

Straight Talk- An Interview With Incumbent Republican Congressman Michael Ferguson

By STEVEN KRAKAUER
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

As the second youngest member of the entire Congress, at 32, Republican Mike Ferguson has made quite a name for himself in his short career as a public servant.

Up for reelection this year in the 7th Congressional District, Congressman Ferguson sat down with *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* for a candid interview.

Steven Krakauer: How did you get involved in politics?

Mike Ferguson: I was interested in politics growing up, just by following current events. But really when I went to teach high school in the Bronx after I graduated college, you know, being in the classroom, working with kids from pretty challenging life circumstances, got me very interested in education policy and how we can improve educational opportunities for our kids. When I went back to graduate school for my masters I went for public policy, and I found it very rewarding that you can make policy on something that you care about. For me, it was education that brought me into politics.

Krakauer: What was teaching like, and how did it help you out in Congress?

Ferguson: Well, the teaching is a wonderful experience because young people have so much energy and sometimes you have to help them channel that energy in a positive direction. There are some corollaries between teaching and serving in Congress. You have to be patient,

you have to listen, you have to be willing to find the middle ground and not give up. I think having the perseverance to help the kids through those struggles, you have to have the same perseverance in Congress because there's a lot of different viewpoints and divergent opinions, and finding ways to navigate those challenges without losing hope and enthusiasm is what having legislative success is about too.

Krakauer: At 31, you're the second youngest Congressman.

Ferguson: I just turned 32, actually. (laughs) I'm getting to be an old man.

Krakauer: Well, being young could help you with younger voters, but also could help your rapport with people under 18. What can you say about younger people getting involved in politics?

Ferguson: I've spent my adult life trying to get young people involved in politics. In the classroom in particular, encouraging them to learn about political science, to get involved in campaigns and other forms of public service. I just think it's extraordinarily important for young people to take the opportunities they've been given and make sacrifices that improve other people's lives. That's what public service is all about. I think I have a different kind of credibility on that issue as well. Being a young person myself, they don't see me as an ancient old man preaching to kids. They see me as a younger person, who, not too long ago, was in their shoes.

Krakauer: Let's talk about your

race. You're a freshman incumbent in a newly reorganized district. How confident are you?

Ferguson: Well, I'm confident. I'm not over-confident, but I'm confident for two reasons. Number one, I and our entire team have worked very hard to bring the voice of New Jersey to Washington, that's common sense. Whether it's keeping our economy strong and helping people feel secure in their economic situation or working with President and other elected officials on homeland security. I'm also confident because I've been elected in this district, this district has changed and become even more favorable to Republicans. I grew up in Hunterdon County as well which is a strong Republican territory and a place I know well. The issues are on our side, so I feel good about it. That doesn't mean I'm over-confident. I'm going to compete for every single vote.

Krakauer: Tell me about the staff around you. What kind of impact do they have on you in your campaign?

Ferguson: We have a wonderful staff. Our staff is seasoned, experienced, very energetic and determined to get results. We get a lot of compliments on our staff, and I'm proud of that. Our campaign staff is excellent as well. And of course, we have scores of volunteers. We have over 200 volunteers who we call on at a regular basis.

Krakauer: What has it been like spending so much time with the President, especially flying on Air Force One last month?

Ferguson: It's an honor, it's a privilege, it's a big responsibility, but I wouldn't trade it for the world. Particularly at a time when his leadership has been so crucial and so positive for our country, I consider it all that much an honor to work with him and to support his agenda. It's a thrill

to work with him on a personal level. He's a great guy, very friendly, and he doesn't have any airs. He calls me "Fergy" and knows I went to Notre Dame, so he kids me about that. In fact, a few weeks after he came to New Jersey at the end of June, I saw him in Washington and I said, "Mr. President thanks again for coming to New Jersey, we loved having you in our state, we're just sorry it was so hot that day." And he said, "Mike, it was nothing like Texas." (laughs) He's very real like that.

Krakauer: Okay, speed round of questioning. Just say the first thing that comes to your head. The impending baseball strike.

Ferguson: Hope it doesn't happen, it's not fair to the fans.

Krakauer: Union County.

Ferguson: Great, historic county, and it's a privilege to represent a big chunk of it.

Krakauer: Recent child abductions.

Ferguson: Frightening for parents, and as a parent it strengthens my resolve to make sure that it doesn't happen more.

Krakauer: Robert Torricelli.

Ferguson: Embattled U.S. Senator, going to be a very close election.

Krakauer: Bruce Springsteen.

Ferguson: I'm a big fan, I saw him in concert recently, and he's a great voice for lifelong New Jerseyans like me.

Krakauer: And finally, do you know there's someone running for District Attorney in Nevada County also named Mike Ferguson? Is this guy stealing your thunder?

Ferguson: (laughs) This is so funny! I actually did a search once on the Internet and there's someone in California who had Mike Ferguson.com. I think he was a sheriff or something. But, no, I think the more Ferguson's who get involved in public service the better.

WF Private Investigator Aids September 11 Widow

By SUZETTE F. STALKER
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD — Westfield private investigator Mike Boyle recently completed a long effort to obtain Green Card status for a World Trade Center widow whose plight generated international attention.

Deena Gilbey, a British native with two American-born children, found herself facing the prospect of deportation after her husband was killed following the September 11 terrorist attacks.

After a nine-month ordeal involving United States senators, embassies, the Consulate General in New York and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), Mrs. Gilbey was ultimately granted a Green Card in late July, ending her fears of deportation.

Mrs. Gilbey's husband, Paul, was a currency trader with EuroBrokers Inc. The couple left England in 1993, living in Chatham for nearly a decade and raising their two young sons, Max, 7, and Mason, 4, in the Morris County town.

Shortly after the tragedy, Mrs. Gilbey called the INS, never thinking she wouldn't be allowed to stay in the United States, since she and her husband had spent years and thousands of dollars in lawyers' fees on the citizenship process.

The INS told her she had no right to stay in the country and that if she refused to leave she could be arrested and deported.

Mr. Boyle became involved in the case through a client, whose wife Mrs. Gilbey had spoken to at the Summit day care center attended by one of the Gilbey children. The private investigator took Mrs. Gilbey's case pro bono.

"I've always been interested in helping those that have been in a disadvantageous situation," he told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* on Tuesday. "I just couldn't let this go into the wind."

Mr. Boyle's efforts included helping Mrs. Gilbey tell her story by booking her appearances on the "Today Show," "Good Morning America" and

"Donahue."

British Prime Minister Tony Blair and the BBC learned of the widow's story as well and supported her right to stay in America.

Mr. Boyle expressed disappointment with the INS, however, which he claimed was "difficult" and "uncooperative" in its handling of Mrs. Gilbey's case. He said he feels agency procedures regarding people in such circumstances need to be revitalized.

Mr. Boyle credited the positive press Mrs. Gilbey received, both nationally and internationally, for helping her realize her dream of remaining in the United States. He also praised the support given her by the public.

"The American people have a bottomless empathy for the underdog and it was confirmed through this," he remarked. On September 11, Mr. Gilbey was

working on the 84th floor of the South Tower at the World Trade Center. After the first plane hit, he telephoned his wife to assure her he was safe and on his way out of the building.

A co-worker told Mrs. Gilbey that her husband made it to the 78th floor, where he and a friend began organizing an evacuation plan. They put women and the handicapped into elevators, while men took the stairs. Mr. Gilbey never made it out.

Mrs. Gilbey publicly thanked Mr. Boyle for his assistance on the "Today Show" during a July 26 broadcast.

She also thanked him and the people of Chatham on her website, saying, "I will hold dear to my heart forever the compassion you have shown to us and would like to take this opportunity to thank you sincerely from myself and on behalf of Max and Mason."

Mr. Boyle, who worked for Senator Jon Corzine's campaign, is a private investigator with Investigative Consultants International (ICI), located at 231 North Avenue in Westfield. ICI may be reached at (908) 518-9185. Information is also available at www.icinj.com.



Michael Boyle

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District 21 Interns Gain Insight on State Government

WESTFIELD — Eleven college and high school students had the opportunity to learn about the workings of state government firsthand through an internship program sponsored this summer by State Senator Richard H. Bagger, Assemblyman Thomas H. Kean, Jr. and Assemblyman Eric Munoz, M.D., of the state's 21st Legislative District.

Westfield High School student interns were Gil Arbitsman, Joshua Bengal, Matthew Carlin, Jason Tammam and Alison Weinstein. Also serving were William Davidson of Westfield, a student at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.; Joe Fischetti, a 2002 Westfield High School graduate who will be a freshman at George Washington University this fall; Chris Schwarz of Westfield, a student at the University of Richmond in Virginia; Greg Pesce, a senior at Governor Livingston High School in Berkeley Heights; Linda Dougherty of New Providence, a student at the University

of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Brad Feldman of Bedminster, a student at The Pingry School.

"Each intern had the opportunity to learn about important government functions by helping constituents with problems ranging from banking and insurance to motor vehicles to answering questions concerning notary public applications," explained Senator Bagger. "They also helped draft our responses to constituents on pending legislation as well."

"All of our interns have been a valuable addition to our office, and we thank each of them for their hard work. I was very impressed by how quick each of our interns jumped in and helped our full-time staff stay ahead of the hundreds of inquiries we receive each day," Assemblyman Munoz stated.

Assemblyman Kean explained that, "this internship program is a great opportunity for high school and college students to gain valuable insights into the daily workings of Trenton. Part of the program includes an opportunity to go to the Statehouse to watch their legislators at work when the Legislature is in session. Each of the interns had the opportunity to watch floor debates as important pieces of legislation were considered in the Senate and General Assembly."



INTERNS THANKED... The State 21st Legislative District Office recently thanked their interns with a luncheon at Acquaviva delle fonti in Westfield. Pictured, left to right, are: Matthew Carlin, Westfield High School; Greg Pesce, Governor Livingston High School, Berkeley Heights; Joe Fischetti of Westfield, George Washington University, Washington, D.C.; Assemblyman Eric Munoz, M.D.; Jason Tammam, Westfield High School, and William Davidson of Westfield, George Washington University. Standing is Assemblyman Thomas H. Kean, Jr.



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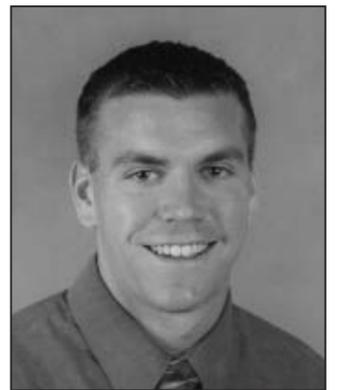


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GET TO KNOW OUR STAFF

Eric Boden, MPT, graduated from Villanova University with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1996. He then attended the Medical College of Pennsylvania/Hahnemann University. He graduated Cum Laude with a master's degree in physical therapy in 2000. In October 2000, Eric was chosen to join the professional team of ADVANCED Physical Therapy Associates based on his academic achievement, clinical reasoning and personal commitment.



Eric has had a special interest in orthopedic physical therapy since initiating his graduate degree. His post-graduate education has focused on orthopedic impairments, functional limitations and disabilities. Currently he is pursuing concentrated studies in the McKenzie method of mechanical diagnosis and treatment of orthopedic spinal dysfunctions. He is also a member of the orthopedic section of the American Physical Therapy Association.

Eric finds personal satisfaction in restoring patients to full activity and relieving their discomfort. This requires identification and correction of the abnormal mechanics responsible for the dysfunction. He educates patients in home exercises and self-treatment techniques to provide independent, active long-term relief strategies.

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