

INTERVIEW OF JUAN P. TENORIO

by Deanne C. Siemer

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- Siemer: Mr. Tenorio, could you tell us your full name for the record?
- Tenorio: My name is John P. Tenorio, but I am better known locally as just plain Morgan.
- Siemer: How long have you lived in Saipan?
- Tenorio: I have lived here all my life, but I did spend about ten years abroad. I went to school in Guam (from 5th grade) all the way to college. I took a year off to go to Hawaii and I came back to Guam.
- Siemer: Where did you go to college?
- Tenorio: University of Guam.
- Siemer: What did you major in?
- Tenorio: I majored in math.
- Siemer: When did you graduate?
- Tenorio: 1969.
- Siemer: What did you do after you graduated?
- Tenorio: I came home and taught school for about three months. I saw all the inequities in Saipan between the locals and the expatriates and I decided to organize the teachers and then we went on strike against basically the United States government.
- Siemer: What year was that?
- Tenorio: It was in 1969.
- Siemer: What was the outcome of that?
- Tenorio: We won. I guess it is just not so much the strike itself, but it is the matter of the principle of something that we believe in and it was the first ever in Saipan. I guess the entire Micronesia for that matter.
- Siemer: Where is your father's family from?
- Tenorio: Saipan.
- Siemer: And your mother's family?
- Tenorio: Also from here.
- Siemer: After you graduated from college, you said that you went to Hawaii. What were you working on there?
- Tenorio: Well, when I was going to school in Guam, I was a pre-engineering student so I went to Hawaii because in Guam they did not have any college of engineering. So I had to go to Hawaii. Then when I got to Hawaii, instead of going to school, I went on one year vacation.
- Siemer: Then, you came back to Guam and went to college?

- Tenorio: And finished it off. I supported myself; starving half the time just to get that piece of paper.
- Siemer: What year were you in Hawaii?
- Tenorio: I think that it was 1966 or 1967.
- Siemer: And then you came back to the University of Guam and, after you graduated, you were employed as a teacher here in Saipan?
- Tenorio: Yes.
- Siemer: When was the first time that you ran for public office?
- Tenorio: I believe that was in 1975 for Saipan Municipal Council.
- Siemer: Whom did you run against?
- Tenorio: I think there were 13 seats open. I ran on the Republican ticket and at that time the Republicans never really win any seats in any election, except for two or three cases where during the District Legislature, I think, the Republican made it. In the Municipal Council elections, the Republicans were losing out.
- Siemer: At that time, was the Municipal Council elected by district?
- Tenorio: No.
- Siemer: You had to run at large?
- Tenorio: We have to run at large and I think out of the 13 seats, I believe that we got 11, if I am not mistaken. First time ever and it was a record. It was the beginning of the real birth of the Republican Party being in office.
- Siemer: Where were you working at the time you ran for this office?
- Tenorio: I think I was the deputy chief of data processing. I was heavily into the computer field.
- Siemer: In the finance office of the Trust Territory government?
- Tenorio: Yes.
- Siemer: Had you done training in computer programming overseas?
- Tenorio: Yes, most of my training is directly with IBM in the States.
- Siemer: When was that?
- Tenorio: That was from 1971 until I quit in 1976. But, prior to my quitting, I had a U.N. fellowship for an international computer course that was held in Budapest, Hungary.
- Siemer: When was that?
- Tenorio: It was 1975.
- Siemer: When did you switch over from being a teacher to working in the Finance Department?
- Tenorio: Well, after I found that I could not really hack teaching, I worked for UMDA. This is probably the largest private company in Micronesia at that time.
- Siemer: UMDA, what does it stand for?
- Tenorio: United Micronesian Development Association. I think now that is the part owner of the Continental Air Micronesia. That is the investing arm of the people of Micronesia. I worked there for about seven months and then I was in accountant training. It was not my thing, and I finally landed a job in data processing which is pretty close to my major.

- Siemer: And that was part of the Trust Territory government,—the Finance Department. How long did you work there?
- Tenorio: I worked for about six years.
- Siemer: Were you working there when you ran for the First Constitutional Convention in 1976?
- Tenorio: At that time already from there I transferred to Labor—Marianas District Labor [Department]. So from the Trust Territory headquarters I went down to the district. That was during the transition period under Commissioner Canham. That was the beginning of working myself out of a job so to speak.
- Siemer: What was your position in the Labor Department?
- Tenorio: I was Chief of Labor.
- Siemer: Why did you decide to run for the Constitutional Convention?
- Tenorio: Well, it was an accident really. I wanted to run because it was almost together with the election for the District Legislature at that time. So, I got drafted to run for the District Legislature and my brother, Pete, was drafted to run for the Legislature. So they told me to step aside so that my brother can run for that office. So I picked up the election for Constitutional Convention delegate. Plus the fact that my wife really pushed me.
- Siemer: Is your brother Pete P.?
- Tenorio: Pete P.
- Siemer: Are you related to Pete A. as well?
- Tenorio: Yes, first cousins.
- Siemer: Why did your wife want you to run for the Con-Con?
- Tenorio: She says that it has more meaning. If we make a constitution, it is lasting. It will last for generations. I guess she had the foresight, and I didn't really know what I was getting into until I successfully ran. Then, I saw the volume of work and the reading we had to do. I said: "Oh my God what did I get myself into?"
- Siemer: You remember the briefing papers?
- Tenorio: The briefing papers, the discussion, late night discussions plus the daily prayers that I make every day and every time I vote on any provisions that are coming up for the Constitution.
- Siemer: Did you run for the District Legislature at the same time?
- Tenorio: No.
- Siemer: What went on before the Convention among the delegates to get organized, if you recall?
- Tenorio: Well, one of the things is in as much as possible we tried not to make it a political election. You know. We are from a small island and grouping people together it is almost inevitable. There was some political grouping between the Democrats and Republicans. Basically, the Republicans came in control of the Convention.
- Siemer: So the Territorial Party (or the Republicans) had a big majority going into the Convention?
- Tenorio: Yes. In fact, they were extremely popular. I was surprised that they came out so well.

- Siemer: How were the positions on the ballot drawn? I know that there was a lottery. Did the candidates actually go and draw their positions?
- Tenorio: Yes. I remember one guy that I will never forget because it was a very catchy slogan. Just pretend that you have a cold and you need some medication. First thing that you would need would be Formula 44 so don't forget the number 44. Vote for number 44. I guess in that context, I forgot my number.
- Siemer: Was there an actual drawing that Canham had where people went and drew a number out of the hat?
- Tenorio: It was the Party that I believe that drew for us.
- Siemer: The Party went and drew?
- Tenorio: Yes.
- Siemer: Did you go to the Territorial Party convention that selected the delegates for the Constitutional Convention?
- Tenorio: What's that?
- Siemer: The Territorial Party had a convention to select the candidates that were going to run for delegate?
- Tenorio: Like I said, I was not running. I was running for the District Legislature. I guess the Party just decided for their convenience to switch me with my brother. They know that I would not put up any argument. So I guess they got the upper hand on me at that time, but I have no regrets and I was very happy. And I guess that it worked out for my brother's political career.
- Siemer: Do you recall at the Territorial Party convention, where delegates were going to be chosen for the Constitutional Convention, any discussion about what the party's objectives were at the time?
- Tenorio: I don't believe that the party itself had any agenda so to speak—simply this was the first time ever and we are relying heavily on, I guess, on the experience for putting this thing together. And, you know, we had to go and get some sort of direction on how to go about it, but the delegates are pretty sharp and in the coming weeks they are up on the agenda.
- Siemer: Did the Republican Party try to have one delegate from every village on the island?
- Tenorio: No, it was island-wide. But, if I am not mistaken, it was practically a cross section anyway.
- Siemer: The Republican Party convention to select the delegates was a couple of weeks before the Popular Party convention. The Republicans seem to have gotten themselves organized more quickly for this, once the bill passed. Did that have any effect on the election—the fact that the Republicans had two or three weeks longer to get things organized?
- Tenorio: I would think so. The Republicans were quite excited about the outcome of the election because there were quite a few members of that Constitutional Convention that were members of the Municipal Council that were just elected into office.
- Siemer: The members of the Municipal Council took office in 1976?
- Tenorio: Yes.
- Siemer: You ran in 1975 and took office in 1976?
- Tenorio: Something like that I believe. I am not too sure.

- Siemer: So, a number of you ran again in 1976 for the constitutional convention?
- Tenorio: That's right. Within a few months period, so our popularity at that time was still boiling.
- Siemer: You were floor leader in the Municipal Council at that time?
- Tenorio: That is correct.
- Siemer: Did you work at all on the problem that the Legislature was having with Mr. Canham in getting a constitutional convention bill passed? Do you recall that at all?
- Tenorio: No. I do not recall.
- Siemer: There was a constitutional convention bill passed in 1975 while the United States Senate was still debating the Covenant, and people thought that it probably was not a good idea to have a constitutional convention bill enacted in the Marianas while the Senate in the United States was still trying to decide whether it was going to approve the Covenant. So it was not until sometime in May 1976 when the first constitutional convention bill was passed by the District Legislature. Then Canham vetoed it. The second constitutional convention bill was passed a few weeks later and Canham vetoed it again. A third constitutional convention bill was passed and Canham finally signed it. The Saipan Municipal Council had a couple of resolutions passed at the time saying: "Look, get this resolved and get the Convention under way."
- Tenorio: I think so. If my memory serves me right, I think that was the case. We decided to give our support to the District Legislature with regard to that bill being passed and signed into law by the commissioner.
- Siemer: Do you remember that there was an argument about Carolinian representation and whether there was going to be a required number of seats for Carolinian representatives? The District Legislature did not want to do that.
- Tenorio: Yes. I think, one of the discussions at the Council meeting was that we feel there is nothing wrong with at-large elections. As it turned out, one of the top vote-getters at the time was Ben Fitial. Ben ran at-large. And, it goes to show that if he were to be supported only by the Carolinians, and if he was being discriminated against by the Chamorros, he'll never make it. Fortunately, the people believed in individuals and that is how they get into political office. There was another Carolinian, Luis Limes. And these two individuals were outspoken supporters of the Carolinian community as well as supporters of the Republicans here in Saipan.
- Siemer: Were there any Carolinians on the Saipan Municipal Council at the time?
- Tenorio: Well, let's see. I remember Placido Tagabuel was with us in the Council, if I am not mistaken. He went on to be the first Carolinian to be in the Legislature.
- Siemer: Based on your experience, you thought that Carolinians could be elected in general island-wide elections?
- Tenorio: To begin with, the Carolinians affiliated with the Republican Party, so we never had the problem. We just keep within our own internal rules to make sure that Carolinians were represented. In areas where we feel strongly that there is a sizable Carolinian community, then we normally would have found a Carolinian candidate so that these people would be well represented.
- Siemer: The United Carolinian Association had opposed the Covenant. Did that affect their ability to get elected as delegates to the Constitutional Convention?

Tenorio: No. I don't think so. Well, one of the unappointed spokesmen at that time, who was well-respected, was Oscar Rasa; and I think because he was half Ponapean he identified with the Carolinian community.

Siemer: Is that right, Rasa was half Ponapean?

Tenorio: Yes. His father is Ponapean, but he is well-respected all along. It is not that the Carolinians were fully—what you call—disapproving of the Covenant. They have reservations of certain areas in the Covenant. They are not against the Covenant in its entirety, but there are certain provisions within the Covenant and also additional provisions that they feel should be included in the Covenant. There were other things at issue. I am not too sure.

Siemer: There were some meetings and seminars that Canham held when he was out here as Plebiscite Commissioner for the Covenant. It seemed from the record that most of the opponents of the Covenant were from the United Carolinian Association and that was the reason for my question. You think that did not affect their subsequent ability to get elected to the Council?

Tenorio: No. If anything, it gained them more exposure, more knowledge of the mechanics of the Covenant. They had to be aware of what they are opposing. Some of the others just want to get it over with and get on with our political status. I think that it was just like what is happening to Palau now. It is no longer a question of is there going to be a challenge again for the plebiscite or do they just want to get it over with once and for all. It was the trend at the time.

Siemer: Once the election results were in and the Territorial Party knew that it had a large majority in the Convention, were there meetings of the Territorial delegates before the Convention to organize themselves?

Tenorio: Yes. It was really one of my first experiences in working within a bigger context because you know nobody paid much attention to the Municipal Council at that time. But it was a learning experience for me organizing the committees, chairing this committee and all this. In fact I turned down the speakership at that time for the Council because I was scared. I really did not know what to do. I was not a politically minded person. I just want to do what the people needed. I just want to give them my experience. Basically that was what was happening after the delegates were elected and then the Republicans got together to see—this guy wants this committee and that guy wants that committee. There were a few veteran politicians that were members of the District Legislature or the Congress of Micronesia. So they have political working knowledge of how this gets organized into different committees.

Siemer: That would have been whom? Oscar certainly had long experience by that time.

Tenorio: Oscar [Rasa], Felipe Atalig, Dr. Palacios.

Siemer: How about Larry Guerrero?

Tenorio: Larry Guerrero was a member of the Marianas District Legislature. So he has political background already. Then, we were the few ones—myself, Manny Tenorio—we just said okay you guys can have all the committees that you want, but we want to be members in this committee.

Siemer: Is Manuel A. Tenorio a relative of yours as well?

Tenorio: Yes, that is Pete A's younger brother also.

Siemer: Who else would you say was an experienced politician at that time?

- Tenorio: Let me see. I think Prudencio Manglona from Rota.
- Siemer: He had been mayor over there in Rota?
- Tenorio: Yes. Also the District Legislature. Felipe Atalig, Luis Benavente was the mayor at that time. Olympio Borja.
- Siemer: Senator Borja had been in the Congress of Micronesia.
- Tenorio: I don't know about the first governor, Dr. Carlos Camacho, whether he was ever a politician.
- Siemer: How about Mayor Benavente? Was he elected when you elected?
- Tenorio: Yes. We ran on the same ticket.
- Siemer: Had he been in politics before then?
- Tenorio: I think so, but he was in the Popular Party before he switched to be a Republican or Territorial. Herman Q. Guerrero was a veteran politician. Larry Guerrero, our governor now. Luis Limes. I don't know about Joe Mafnas, whether at that time he was already in the Congress of Micronesia.
- Siemer: He resigned from the Congress, didn't he, to become police chief about that time?
- Tenorio: Yes. Something like that, but it was right around that period that he stepped down from the Congress. And, of course, Dr. Palacios. And the one and only Joe R. Cruz was a veteran politician. Nobody could deny that.
- Siemer: Where is Joe Cruz now?
- Tenorio: I believe he is in Tinian.
- Siemer: When the Territorial Party delegates met to organize for the Convention, had the three committees already been set up?
- Tenorio: What committees.
- Siemer: The Convention had three committees—Ben Fitial chaired the Finance Committee which I think you were on, Felipe Atalig chaired the Personal Rights and Natural Resources Committee, and Jose Mafnas chaired the Government Institutions Committee. Various subject matters were going to be assigned to those committees and that is where a lot of the debate was going to go on.
- Tenorio: At the end, it was assigned.
- Siemer: How was it decided which of you would go to which committee?
- Tenorio: Like I said, those veteran politicians have a way of having just grabbing it. We are green. We are new into this. We are thinking that we have a constitution to pass, to put before the people.
- Siemer: And only 50 days in which to do that?
- Tenorio: Yes, Nobody gives a heck about it. They just want to be a member of particular committees or subcommittees. And one of my main concerns was the Municipal Council. Get rid of it. My goodness, we have got too many legislators and the money being spent for office expenses, salaries, and all that should be put to better use in education, hospitals, scholarships or what ever. That was my main concern.
- Siemer: You were a member of the Saipan Municipal Council. Is that why you were on the Finance and Local Government Committee?

- Tenorio: That is right. Because I feel that I would have a very strong case being a member of the Saipan Municipal Council and be very instrumental in trying to kill it because I can justify that. I am worthless—not worthless but it is a duplication of effort and we can leave those matters for the District Legislature or in this case our new constitutional government. Get rid of Tinian and Rota Municipal Councils. In Rota especially they just want to hang on to their little kingdom, I guess, and I was fortunate that there were other members of the Con-Con that will help.
- Siemer: You were successful in that?
- Tenorio: Very successful.
- Siemer: What do you recall about the discussion at that early delegate meeting before you ever went to the Constitutional Convention about the protection that Rota and Tinian were going to get in the constitution?
- Tenorio: I thought it was quite clear, the things were spelled in the Covenant that there would be two houses in the legislature.
- Siemer: That is correct.
- Tenorio: So once you get into the two houses, you cannot help having the lower house go into representation by population and then of course the upper house electing two senators from each state. But we were not quite concerned about that. I don't believe we even talked about it until we found out for ourselves when the Constitution Convention was well on the way, what Rota and Tinian were really after.
- Siemer: That was the question: whether they discussed what they were after up front or whether you found out later on as the Convention went on?
- Tenorio: It was later on as the Convention went on because I was appointed by the President to meet with the delegates to come up with a solution about the particular provisions that they really wanted. That's one that I'll never forget—forever that would be with me what happened that day.
- Siemer: What do you recall about it?
- Tenorio: Well, the Governor, I don't know, for some reason he appointed me and a special committee because these nit wits, excuse the expression, they wanted three lieutenant governors. I said, "Oh my God, here I am just getting one level of government and these people are trying to make the new constitutional government more thicker with bodies inside the government." Plus it's ridiculous, you know, people will just laugh at us and it shouldn't be part of the Constitution, no way. So I was appointed as a special member to iron out the differences, but there was basically no instruction from the President on what I should do. I was appointed to come up with an answer and I was given a free hand. I said okay, thank you. So I went in there and I recall the Lieutenant Governor, Benjamin Manglona, and Joe R. Cruz and especially Benjamin's brother, the Mayor of Rota, he was very upset because I would not back off of what I believe—it was just plain ridiculous to have three lieutenant governors. And I think the fear there is they want that full representation in the Executive Branch also, aside from the Legislature that was guaranteed in the Covenant.
- Siemer: Why did they think that the guarantee in the Cvenant was not enough?
- Tenorio: I really don't know.
- Siemer: It's enormously powerful as we've seen in the years since. They have been able to block almost anything in the Legislature.

- Tenorio: Yes. That's right. And to be quite honest, I think it's just prestige that these people were quite, quite honestly these people from Rota and Tinian, they just love to be addressed as Mr. Chairman and Mr. Senator. I think it's a prestigious thing to be even though you are number three lieutenant governor. If you have that lieutenant governor title, that's the most important thing. It was much more [than] prestige, but at that time I don't know it must be more than that, because they walked out of the Convention.
- Siemer: How long did you meet with them to try to persuade them?
- Tenorio: Well we met about two times and on the third time I was the one who refused to meet again. And I went straight to the president. And I said Mr. President my vote is final. It's up to you now. No, I'm not going to have three lieutenant governors, period. These guys are not listening. And I would face the people in Saipan that we're not going to have any constitution and I would live with my conscience. The important thing here is to have a constitution that would work for the people, not to have a constitution because these guys are after certain provisions or self importance for their own ego or whatever. Then our own people would be paying too much for their salary also.
- Siemer: They talked a great deal about the deprivation that Rota had experienced under the Trust Territory government. They said that they had not had the advantages that Saipan had and they were afraid that was going to continue if they didn't get their separate lieutenant governor position. Did you think that was correct?
- Tenorio: It was very incorrect. There was already at that time good and clear representation, especially Benjamin [Manglona] being a member of the Congress of Micronesia at that time. That thing does not carry weight with me. Of all people, you know, he should be the last one to even say that because he's representing Rota and us too for that matter in the Congress of Micronesia. So I'm from Saipan, but when he's up there he's representing the entire Marianas District, so I just don't see the rationale why they should be threatened or they always say the left-overs are what's given to them, so to speak.
- Siemer: Did they give you any other reasons in the committee when you met, other reasons why they should have the two extra lieutenant governors?
- Tenorio: I don't know what the reasons were really at that time but I had my own reason when I went in and that's to kill it, period. I guess maybe I'm blaming them for being stubborn and too set in their own thinking, but when I went in I was also very set in my own thinking—no, period. It's a non-negotiable point for me. I cannot negotiate for three [lieutenant governors]. I will not even discuss it, period. Take it or leave it. We're going to have one.
- Siemer: That carried the day in the Convention. There wasn't even a lot of serious opposition once you came back with your report and it was put to the floor. The one lieutenant governor carried readily.
- Tenorio: Readily, 100 percent.
- Siemer: Even a number of the Rota and Tinian delegates voted for it?
- Tenorio: Voted for it, God bless their souls.
- Siemer: Going back to the start of the Convention when your committee got organized, were there particular groups of people who showed up on your committee?
- Tenorio: From the public you mean?

- Siemer: No, I wondered if there were particular people who were assigned to that committee to represent particular interests. Let me actually give you a list of the committee members. Tell me if there were particular reasons why any of them were assigned to the committee?
- Tenorio: Our committee was Finance, Local Government and Other Matters. Most of these members are present with two exceptions: Demapan and Camacho. Camacho I think made it one or two times for the entire Convention and ironically he became our first governor which is, you know, no wonder why we are so screwed up in the first term. I guess he just couldn't listen to other people.
- Siemer: But most everyone else came regularly?
- Tenorio: Of course. This is a very important chapter in the lives of the Northern Marianas people. This is our constitution that would guide us. And I sincerely believe that the members in this committee, with the exception of these two, seriously took that mandate of the people when we were voted into the Convention to be present and to attend this matter. It's a serious matter.
- Siemer: Now Demapan was a member of the Saipan Municipal Council too?
- Tenorio: Oh no. At that time, no.
- Siemer: Oh. Was he in the Legislature?
- Tenorio: I'm not sure. I don't think so. He's just beginning his political career at that time.
- Siemer: One of the things that Dr. Camacho said a number of times during the Convention, was that there had been a deal made by the leadership of the Territorial Party to give Rota and Tinian these large concessions with respect to their interests: the lieutenant governors, the composition of the lower house; resident commissioners on the islands, things of that sort. Dr. Camacho said again and again that there had been a deal made at the outset with respect to what Rota and Tinian were going to get and that the Popular Party was opposed to this and that it was never going to carry.
- Tenorio: I don't know when those deals were made but I certainly did not make any meeting in which deals were made. And I believe I went on to prove that if there was any deal made then I was very instrumental in barring that deal that has to do with the lieutenant governors and with respect to other aspects in the government. By barring the municipal council, this guy here Mr. Tenorio, just doesn't want more government; he wants less government, period. So I think I don't know what his excuses are, but that was an unfounded accusation or concern on his part regarding deals. There were just no deals, period.
- Siemer: Let me ask you about a couple of the delegate proposals that you sponsored. Do you remember No. 109? It has to do with what the titles are going to be for the chief executive in local government.
- Tenorio: The chief executive would be the mayor in this case. Oh, if my memory serves me, if you look at this particular provision, chief executive and executive board of the governor, I am trying to think of like a county board of supervisors and then you have what you call a city manager and . . .
- Siemer: So that was your thought?
- Tenorio: That's my thought. The mayor, the minute you have a mayor you are talking about a politician that would try his darnest to be in there forever by being Mr. Nice Guy. I'm thinking as an executive in the sense that you are going to get kicked out if you don't

run it like a business where you have efficiency, accountability to the stockholders. The stockholders are the people who voted you in.

Siemer: So that was the reason?

Tenorio: That's the reason for this proposal. At the same time you don't have too many political concerns. Just go in there, do the damn job and get out of it. Like I said I don't think I have this politician mentality. When I was in that Constitutional Convention, I was always thinking of what would be the most cost effective approach for the taxpayers money.

Siemer: That was a very difficult point in your committee—whether you could do away with any aspect of local government.

Tenorio: Very hard because by and large, and that's including Dr. Camacho he doesn't know about the board of supervisors in a county. I don't believe he does at that time. He knows about penicillin and Tylenol. I was fortunate, also to be quite honest, that prior to this I was sent to San Diego under the auspices of the controller for the city and county of San Diego. So that's where I learned about the concept of a county.

Siemer: When was that?

Tenorio: This was I believe 1973-1974. The concept of a county.

Siemer: Of professional management?

Tenorio: Right. And then you get a board of supervisors and then normally they hire city managers—you know you get a different nomenclature for this but basically you have a city manager or somebody that would run the affairs on a day-to-day basis. And they try to steer away from politics.

Siemer: Take a look at No. 110. That was also one that was offered by you. That had to do with the governor's council.

Tenorio: This is the governor's council, no? Mostly the executives—the mayors.

Siemer: Right. Do you recall why you put that one in?

Tenorio: I guess this is really in an advisory capacity for the governor—not to come in with their own agenda and their own priorities. Governor, we would like you to be aware of such and such going on within our particular districts. But not to the extent where they are going to come in and have—not to have any power per se.

Siemer: Just advisors?

Tenorio: For our leaders, yes. This was my whole intention, that the governor does need an advisor. And that the advisor should come from each municipality which is facing day-to-day problems. And the governor—we have this problem you know where the governor is powerless.

Siemer: And that's another way to strip out the rest of the municipal government and make it a direct relationship with the governor?

Tenorio: That's right. Yes. Since you're getting rid of that, your public works is not doing the job down there. Or your public health is weak etc. So this is the direct conduit for the governor. As the local chief executive, I'd like to call them managers. Because when you call them mayors and all that then they become—the word gets carried in their head.

Siemer: Let's see, the next one that you put in or that you were on, I guess was No. 114 and that was one that was offered by Manuel A. Tenorio

- Tenorio: Okay, that deals with the members of the legislature, this is clean government. Conflict of interest.
- Siemer: Was there a particular problem that you were aiming at there or just a general rule?
- Tenorio: It's a general rule and we're not keeping this legislature from being corrupted. This from my own limited experience. There is some little bit of guidance here. The minute you have a member of our legislature voting on another board that was created by the legislature, then you are consolidating, you are concentrating power and you are giving a lot of power to the individual and I'm a firm believer that absolute power corrupts absolutely.
- Siemer: So you were concerned about decentralizing and making sure that the legislators were not sitting on all the boards as well?
- Tenorio: And then again, when you don't have any board members, I mean no politicians, no elected politicians on any board then you don't politicize it and then the board members can freely make decisions on their own. And I think that's proven just quite recently.
- Siemer: What is that?
- Tenorio: On the Marianas Visitors Bureau. I was a member. We voted to finance a particular project. When we had some crisis with CUC and I refused to change my vote to reprogram that money to bail out CUC. But it was becoming politicized because we were getting pressure from the politicians, but I refused to budge. But the minute I left the island, they called a meeting and had a quorum so they went ahead and I was extremely disappointed. And I think this is what I'm thinking right now and I will not allow any politician to influence a board's decision.
- Siemer: The next one you were on was No. 115 which had to do with Managaha.
- Tenorio: I think this is just Manny Tenorio. I think he has spent a long period of time in Hawaii and he appreciates and he understands the parks for the people and we also realized our smallness in terms of land area and we have to provide certain areas for our future generations.
- Siemer: That certainly looks like a good decision now, doesn't it?
- Tenorio: Yes, a very, very good decision. This one, all this, I would classify Manny, especially Manny—he has a lot of influence on me—as the environmental spokesman at that point in time. He is a little bit too far ahead of us. For example, on endangered species, it's a new idea in the States now and really it is only in the last five to eight years they are talking about endangered species, the California owl and all that. Manny already did this coming from a very small island. We got to give this guy credit, he deserves it.
- Siemer: Who else in the convention was particularly concerned about the environment besides yourself and Manny Tenorio?
- Tenorio: None that I know. But Manny is a real spokesman on the environment.
- Siemer: He had another [proposal] that I think is the next one too.
- Tenorio: Yes, I'm right.
- Siemer: Number 116 is a
- Tenorio: This gives me goose pimples. Knowing how far sighted this guy is. We have in Chamorro a word that would describe this kind of an individual.
- Siemer: What is it?

- Tenorio: Menhalum. It means he's got, like a premonition into the future, what's going to happen, farsightedness. This is one of the best provisions in the Constitution.
- Siemer: Was there any argument about that proposal 116? Was anyone opposed to it?
- Tenorio: No, other than I was kidding Manuel outside [the Convention meeting] and I said, "Manny, this is full of crap because you're not going to know when I go out there to hunt for fruit bats." But I was just kidding. And he says, "Well, just make sure you don't get caught because once we have the law that would strengthen this position you're going to be in big trouble." But there was really no argument about this.
- Siemer: How about No. 117, which I think is the next one that you were on and that was preservation of historic sites, offered by about the same group of delegates?
- Tenorio: On a lot of these I worked closely with Manny. I said go ahead and sometimes I'll be the one discussing it with him and I said, "Why don't you draft it up and I'll sign it for you." These are a lot of the things that I worked on closely with Manny.
- Siemer: How did you feel about the method by which the Convention dealt with proposals? People would come to the staff, get them typed up, circulate them around. Did you think that worked out reasonably well?
- Tenorio: You know, for some reason we are very hard headed here in the Commonwealth. We should have a repeat for that for our Legislature here. The minute your proposal goes in, before you even introduce it, it's practically in the committee. And it would give everybody ample time to think about it. But I think I know why it's not the case now, its ego. I am the introducer. (I was just looking in the paper, yesterday's paper) I introduced this bill, only me. That's the mentality. None of this informal discussion, then somebody would pick it up, you know try to make a rough draft, give it to the legal department to put it into the proper wording, then come back to us for discussion. Pom, pom, pom. Finished. Out. But now it is just—I introduced 25 bills, or I authored 25 bills. Our mentality during the Convention was different.
- Siemer: The delegates seemed to be very interested in getting the work out so that people could look at it, and getting decisions made.
- Tenorio: Yes. And you get more input, more discussion on the proposal. You'll break it down into its elements.
- Siemer: The committees dealt with 146 proposals in that very short 50-day time period.
- Tenorio: This committee only?
- Siemer: All the committees. Your committee had about 40 or 45 of them. They were all dealt with, reported back to the Convention. Some of them were incorporated into the constitutional language, some of them were changed, but there was an enormous amount of material that was dealt with.
- Tenorio: In 50 days, yes.
- Siemer: And in less than that because remember there had to be second readings and public hearings.
- Tenorio: Public hearings, then the committee met at night if it is, on the Convention floor. Sometime it's referred back to the committee, so guys, we didn't do our homework, we got to go back and amend and refine this thing.
- Siemer: This is No. 139, in which you were trying to get the Legislature to be part-time.

- Tenorio: Well, yes. That was my main goal at that time. Actually I didn't want to get involved with this payment. This money. Competition. But, and God bless him, he has the foresight, this guy, Jess Villagomez, he was very adamant in just putting a limit on the amount of money. He says, you give these guys a chance to go berserk, they going get their hands into it. Because he was an auditor in the Trust Territory at that time. He's always dealing with money, financing and all that. So he was very concerned. My main concern here is politics again. And I don't see any reason why the Legislature should be on a full-time basis. Including up to now.
- Siemer: The District Legislature had been part time up to shortly before the Convention, when it was made full-time. It was made full-time sometime right around the Covenant, wasn't it?
- Tenorio: Yes.
- Siemer: And they would then meet what, four times a year?
- Tenorio: Something like that. But again, as a member of the Municipal Council, we were meeting part-time and I feel that, if it's part-time, then people would be running for this. You're giving a chance to all those with careers. They can pursue both. At the same time, you have more honest people in there because they're not going to be glorified as their senator on a day-to-day basis or their congressman. They're going to go in there to do a job. That's to put out legislation for the interest of the people. That was my intention here. And it goes back to my basic philosophy, the less government the better.
- Siemer: The last one that you sponsored is No. 140, which is another conservation proposal with respect to the preservation of the beaches.
- Tenorio: Oh, this is really an extension of those designated islands and Managaha. This is again to provide our future generations access for recreational areas without impediments because of our private facilities.
- Siemer: And that's been done right? There is public access?
- Tenorio: Right across the street from here is a beautiful example. It even curtails the private portion here on what they can really do. And I think, you know, maybe my grandchildren or great grandchildren will go there say, grand dad had something to do with this place and they'll tell their friends that we're enjoying this because they had the foresight to reserve it for us.
- Siemer: Now, we'll talk a little bit about what went on the Convention floor. What I have here is actually the record of the Convention and there are a number of places where you steered resolutions one way or another. You were the floor leader on some occasions and you were adamantly opposed to some kinds of things. Actually the first time that you spoke up, at least on this record, is on the eighteenth day and there were many speeches being given about a resolution congratulating President Carter for his victory. And here at the bottom, you will see a remark characteristic of you, expressing some impatience with the speeches that were being given.
- Tenorio: This is, I guess, my way of showing that I don't like all this grandstanding in the session, and I'm more or less a background guy. I like to work in the background, get things done, get it over with. And, this is just to prolong all the meetings.
- Siemer: Were the speeches being made for the benefit of press people who were there?
- Tenorio: I think so. And just to show off to the people. Those guys are actively talking within

the session, even if they say nonsense. And to me, this is completely irrelevant to the Constitution. Why should I be worried about whose birthday it is.

Siemer: On day nineteen, you were actually chairing the Committee of the Whole. This was a particularly important debate because you were considering the legislative branch. And this is the first vote. The first time around, it was just a majority vote and you were trying to get some provisions together so that a draft constitution could be put out for public comment. This was the provision on which the Rota and Tinian folks ultimately walked out. And it was a very key time. And I wondered if you recalled why you were selected to chair the Committee of the Whole that particular day?

Tenorio: Well, you have good memories. I really don't know. I just have a feeling that I would be more accountable I guess to the entire Convention by chairing that. I mean if they do have any question with regard to the provisions when the delegates walked out, check with Morgan, that's his problem. I think that might be the case. I think Larry, our former Governor, put me there because I have the guts to face the issue. Quite honestly.

Siemer: This was a very successful session because you got this through the Committee of the Whole. And you got it out and it was voted on. The Convention went on, and it did not get stuck at this point.

Tenorio: Most of these delegates, they know me right? I can have a big mouth if I want to. And I'm very stubborn and very vocal. But I as much as possible I try to stay in the background. And, most of my deliberations where I feel more effective is in the committee, not on the floor. Because my main concern is the minute that I committed myself to certain provisions, and I signed the proposal, then I go in there prepared, as a co-signer, to defend that provision. In the other committees, I have also a tendency to respect those members of that committee, that they have deliberated, they went through provisions, many provisions, and discussed them thoroughly and I would take their wisdom, their vote on that committee when it comes to the floor. But when I had specific questions I would go ahead of time and ask. If they answered me, you know, my concerns are answered outside of the regular session, so I don't have to waste anybody's time [on the Convention floor].

Siemer: How was Mafnas as a chairman? Was he effective on the floor?

Tenorio: Very effective and very knowledgeable especially in the parliamentary procedures. Mafnas is brilliant, very, very. I have the utmost respect for the guy. And he comes prepared. Sometimes it's misleading, his appearance. But when he goes in, mentally, he's prepared. He can get what he wants too. He knows how to make all these parliamentary moves, procedures, also he's quite convincing.

Siemer: How about Felipe Atalig, was he effective?

Tenorio: I don't think so. Felipe is more of an orator.

Siemer: And how about Ben Fitial, was he effective as a chairman?

Tenorio: Very. Because Ben is an extremely intelligent individual and very articulate, both in English and in Chamorro, you know these not being his languages. I think sometimes Ben speaks better Chamorro than about ninety-five percent of the Chamorro people themselves. Believe it or not.

Siemer: I remember that Ben could always make people laugh.

Tenorio: And he used that as a very, very effective weapon. He got, possibly in this whole Convention, between him and Oscar, they've got the best sense of humor. And they could

catch you off guard and before you know it, you're laughing and then you're voting for something he wanted.

Siemer: Now here, on the 24th day, you are actually the floor leader for that day. Was there some arrangement when Oscar was not there that you would be the floor leader?

Tenorio: No, maybe this is just because of my limited exposure as the floor leader in the Municipal Council.

Siemer: Because you showed up as floor leader several times and it seemed that the President turned to you when Rasa was not on the floor.

Tenorio: This is just to get things rolling. One of the things I did with the Municipal Council, I would cite a particular rule, like in the Robert's Rules of Order, you know, rule number et cetera, et cetera, and I'd probably make it up just to get the damned thing rolling. Just to get some people to shut up and get the legislation going.

Siemer: Well this was particularly important in this Convention because you had so little time and you really had to keep so many proposals going forward. Remember, you'd have reports coming from the committees and you'd have Committee of the Whole and you'd have Convention voting and, if you didn't keep all of those tracks moving along, you were never going to make it in fifty days.

Tenorio: Yes. That's exactly right. That kind of highlights my remark about all these speeches. Among other things I also sat in the other committees. I go in and join and listen whenever I see there is some provision I'm interested in, so I can be better informed. Not just in our own committee. Any free time I might have, I look around, what's going on in this committee, these are the proposals now that are being discussed in this committee at this time and I'm going to go in and just listen in.

Siemer: How was Oscar Rasa as a floor leader, was he effective?

Tenorio: Effective. He knows his job. He's a really good parliamentarian. I think at times, too, he's just like me. He lies about certain provisions in the rules just to get things rolling. He makes it up, you know. But, it's not in any negative sense, I think.

Siemer: He seemed to do a very good job of keeping things moving along and sometimes it appeared that he would select non-controversial things to get them moving while other things were being discussed.

Tenorio: It's the politician aspect of Oscar. You can sense it, you can feel it. He did quite a good job. I think in that Convention we have this grandfather in there that we always listen to, Doctor Palacios, and he's like the eldest statesman in there that we can look up to. So, he's kind of the law and order in our custom.

Siemer: This is the next piece that I wanted to ask you about. This is day thirty-seven and the Convention is considering the legislative branch. And here, you are commenting with respect to the provisions on compensation.

Tenorio: All this time I was focused on waste.

Siemer: You were very focused on cost and expense.

Tenorio: Cost, yes. And even at this time, maybe it's fate, I have no real intention of being into business per se. This is all real life, and business too. It costs.

Siemer: There were a number of delegates who argued that if you didn't pay more you could not get quality people. What did you think of that argument?

- Tenorio: Bull. One of the lowest paying professions is a teacher. Boy do we have a lot of good dedicated teachers that are committed. And the last thing on their mind is an executive salary. They want a salary to raise a family, an average American family and go about doing what they do best, and what they love to do. They are committed to children, to the future. So, that argument does not hold any water with me.
- Siemer: Was there any division of the delegates between the sort of professional politicians and those like you who were not professional politicians on this issue of compensation?
- Tenorio: To some extent, I think. The professional politicians, of course, they want to sit in there and get all the accolades, the recognition, plus of course the salary. I think, at this time, if I'm not mistaken, the minimum wage was eighty cents an hour? Something like that, while we're still under the Trust Territory.
- Siemer: What about now?
- Tenorio: And now we're talking about four times the regular salary here of the people for the legislature. And they have all the time in the world so they can take a five hour coffee break a day.
- Siemer: The next part of the debate is also about compensation and that had to do with the compensation of the governor and the lieutenant governor. Here is a section where you were in favor of allowing the legislature to set those salaries.
- Tenorio: For the governor? I think one of the reasons is I myself am not too sure what would be a fair compensation for the executive branch. I also feel that this thing [compensation] really changes. You cannot be putting too much in the constitution, except for the legislature in my experience just to keep it down from more government. That was my main concern.
- Siemer: That was certainly a part of the debate because once it's in the constitution to change the governor's salary you would need a constitutional amendment.
- Tenorio: Yes, right. But with the legislature since I am all for part-time anyway, I was not too concerned about what they're going to get for the salary per se. It wasn't until the debate had been going on for sometime—at one time it was for \$1,000 and part time. And now we're getting into full-time legislature. But I think within the committee, we eventually agreed that it should be up to the legislature. But we were going to include this in the transitional matters as a departure.
- Siemer: Finally, there was a compromise so that there was a level set in the Constitution but a commission could review it. You didn't need a constitutional amendment to do that.
- Tenorio: That's right. We set up the commission to bypass that constitutional amendment. I think [an] elected officials review board.
- Siemer: Right. And that compromise seemed to work quite well.
- Tenorio: It worked quite well. Especially if it's election year, the last thing they want is to raise their salary.
- Siemer: This is the 41st day where you are the acting floor leader again. You getting fairly near the end and you were very efficiently putting through a number of constitutional provisions—getting the vote on those. Do you recall whether there was any particular reason why you were appointed then or was it as before that they turned to you when Oscar Rasa was not there?
- Tenorio: Yes. Kind of like his assistant.

Siemer: This is the 42nd day and here the debate is about the constitutional amendment and Ben Manglona had proposed that there be a vote of three-fourths of the members of each house. This is the debate about when the constitution is amended by the initiative of a legislature. You proposed two-thirds of the legislature and you were concerned, apparently, about there being enough flexibility to amend the constitution. I wondered if you remembered any of that debate?

Tenorio: I don't recall it. It's interesting.

Siemer: I think what was happening is that Ben Manglona on behalf of Rota wanted to get into the constitution certain protections for Rota. So he was very concerned about the amendment procedure because if he got a level of three-fourths, then it would be very difficult to amend out what he put in. I think what you were concerned about on behalf of Saipan was, wait a minute, if this doesn't work out down the road, we ought to be able to amend it with two-thirds. I think Manglona, looking at the numbers, realized that two-thirds could be just Saipan and depending on how it came out down the road, that would mean that Saipan could amend out of the constitution all of the protections that he had put in. I think that's where the debate was centered. You were, on behalf of Saipan, trying to make it a little more flexible to amend the constitution.

Tenorio: Yes.

Siemer: It was a difficult debate all centered around the same thing.

Tenorio: Article what? Thirteen?

Siemer: Eighteen: constitutional amendment.

Tenorio: I was concerned about another article. I was thinking of the concept of being overrun again by these two municipalities. And now I still have the same problem.

Siemer: There's a similar discussion about recall of legislators and who ought to set the standards for recall of legislators and I don't remember whether you had a large part in that debate. You did contribute some on the floor. If the public wants to recall somebody who's been elected and "unelect" them during their term. I think that the delegates were pretty concerned about making that too easy.

Tenorio: Yes. I think even me in this case.

Siemer: This is a discussion also on the 43rd day of the initiative. This is where the public is passing legislation by initiative. The question again is whether it should pass by two-thirds of the votes cast, or two-thirds of the registered voters. You are (if you look on this page and the next couple of pages) trying to make it easier for the public to proceed by initiative because you were in favor of a formulation that was two-thirds of the votes cast.

Tenorio: Yes. That's amendment number 18?

Siemer: Did you think at the time that the initiative would actually be used very much here?

Tenorio: No. Not really. My main concern was that if these elected officials become nit wits and are not listening to the concern of the people, then the people have an easy enough mechanism to legislate themselves. The heck with these elected officials and we'll dispose of them when election time comes.

Siemer: How about the recall? Did you think that would be used?

Tenorio: I really have no thoughts on that. I thought that the recall's too sensitive a thing. It can become political or personal.

- Siemer: The terms are short enough; people can just wait until the next election?
- Tenorio: Yes. Especially the lower house. Yes, that's right. But it was done, surprisingly, recall.
- Siemer: It was done?
- Tenorio: Well it didn't work. It almost did. It was on Tinian.
- Siemer: Now we are at the 43rd day in a discussion relates the alienation of land provision. This is a discussion about whether the permissible lease term should be 25 years or longer, and you were proposing a 40 year term, which I think ultimately was successful.
- Tenorio: Then subsequently it went up to 55 years. I didn't realize the timeframe. I didn't realize why I'm saying this though.
- Siemer: Do you remember going to the Personal Rights Committee while they were talking about land alienation? Were you a part of that discussion?
- Tenorio: I think I was listening. Outside the session, I had my discussion with Dr. Palacios and Oly Borja. We have our differences. Big differences on this provision. This was with regards to that land alienation.
- Siemer: What was your view at the time?
- Tenorio: My view at the time was two things really. I don't know, maybe I'm a little bit too independent minded. I have a tendency to go on my own and do what I think is right. In that sense, I don't want anybody to be my brother's keeper. You know. Do what you feel is good for you. Please give me the benefit of the doubt now. Let me look after myself.
- Siemer: But there was a pretty broad consensus among the delegates about the land alienation restrictions wasn't there?
- Tenorio: No. The old doc [Palacios] he was 100 percent successful except for me (I think) because I never subscribed to that principle. One of the things is that I feel at the time it was grossly unfair for you as an example, whatever State you come from, I can go there and own a piece of property. And I'm going to be an American citizen after the constitution is passed. Why shouldn't you have the same right over here? That is one basic concern. The other argument is a piece of land is a commodity. It has its ups and downs. Why should I be restricted in the amount of money I can get just because I'm limited in who can buy it. If my fellow American from New York, like Rockefeller, (and I used this argument) is willing to pay me \$1 million, why should I be forced by you guys to sell it to Joeten because he is local (God bless his soul) and he's the highest bidder of \$25,000. Don't tell me what to do with what I own!
- Siemer: Were there other delegates who shared that view?
- Tenorio: Of course not, only me.
- Siemer: I thought not.
- Tenorio: We were arguing back and forth. I said don't ever try to be my brother's keeper. One guy even said that, "Look! If you sell your land to Rockefeller, maybe your children one of these days would be renting their apartment from Rockefeller." And I said, "Yes, that's right. And if I sell it to Joeten, don't tell me that Joeten is going to house my children free because I sold it to him. They are still going to pay the fair market value." But that kind of shut him up real quick. Primarily, I'm a believer in the individual. Something you own, you should best think for yourself what's good for you. I'm thinking at that time quite frankly, this might sound corny but equality if you can own land in the States why can't

you prevent somebody? I'm not saying Koreans can own land here. I'm saying American citizens from New York to California that are paying taxes. Why can't they own land here?

Siemer: Dr. Palacios is very strong on this land alienation point.

Tenorio: Dr. Palacios, when he looks at the land, he's looking at it, I think, more from a different context than I am. I am looking at it as a commodity and, of course, the other aspect of fairness between you guys and us where we can generally own both sides. Dr. Palacios was looking at the land alienation concept more on a cultural basis and as a part of identity. And I gave in to his view later on. Also, at the same time, being exposed, he has struggled quite a bit. I think he also sees the value of the land from an economic standpoint among other things. The overall economy. At least you can lease it, when you still own it over a certain period of time. The generation behind you will later on come into that point and time where they own it again and then they can renew another economic prosperity for themselves. I got to appreciate that part of the argument. But at that time, they were not explaining it correctly to me. It was just through the process that I got to appreciate it. But, I'm still for the highest bidder.

Siemer: You're still a free market person?

Tenorio: That's right. I say that the whole concept of the American democracy was founded on free enterprise, nothing more nothing less. That's the rebellion against the guys from England. Taxation without representation. Don't tell me what to do or how I live my life.

Siemer: This is the 44th day, the next day and here is the discussion on the floor with respect to abolishing municipal councils, and that is the speech you made at the time which carried the day.

Tenorio: This is my thinking all along.

Siemer: By that time it seemed that you had persuaded your colleagues, because it didn't seem that there was too much opposition and the provision did go through the way you had proposed it. At this point late in the Convention, were there particular people who were opposing you on this point?

Tenorio: I think if anything they were backing me up because I've been becoming very convincing, especially outside the Convention floor.

Siemer: This is another subject that you addressed a number of times. We are now in the 45th day, and we're discussing on the floor section 6 of the schedule on transition which dealt with continuing licenses in effect.

Tenorio: I think it's coming true to some extent. But the percentage definitely is spreading, local doctors percentage-wise.

Siemer: Do you recall who the doctor was?

Tenorio: It's Dr. Chong. He is the Director now. This has to do with their license to practice.

Siemer: They were concerned that their licenses might not survive; that they would have to qualify again.

Tenorio: Yes. Under the American Medical Association.

Siemer: Oh, under the American certified system?

Tenorio: Yes. Something like that. So I wanted to make sure they are grandfathered in. Off the record, again, I said, "You know how many lives Dr. Chong has saved?" There are also

- some lives that the MDs lose. Where do you strike the line? These guys are professionals. They are out to save people and to make people well.
- Siemer: Was there a reason that Dr. Chong had come to you about this problem?
- Tenorio: No. He was appearing in the committee, but I take exceptional interest to ensure that this special group of people fully protected.
- Siemer: So Dr. Chong had taken the initiative to come to the committee and explain?
- Tenorio: Yes. We called him in. And he took the time to come. Good old Carlos as a doctor did not show up at that committee when we were hearing this. Ah, I take it back. He did show up because he has an interest. He's a licensed practitioner and he might lose his license. Then after he found out that we were all agreed, well not necessarily because of him, but as a matter of principle, I think it just left the committee because it was in good hands already.
- Siemer: There was not significant opposition to this I take it? This was a protection for people who were practicing here.
- Tenorio: Yes. And not only the medical profession. One guy that passed away, Joey Levin, he's licensed to appear before the court without a law degree. These are the very few people that were taken up in the transitional matters to be grandfathered in. Any new one would have to fall into the new category as far as licensing. But those that are presently licensed at that point in time will continue to be honored. Lifetime.
- Siemer: Did they ever change the licensing system so that new doctors had to meet AMA standards.
- Tenorio: No. But we do have a licensing board now. But that licensing board cannot touch those that were licensed before. They're grandfathered for life.
- Siemer: This is a discussion on the 47th day of a resolution with respect to preserving historic sites. And there's some discussion here about the Intercontinental Inn, which is where the Convention was held and somebody (Chairman Mafnas) raised leaving the Convention hall the way it was.
- Tenorio: Yes. I think that didn't go anywhere.
- Siemer: This is the 47th day. You're talking about section 18 of article 3, the executive assistant on Carolinian affairs. Do you remember that?
- Tenorio: The assistant for Carolinian affairs?
- Siemer: Well, it's a little unclear.
- Tenorio: I think this has to do with the Carolinian affairs office.
- Siemer: Yes. Were you opposed to that?
- Tenorio: I was opposed to that.
- Siemer: Why was that?
- Tenorio: I find it very illogical to have. I think you are creating the problem. You are creating segregation.
- Siemer: By making them separate?

- Tenorio: Yes. That's an acknowledgement that there is a problem. Maybe there is, but in my mind, I don't see any because I happened to grow up right next to the Carolinian community and so are my parents.
- Siemer: Where is that?
- Tenorio: In the old Municipal District Four.
- Siemer: And that's Chalan Kanoa?
- Tenorio: Chalan Kanoa. At that time way back when I was growing up, say since I was young until maybe 15 years old, this District Four, that's primarily a Carolinian community. I grew up there and I was learning the language up until I went to Guam to go to school. Then I forgot Carolinian because now I was trying to learn English. So all this thing about the Carolinian affairs office to me it's wrong. I think eventually anyway it was clarified that it can be chaired by a non-Carolinian, you know. Then I was asking this Bureau of Indian Affairs, what are they doing to the affairs of the Indians other than those bureaucrats, you know, protecting their turf and getting paid; putting out volumes and volumes of reports and not accomplishing anything for the Indians. They are still on the reservation. What concrete thing can we accomplish? What significant thing are we after?
- Siemer: What did Ben Fitial and others who were proposing this think they would get from this?
- Tenorio: I think he was looking at it becoming more like a cabinet level almost. Where there would be a channel from the Carolinian community to air their concerns in the future if there should be a need for the government to be heard. But, after almost 20 years, close to 20 years, the government is still small. The Carolinians here can practically band together and call the shots of who the governor will be. We still have the voting mechanism. The democratic process of putting people in office without adding another layer of bureaucracy and expenses, that's my main concern.
- Siemer: So if they vote as a block they have sufficient protection?
- Tenorio: Of course, yes. And we are in a very small community, people are becoming more educated, more exposed, hopefully less and less prejudiced. Hopefully. But, sometimes people become prejudiced, I think not necessarily because they just want to or intend to be prejudiced, sometimes it's just out ignorance.
- Siemer: Was there a considerable amount of opposition to that provision for the Carolinian assistant?
- Tenorio: Not really. This is one issue where Ben [Fitial] and I really differ. He also knows me enough to respect me that I'm not against the basic principle, I just don't believe that it should be in there period.
- Siemer: Tell me what you recall about the walk-out and the circumstances that surrounded that.
- Tenorio: The first thing was, I believe if I'm not mistaken, I went up to the president and said it looks like we might not have a constitution after all. What did the law that creates this animal, what did it say with regards to the delegates from the municipal districts, Rota, Tinian and Saipan. He said, fifty percent at least should vote for the constitution, the delegates for the passage of this. Then once we voted, that means we have a constitution to present to the people and then it becomes a constitution when the people accept this. But, we need this to present to the people. We need this many delegate votes from each municipality to successfully conclude this to put it before the people. So there it was, barely 50/50. Fifty percent it's right there, because 50 percent walked out from Rota. I

- think I went to mass the following morning. I went to church. I was praying very hard because it was a very, very sensitive issue.
- Siemer: Had Ben Manglona threatened to walk out before that?
- Tenorio: I was not really expecting it, but he was very adamant on having these provisions in the constitution. I'm just as adamant and stubborn that it shouldn't be in there, so this is a collision course between the two of us. So his way is to walk out. My way is to go and face the music if there is no constitution
- Siemer: Did you know that some of the Rota delegates would not join him and would stay [in the Convention]?
- Tenorio: Yes. Then I look at them and right away I can tell that the non-politicians are staying. The politicians are leaving. But it was hard personally, that was my most exhausting part of the Convention.
- Siemer: Was there a concern that if Ben Manglona and the other politicians from Rota walked out that the Rota voters would not support the constitution?
- Tenorio: No. I was not concerned about that because I'm confident that everybody would vote, and it would make that two-thirds vote for the constitution.
- Siemer: So the concern was mainly the disruption of the Convention not the fact that the constitution
- Tenorio: Yes, to some extent. I was also very concerned about the possibility of not having a constitution to present to the people. We were getting very close to the end of our 50th day to conclude and to adjourn the Convention. I was very, very concerned but I was ready to face the people.
- Siemer: What role did Larry Guerrero play at the time?
- Tenorio: It was kind of neutral down the line.
- Siemer: Was he close to Ben at the time?
- Tenorio: Yes. He was, I think.
- Siemer: How about Ray Villagomez?
- Tenorio: No. I don't think he was. Especially Jesus, his brother. I think we called the shot as we see it. We don't have all these plans or even the other provisions like I was concerned more about too much government and wastage. So is Jesus. His main concern is the future generation, what do we have to leave for our kids.
- Siemer: Tell me what you did after the Convention. Did you run for office again?
- Tenorio: No, I waited for a few years then I ran.
- Siemer: You were still on the Saipan Municipal Council?
- Tenorio: No more. It's gone after the Constitution.
- Siemer: Right.
- Tenorio: It's gone, so that's the time I already I was working in Labor. Then in our Frst Legislature, I worked there and I said to myself this would be the last of my steps, working myself out of government.
- Siemer: Whom did you work for there?

- Tenorio: I worked for Oscar [Rasa] for a while then I switched to Plas Tagabuel, who is the chairman of the appropriation committee and I worked there.
- Siemer: You were their staff person?
- Tenorio: I worked there for about a little bit over a year, then I quit. That was the beginning really of my self-employment.
- Siemer: Then what did you do?
- Tenorio: I started my business. I had a very, very small grocery store. I went and applied for a loan to start my laundry and to expand my grocery. It was interesting because the guy who made the design, at that time I was telling him to design me a building that would last for 10 years that I can tear down and still get something out of it. So I kind of forgot about that. But when I came back 10 years later, I said, "Frank, would you finalize this building that I sketched out." He said: "Where is this going to be at?" I said: "It's going to be in my building, I'm going to tear that down." He said: "That's exactly 10 years since you told me that." I said: "Oh, yes." So it was 10 years later I tore down the building and put this building up. I was going to retire. I want to have time for myself. Life is too short.
- Siemer: Have you run for a public office?
- Tenorio: Yes I ran, about 10 years ago to the day, and I lost.
- Siemer: Ran for the Legislature?
- Tenorio: Yes. For the Senate and I was up against a guy who is at his prime at that time.
- Siemer: Who is that?
- Tenorio: Senator Guerrero. He just lost this election. Herman Guerrero.
- Siemer: Herman Q?
- Tenorio: Herman R. He is a veteran and was at his prime at that time and I was given the honor of challenging him. At that time I guess I had the most potential to beat him. But, unfortunately at that time my wife was not into it. So I just kind of was pushed by the Party to run. But my wife never really wanted me to be in politics.
- Siemer: So you ran for Senate once, and then did you run again?
- Tenorio: No. I figured I would do better just supporting people that I believe in and programs and issues. My brother at that time was the governor, so I figured one in the family is also enough.
- Siemer: Have you worked in the Republican Party since then?
- Tenorio: Well at one time I worked for a short period of time with Senator Borja when there was some sort of coalition in the Legislature. I worked there for about four months kind of matching things up being his public relations officer. Then I worked again for the first time in the Legislative Bureau that was created by the Second Constitutional Convention. I worked there organizing the body that was created by the Constitution for about four or five months but it was only for a short period of time. It seems like when there's a problem I go in and try to mend things. Then I find it hard to be working for somebody, it's been too long on my own.
- Siemer: Well that's also a typical businessman's approach, to define the problem, organize, solve it, and then it's over with.

Tenorio: That's right. I just find myself impatient with government.

Siemer: Thank you very much for your time in giving this interview. We appreciate it very much.