

ROBERT W. O'DONNELL

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Raised in Germantown working class neighborhood in the same legislative district he now represents, Robert O'Donnell never ventured outside Philadelphia until he left law school in 1969.

Following graduation he served as a judicial clerk to Judge Joseph E. Gold ('30) in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. He then served as an arbitrator, first under the Municipal Court Community Dispute Program, next as a labor arbitrator representing police departments under ACT III, and finally as commercial arbitrator under the American Arbitration Association. Currently he is "special counsel" to the law firm of Saul, Ewing, Remick & Saul.

In 1974, Bob O'Donnell was elected Ward Leader of Philadelphia's 12th Ward, after gaining extensive campaign experience as personal assistant, then suburban field coordinator, in the Shapp for Governor Campaign (1970) and city-wide field coordinator of Green for Mayor (1971). He organized his own successful campaign for state representative seat, which he won in 1974, to represent Philadelphia's 198th legislative district. Following his election, he became member of the Philadelphia Democratic City Committee form 1975-80. He continued to win eight consecutive bids for the seat. He was elected Chairman of the House Democratic Caucus 1981-82; Majority Whip in 1982 and Majority Leader in November 1988.

On January 23, 1990 Bob O'Donnell was elected Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, the post which he currently holds.

During his tenure as legislator, Mr. O'Donnell has served on nine House Committees: Consumer Protection; Rules; Democratic Policy; Bi-Partisan Management; Business & Commerce; Appropriations; Finance; Judiciary; Education, and he chaired several sub-committees.

He has also served as a member of the following committees, commissions and boards: Commonwealth's General State Authority, 1983-85; Public Employee's Retirement Study Commission, 1982-84; Greater Philadelphia International Network; State General Services Administration; Neighborhood Enterprise Corp.; Pension Commission; Philadelphia Clearinghouse; Community Leadership Seminars.

He was chairman of the House Select Committee to Investigate Teenage Pregnancy, 1986; member of the Chesapeake Bay Commission, 1985-86; and member of the Executive Board of the Joint Government Commission.

He has served on the Mayor's Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission, 1984-85; Philadelphia First Corp.'s Neighborhood Economic Development Task Force; Philadelphia Port Corp. Board of Directors, 1984-85; Pennsylvania Higher Education Facilities Authority, 1977; Milrite Council, 1979-80; Mayor's Economic Recovery Task Force; and finally, Member of the Mayor's Tax Budget and Advisory Committee, 1989.

As a legislator he successfully introduced legislation on these topics: Nuisance bars; tighter regulations on personal care boarding homes; mortgage redlining; community jobless prevention plan; SEPTA required to hold public hearings in areas affected by rail cutbacks.

He wrote the law requiring state pension funds to be invested to create jobs for Pennsylvanians. He also authored an amendment to Neighborhood Tax Credit Act, giving businesses incentive to invest money in rebuilding neighborhoods; budget structure for Philadelphia public school system; anti-corporate takeover bill; authored amendment that reversed cuts in child immunization, maternal and infant care programs and family medical programs; legislation designed to assist the physically handicapped; and legislation designed to reduce automobile rates.

In 1986, O'Donnell has received the following awards during his period of service in the Pennsylvania legislature: Philadelphia Bar Association Outstanding Young Lawyer, 1982; The Boarding Home Advocacy Team Recognition Award, 1984; Multi-Family Council of Southeastern PA Official of the Year, 1985; Distinguished Service Award from Board of Directors of Philadelphia Zoo, 1985; Temple University's College of Arts and Sciences Centennial Alumni Fellow, 1985; Pennsylvania League of Cities Outstanding Service Citation, 1985; Pennsylvania League of Cities commendation for work on reforming the Commonwealth's local tax system, 1989. Most recently, he was a recipient of the "Champions of Good Government," award presented by Common Cause, for his work on the recently revised Ethics Act.

Civic involvement has included the Board of Germantown Boys and Girls Club; Advisory Board of the Supportive Older Women's Network; volunteer coach of Chestnut Hill Father's Club; Advisory Board of Germantown YWCA.

O'Donnell graduated from LaSalle High School in 1962. He attended Temple University where he received a BA in Economics in 1966, and he graduated from Temple Law in 1969. Subsequent to receiving his JD, he attended Hague Academy of International Law in the Netherlands. He has two sons, Rory and Casey and enjoys playing sports, reading and traveling.