia Sheehan:** I'm not sure I understand you. You mean Wayne Dumont wanting to do away with the department?

**Q:** No, Dick Leone wanting to restructure the department.

**Patricia Sheehan:** My department?

**Q:** Uh-huh.

**Patricia Sheehan:** I don't remember that at all, maybe I blocked that out of my mind.

**Q:** Possibly.

**Patricia Sheehan:** What are you talking about?

**Q:** Possibly; no I remember but why don't we move on. I think it was in the second or third year of the first term.

**Patricia Sheehan:** What I remember was Wayne Dumont, he always every year put in a bill to do away with the Department of Community Affairs.

**Q:** Well what was your reaction to those bills?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Fought like mad, successfully I might add.

**Q:** I guess one of the arguments for abolishing or whittling down the department was that the federal money that had led to the creation of many of the urban poverty programs and urban revitalization programs had been drying up over time.

**Patricia Sheehan:** Significantly.

**Q:** So how did you deal with that with greatly reduced resources?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well one of the big issues of course is that bond issue that I just referred to. The federal – the Housing Bond issue which was a state funded bond issue which provided resources to do housing that was not going to be available anymore from the federal government. The other issue was to fight like mad for the federal dollars that were available and there was a young man in our department who came up with a formula, again it came to mind recently with the Homeland Security, and the dangers of Utah are more extreme than the dangers of New York City, federal formulas, you live and die by federal formulas if you're a beneficiary which the State of New Jersey was, and Bruce Sax was able to develop a formula for housing support Section 8 housing that if not favored, at least leveled the playing field, and I don't pretend to understand it but made sure that the formula included a provision for age of housing stock which favored New York, Boston, Newark over brand new communities. I mean we go back to the Revolutionary War and the whole middle is less than a 50 or 100 years old some of those communities. So that's the kind of thing that you do to ensure that whatever aid is available is coming to the fore. The whole question of local government finance, we were able to and I hope and think they still

do it, but we were able to certify every municipal budget in this state. There was no fun and games and make believe money, that's part of the reason taxes are so high, but it's because every dollar is accounted for, and so I think we had a mission. Well you can tell I feel we had a mission, regardless, it was not just a poverty program and it was not dismissed as that. We had real people doing real work and had some accomplishments to our credit.

**Q:** Well moving from policy to politics, the Byrne Administration's popularity plummets with the passage of the income tax and people begin to refer to him as one term Byrne, OTB, how did you view that in terms of his political prospects as a cabinet officer and did you offer any advice to him or others close to him as to how to get out this sort of political trough?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well I wasn't in the position of offering advice to anyone. I was one of the Lieutenant's out in the trenches and I did what so many of us did, look for ways to showcase accomplishments whether it was cutting the ribbon on senior citizen housing, or whether it was looking at refurbished, renovated brownstones in Hoboken. Some of the things in my department were – we also had the Department of Aging whether it was a senior health-o-rama; I mean little things and big things. I mean he was the captain of our ship and so I think what we all tried to do was not only accomplish what we set out to do, which we were working hard at, but to be able to showcase those accomplishments as the accomplishments of Brendan T. Byrne, which in fact they were. He had to take the blame; he had to get the credit.

**Q:** With the polls showing him so low in public approval, did you think he had a chance to win when he stood for re-election?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Oh sure, always have a chance to win. You work hard and he did.

**Q:** What about in the primary? His political weakness attracted several candidates which split the anti-Byrne vote that was a key factor that many have cited in terms of his winning re-nomination. Talk a little bit I guess about the other candidates in that race and the ones you knew Joe Hoffman was a fellow cabinet member, did you find that sort of a particularly egregious incident of betrayal by a cabinet officer in the Byrne Administration?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well I don't think I'd put it quite that strongly, but yes I disagreed with that whole thing. I thought that it was disloyal and I thought Brendan was a better candidate. I mean I like Joe and I worked with him and I think he accomplished wonders in many of his programs in the Department of Labor I believe but no you don't do that, I don't think.

**Q:** Did you take any or special political role or were you given any special political assignments with urban mayors, with Middlesex County people, with winning in the Byrne re-election in 1977?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well same old, same old, as I said earlier, have mouth will travel. I was very much an ardent supporter and any opportunity I had to participate whether it was the Middlesex County organization or the women's organizations, if I was asked, and in several cases represented the Governor, so I guess – I take that back I was asked. Several times I represented as a surrogate at some campaign thing or another; the Governor so I suppose I must have been doing something right.

**Q:** From your perspective, how was he as a candidate in 1977 compared to 1973?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well I think we've all agreed on this over and over again, he certainly learned how to conduct himself and how to speak and represent people and he **had** something to show for it. I mean it – I think as we're seeing now with Jim Florio, the tax issue although you certainly suffer from it, I mean reasonable people understand that you have to pay taxes and you have to raise taxes, and so I don't think that it was so desperate, the tax thing automatically meant no one would vote for Byrne. I think a lot of that was ginned up by the media who I – I mean they want things to be interesting, it's not a ho hum, here he comes again, he's elected then, now he's going to be elected again, ho hum, ho-ho. Part of it was that, part of it is that rock round, cadre that is against taxes no matter what, for what, is not as large as many people think. They're vocal, but reasonable people I think you can reach within reason.

**Q:** One of the programs he ran on in 1977 in his re-election campaign was his effort to get legislation to protect the Pinelands, even though the Department of Community Affairs was probably not the lead department.

**Patricia Sheehan:** No, that was David.

**Q:** More likely the Department of Environmental Protection, but your department did produce a lot of the planning and a lot of the data that was used in developing the concept of the Pinelands Preservation Act, how did you sort of look at that, and also in terms of the home role issues as New Jersey took on this much more assertive role in regulating such a large expanse of the state.

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well I think that I tried at least to point to the success of the Meadowlands. I mean that's two counties, that's 17 towns, I'm not sure it wasn't a miracle in terms of getting it together and I was not there at the point of its origination and I'm not that close to it now that I know how it's evolving, but I know what it was like then and it was truly a miracle, and what it meant was that what should be protected was in fact protected, and what should be developed was in fact developed. The planners and the engineers, and the developers were able to do their thing within limits in a very open and public way and I mean I thought that the stadium and the racetrack were absolutely wonderful. I was out in a rowboat more often than not looking at heron and shrimp and blue crabs and looking up at then the World Trade Center, I mean minutes from Manhattan and we were able to clean up the water, not totally clean yet but certainly it's not an open sewer anymore, which it was the river. We have had housing on that

river, we have shopping and paved roads instead of a polyglot of warehouses and broken down trucks and abandoned opportunities of the last 30 years, junk heaps, I don't know how else to say it. Instead we have the Meadowlands, people go there to shop, they go there to watch the track, they live there and we had a young engineer and a young environmentalist, chief environmentalist, chief engineer, and I really viewed my job then is to clear the politics out of the way and let these two young men do their job and do it well which they did. So that was the motto for the Pinelands and Dick Sullivan, I mean he's been around forever and knew what he needed and wanted and people respected him and the Governor led the charge and it worked.

**Q:** Another high profile, urban revitalization initiative in the Byrne Administration was the Atlantic City Program, to use casino gambling to revive the resort and your department had a very significant role in the planning and the development of the ideas for Atlantic City, how did you personally feel about casino gambling in New Jersey, for it or against?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well personally I guess I could have lived without it and I could have lived for it. I think its fun.

**Q:** Do you remember how you voted in the referendum?

**Patricia Sheehan:** I'd forgotten there was a referendum, you're right. Oh yeah, I suppose I voted for it. My mother loved going and I don't have any sense of outrage over gambling, I just don't get to do it very often and I've never afforded it I suppose because you have to plan on what you're going to lose because I never win, but I don't have any strong feelings against it. I think that again it didn't totally live up to its promise in that it didn't remake Atlantic City it's not nirvana and it's very hard to see a lot of success off the boardwalk. But there were some successes; I was down for a community school and that was before – I mean now there's a community school everywhere but that was probably one of the first in New Jersey. It was certainly one of the first that I had ever seen that was open 24 hours a day; it wasn't locked at 3:00.

**Q:** Where was that?

**Patricia Sheehan:** In Atlantic City. It had a daycare center and it had a meeting room for community groups as well as a full-fledged school, had an auditorium, I mean it took my breath away. It was beautiful and I think that was one of the fruits of gambling but in terms of housing didn't go as far and as fast; there are some very nice communities. I personally was upset at building a road or a tunnel, or whatever it was they built, through a stable, steady, middle class neighborhood. I thought that was the reverse of what we needed and wanted for Atlantic City and for casino gambling but we employ a lot of people and we're not getting paid as we speak. We've provided a lot of jobs and I know there's been some concern about not enough jobs for the people who live in Atlantic City but the people who actually

live in the community, not many of them are up and available and ready to be a casino worker. They're old, they're on disability, or they're too young or they're not educated and so there's still a lot of work to be done in Atlantic City but I would say on the plus side at least there's a resource that we haven't tapped enough, but we've also done other things around the state since that time with casino revenues. I'm not quite sure how that works, it's after my time, but it's another way of accomplishing purposes for the citizens that live in New Jersey.

**Q:** After Governor Byrne gets re-elected in November 1977, were you still concerned about what came next in terms of the future of your department or your future in the Byrne Administration? Were there worries about that?

**Patricia Sheehan:** There were always worries about the department because whenever it came to budget time it was what is it that you do over there and so on, and we had some of the controversial areas; the housing was an area of controversy, the women's division was an area of controversy, the local finance board was an area of controversy and an overwhelming area of controversy was the HFA and so there were a lot of people who thought if the whole disappeared what would we care? They're only in the way and so on, so that was ongoing all the time. It didn't have the same neat little box that the Department of Labor has, or the Department of Agriculture has, and so expand contract, contract expand some of the stuff we got, although we didn't want it and some of the stuff we tried to make work and by and large it went either way, so I was always worried.

**Q:** What about your personal situation? When did you hear about whether you would be continuing within the cabinet and from whom?

**Patricia Sheehan:** I continued in the cabinet in the second term I guess for the first year and than – you'd be better – maybe you've looked some of this stuff up and I haven't, but Joe LeFante was coming back from Congress, there was – and I forget for whom, was it for Frank Guarini. Guarini was going to Congress and LeFante was coming home and he'd been speaker during the income tax fight. So the only place that made sense for him was the Department of Community Affairs and so I was asked, I guess by the Governor, I really think we're face-to-face it was the Governor, might have been Jerry English I can't really remember. Would I go to the Meadowlands? So I was, I guess it was at the end of the first year, well it had to be because it was December I guess. I went up to the Meadowlands and took Bill's spot.

**Q:** As Executive Director?

**Patricia Sheehan:** As Director of the Meadowlands. I had been Chairman of the Meadowlands Commission as Commissioner, that's kind of automatic.



**Q:** Well that role gives you a much more sort of hands on job doesn't it, in terms of dealing with a specific piece of property and a lot of -

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well that's how I got to know Chet Matson and George Cascino so well. They were a smart, able and they were the first time, at least in my history of government, where you could sit in the same room with environmentalists and engineers and come out with a solution and they were doers and very, very good so it was an exciting and fun time, but – in some ways it was more direct. Couple of issues came up that Brendan felt very strongly about and I was able to lead the charge and get a couple of unanimous votes through the commission; I'm not sure they voted unanimously since and -

**Q:** Do you recall what those issues were?

**Patricia Sheehan:** No, I thought you were going to ask that. I tried to breeze over that; senior moment memory. So I was up there for about a year and a half and then I left government, state government.

**Q:** Did you get more of a sense of accomplishment in that role because you could sort of see things happening either the wetlands getting cleaned up or buildings going up, was that more of a real opportunity for you to sort of sit back and say well gee we did this? Had the more abstract role as a commissioner of a department?

**Patricia Sheehan:** Well it certainly was more exciting. Sonny Werblin was Chairman of the Sports Authority; I served part-time as a Sports Authority member for a brief period on another issue. The racetrack was built, the stadium was under construction, the arena I think – no, I guess the arena came later, I don't think I was part of the arena, so it was fun and it was exciting and it also had some issues of its own. I mean it's pretty exciting to be the garbage queen of New Jersey and very mundane, but very difficult situation with the garbage and that's when we put in the bailer to compact the garbage. I mean we were being overwhelmed with garbage and that's when – so we built the bailer, and that was an area of controversy. I said it had to be union, and it had to be I guess the Laborer's Union and I said, he's in jail I'm not going to negotiate with anybody in jail, I want the operating engineers, and they said they're too expensive and I said, the horn blows and those races go off every night regardless of the dispute. The operating engineers are absolutely the most effective people around and they get the job done, and then you have your arguments but the job gets done, and so they did, they represented the bailer and I was proud and excited about that. Hard to get excited about garbage but I did.

**Q:** In New Jersey that's not true. Well life doesn't end with the Byrne Administration, what have you done after the end of the Byrne years?

**Patricia Sheehan:** I worked for Johnson & Johnson, I went back to Johnson & Johnson, and I was there until I retired. So I've done well, served on various boards and commissions, and trustee, first woman

trustee chairman of St. Peters College, was trustee of the hospital in New Brunswick, St. Peters; surrounded by St. Peters here, UMD&J, Trinity College, various committees – commissions, was on Governor Cahill's Tax Policy Commission.

**Q:** How about your family, what are they up to?

**Patricia Sheehan:** My daughter is an elected councilwoman in the City of New Brunswick, so maybe I'm starting my own dynasty and my youngest is a finance officer for the Northward Cultural Center in Newark. Bought a gorgeous, big, old house by Bridgebrook Park and is the father of my two younger grandchildren. Betsy's the mother of my oldest – I only have three boys; he's graduated from the University of Pennsylvania like his mother and his aunt and I lost my middle son in February.

**Q:** Before we close, let's talk about the Byrne Administration and Governor Byrne and the history of New Jersey. I don't want to be pretentious about it, but what do you see as the lasting accomplishments, and again, is there an unfinished agenda that might have worked out better if decisions were made in the 1970's that would impact us now? Let's start with the positive, what do you think the Byrne Administration's lasting accomplishments are for New Jersey?

**Patricia Sheehan:** I've think we've talked about most of them, not most of them, but certainly we've talked about some of the highlights already. Atlantic City, Pinelands, Meadowlands, they weren't all started by him but they were brought to fruition by him and I think they had an impact. I think that the income tax has a lasting impact and I think that we will someday, somehow, perhaps probably not regionalized governments but at least regionalized services and be able to provide for the needs of our people without pricing them out of the state. I mean right now, 30 years later, we're at a point where the people who are very rich are leaving because they don't want to pay the taxes and don't want their estates tied up and the people who are very poor can't afford to stay because there's no option for them, and so we still have lots of things to do in New Jersey, but I think on balance Byrne and the Byrne Administration, and the people he surrounded him with tried to make things better and succeeded in some and didn't succeed in others and I don't think you can ask for more of a record than that.

**Q:** Thank you.

**#### End of Patricia Sheehan 7-5-2006 interview ####**