

NOTES ON DAWN (CLARK NETSCH) MEMORIES OFFERED AT THE CHICAGO LITERARY CLUB, MARCH 31, 2014 BY ANN LOUSIN

ON THE DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS, 2011, DAWN CLARK NETSCH HOSTED A LUNCHEON HERE AT THE CLIFFDWELLERS. HER GUESTS WERE MARY LEE LEAHY, WHO HAD ALSO BEEN A CON CON DELEGATE, AND I, WHO HAD BEEN A RESEARCH ASSISTANT AT THE CONVENTION. THREE WOMEN LAWYERS, ALL LONG-TIME FRIENDS. WE SAT OVER BY THE WINDOW AND CHATTED FOR TWO HOURS, MOSTLY ABOUT LAW, POLITICS, AND OUR FAMILIES.

I DO NOT SPEAK WITH FALSE MODESTY WHEN I SAY THAT I CONSIDER MYSELF THE LEAST ACCOMPLISHED OF THE TRIO AT THE TABLE. MARY LEE AND DAWN WERE VERY BRIGHT AND ENORMOUSLY TALENTED LAWYERS AND POLITICIANS, AS WELL AS OUTSTANDING PUBLIC SERVANTS. UNFORTUNATELY, I AM THE ONLY ONE OF US STILL ALIVE.

AS DAWN ENTERED THE CLUB, WE SAW THAT SHE WAS WALKING WITH A CANE, THAT SHE WAS BENT OVER, AND THAT SHE CLEARLY WAS SUFFERING FROM EITHER SEVERE ARTHRITIS---OR SOMETHING FAR WORSE. YET HER MIND WAS SHARP AND HER VOICE AS CLEAR AND CRISP AS EVER. AT THE END OF THE LUNCHEON, DAWN ORDERED A PIECE OF BLUEBERRY PIE. WHEN SHE TRIED TO CUT IT, HER HANDS ALMOST FAILED HER. I OFFERED TO HELP. SHE REFUSED. SHE SAID THAT HER ARTHRITIS WAS WORSE THAT DAY. I JOKED THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME IN FORTY YEARS THAT I HAD SEEN HER EAT A DESSERT, BUT THE REAL REASON I WAS STARING AT HER WAS THAT I REALIZED THAT THIS MUST BE MORE SERIOUS THAN ARTHRITIS.

I NEVER SAW EITHER OF MY FRIENDS AGAIN. WE TALKED ON THE PHONE AND EMAILED EACH OTHER, BUT I NEVER ACTUALLY SAW EITHER WOMAN DETERIORATE. MARY LEE CONTRACTED PANCREATIC CANCER AND DIED IN DECEMBER, 2012. WHEN I PHONED DAWN TO TELL HER, I COULD SCARCELY UNDERSTAND A WORD SHE SAID. WHEN I SAID WE MUST HAVE A BAD CONNECTION, SHE SAID, "NO, I HAVE SOMETHING LIKE ALS, AND IT IS INCURABLE." SHOCKED, I MADE EXCUSES AND ENDED THE CONVERSATION. A WOMAN WHOSE DICTION WAS SO PRECISE THAT SOME THOUGHT SHE WAS BRITISH COULD NOT PRONOUNCE WORDS WITH ANY REAL CLARITY.

IN JANUARY, 2013, DAWN TOLD THE SUN-TIMES THAT SHE HAD ALS. IN FEBRUARY, SHE LABORIOUSLY EMAILED ME CONGRATULATIONS ON BOTH MY 70TH BIRTHDAY AND MY APPOINTMENT TO THE LEE CHAIR IN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW, WHICH SHE SAID WAS A WELL-DESERVED HONOR. THAT WAS THE LAST I HEARD.

AS I SUSPECTED, THE END WAS NEAR. SHE HAD TO BE CARRIED AROUND AND HAD TROUBLE EATING. SHE DIED IN HER SLEEP ON TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2013. AS I ALSO EXPECTED, THE TRIBUTES EMPHASIZED HER GENDER. TO THE MEDIA, TO THE PUBLIC FIGURES WHO EXPRESSED CONDOLENCES FROM THE PRESIDENT TO SENATORS TO OLD CAMPAIGN ALLIES, SHE WAS THE "FIRST WOMAN THIS," THE "FIRST WOMAN THAT."

TRUE, SHE HAD BEEN THE ONLY WOMAN IN HER LAW SCHOOL GRADUATING CLASS IN 1952, BUT THERE WERE A FEW OTHER WOMEN AT NORTHWESTERN LAW AT THE TIME.

TRUE, SHE WAS THE FIRST WOMAN ON NORTHWESTERN'S LAW FACULTY, BUT THERE WERE OTHER WOMEN LAW PROFESSORS IN 1965.

TRUE, SHE WAS THE FIRST WOMAN ELECTED TO EXECUTIVE OFFICE IN ILLINOIS, BUT THERE WERE OTHER WOMEN OF HIGH RANK IN STATE GOVERNMENT.

TRUE, AS THE STORIES KEPT MENTIONING, SHE WAS INDEED THE FIRST WOMAN TO BE A MAJOR PARTY CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR IN ILLINOIS.

BUT SHE WAS MUCH MORE THAN THAT. I KNEW HER FROM THE SPRING OF 1970 UNTIL HER DEATH AND I KNEW HER TO BE A WOMAN OF CONTRADICTIONS. SHE NEVER SPENT A NIGHT IN A HOSPITAL UNTIL HER FATAL ILLNESS STRUCK, BUT SHE SMOKED UP TO HALF A PACK EVERY EVENING--- BUT ONLY AFTER FIVE P.M.

GENEROUS WITH HER TIME AND RESOURCES IN HELPING OTHERS, SHE WAS FRUGAL WITH HER OWN EXPENDITURES. WHEN I TOLD HER THAT MY MOTHER WAS LIKE HER, THAT "MY MOTHER READS MENUS FROM RIGHT TO LEFT," DAWN ASKED, "WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?" WHEN SHE WAS IN CHARGE OF THE STATE'S FUNDS AS STATE COMPTROLLER, SHE EXHIBITED THAT SAME FRUGALITY. THE SCOTS HAVE A PHRASE, "A CANNY WOMAN." IT MEANS A WOMAN, USUALLY A HOUSEWIFE, WHO KNOWS HOW TO GET GOOD VALUE FOR HER MONEY. THAT FITTED DAWN TO A "T".

SHE DRESSED WITH STYLE, BUT REALLY DIDN'T LIKE SHOPPING FOR EXPENSIVE CLOTHING AND JEWELRY. SHE DINED IN SUPERB RESTAURANTS, BUT HAD SOME SIMPLE MIDWESTERN TASTES. ONCE, WHEN WE WERE LUNCHING IN A PRIVATE ROOM AT THE STANDARD CLUB, SHE ASKED THE WAITER IF THE KITCHEN COULD MAKE A "LIVERWURST SANDWICH ON WHOLE WHEAT." I HEARD THAT AND SAID, "YOU ORDERED WHAT?" SHE HAPPILY MUNCHEDED ON HER BELOVED LIVERWURST, I THINK WASHED DOWN WITH A BEER, ALL THROUGH OUR MEETING.

I HAVE HEARD HER WAX ELOQUENT BOTH ABOUT WAGNER OPERAS AND THE WHITE SOX. WHEN I ASKED HOW THE SOX WERE FARING ONE DAY, SHE REPLIED, "WE'RE ON THE ROAD, SO WE WON'T DO AS WELL, BUT WE'LL BE HOME NEXT WEEK, AND THEN WE'LL DO BETTER."

THAT CONVERSATION TOOK PLACE IN A CAR I WAS DRIVING TO ROCKFORD TO VISIT A FRIEND OF OURS. UNBELIEVABLY, THIS EXTRAORDINARILY COMPETENT PERSON COULD NOT DRIVE A CAR. SHE WAS, HOWEVER, A PERFECT PASSENGER. SHE HELPED ME NAVIGATE OUR WAY TO OUR DESTINATION AND NEVER ONCE, MIND YOU, COMPLAINED ABOUT MY DRIVING.

I THINK DAWN CLARK NETSCH SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED JUST THRU THE PRISM OF "FIRST WOMAN." SHE SHOULD BE VIEWED THROUGH HER EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE LIFE OF THE PEOPLE OF ILLINOIS---AND INDEED OF THIS COUNTRY. WITHOUT REFERENCE TO GENDER, SHE WAS AN OUTSTANDING PUBLIC SERVANT. WHENEVER I INTRODUCED HER IN LATER YEARS, I USED TO SAY, "ILLINOIS HAS NEVER BEEN AS WELL-SERVED AS WHEN DAWN CLARK NETSCH WAS IN OFFICE." MOST WOULD AGREE.

THIS EVENING, I WANT TO CONCENTRATE UPON WHAT I CONSIDER TO BE THE TWO THEMES OF HER PUBLIC LIFE. FIRST, SHE HAD A COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP WITH THE POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT OF ILLINOIS, ESPECIALLY THE REGULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF COOK COUNTY. THAT EVOLVED OVER THE YEARS, PARTLY BECAUSE SHE CHANGED, BUT ALSO BECAUSE THE PARTY CHANGED.

SECOND, SHE WAS SOMETIMES TORN BETWEEN HER ACADEMIC'S DESIRE TO PUT PURE POLITICAL THEORY INTO PRACTICE AND HER ACCEPTANCE OF THE REALITY THAT MAYBE ONLY A FEW OTHER PEOPLE WANTED THAT KIND OF "INTELLECTUAL PURITY" IN GOVERNMENT.

DAWN WAS NOT FROM ILLINOIS. HER PEOPLE WERE SCOTS WHO HAD BEEN PIONEERS IN COLORADO, AND SHE WAS BORN SHORTLY AFTER HER PARENTS MOVED TO CINCINNATI, OHIO. HER NAME WAS PATRICIA DAWN CLARK. SHE EXHIBITED A STREAK OF TEEN-AGED INDEPENDENCE BY DROPPING THE FIRST NAME, BUT I NOTICE THAT HER TOMBSTONE IN GRACELAND CEMETERY SAYS "PATRICIA DAWN CLARK 1926-2013." AT THE END, SHE BROUGHT BACK HER OLD NAME.

AT FIRST, HER FAMILY WAS COMFORTABLY WELL-OFF. HER FATHER OWNED A CONSTRUCTION BUSINESS, AND HER MOTHER WAS A SOCIAL WORKER, BOTH OF THEM COLLEGE GRADUATES AT A TIME WHEN FEW COUPLES COULD CLAIM THAT STATUS. HER FATHER WAS CONSERVATIVE AND LOATHED FRANKLIN D.ROOSEVELT, "THAT MAN IN THE WHITE HOUSE," PARTLY BECAUSE THE COLLAPSE OF THE BANKING SYSTEM HAD CAUSED MR. CLARK TO LOSE HIS BUSINESS. MRS. CLARK SPENT THE DEPRESSION AS A SOCIAL WORKER, HELPING TO RELIEVE SUFFERING.

DAWN AND HER BROTHER WENT TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS. IT WAS EXPECTED THAT SHE WOULD ATTEND A LOCAL COLLEGE, MARRY A LOCAL MAN, AND TAKE HER PLACE IN LOCAL SOCIETY. IF SHE WAS INTERESTED IN POLITICS---AND LITTLE DAWN DID SAY SHE WANTED TO BECOME PRESIDENT--- WELL, SHE COULD BECOME THE PRESIDENT OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO.

THEN CAME WORLD WAR II. DAWN AND HER MOTHER HELPED IN THE WAR EFFORT AT HOME WHILE THE TWO MEN, WILLIAM KEITH, SR., AND WILLIAM KEITH, JR., WENT OFF TO WAR. DAWN HELPED RUN A YOUTH CENTER FOR DISADVANTAGED TEENS. THE CENTER FEATURED A POOL TABLE. ONE DAY, ONE OF THE BOYS OFFERED TO TEACH HER TO PLAY POOL, AND SHE PROVED TO BE AS QUICK A LEARNER AT POOL AS SHE WAS AT ALMOST EVERYTHING ELSE (EXCEPT CARS AND LATER COMPUTERS). ALL OF ILLINOIS SAW HER SKILL AT SHOOTING POOL BALLS INTO SEVERAL POCKETS AT ONCE IN THE FAMOUS TV COMMERCIAL IN 1994---THE ONE CALLED "THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER."

LET ME SAY SOMETHING ABOUT DAWN AND WORLD WAR II. WHEN I HELPED ORGANIZE AN OBSERVANCE OF THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF PEARL HARBOR, I TOLD DAWN THAT OUR FRIEND RON SMITH WOULD BE SPEAKING ABOUT HOW CIVILIANS FARED DURING THE WAR. SHE GREW THOUGHTFUL AND SAID, "YES, I REMEMBER IT WELL. EVERY MAN SERVED, INCLUDING MY FATHER AND BROTHER."

DAWN'S BROTHER SERVED AND LATER MADE ARMY INTELLIGENCE HIS LIFE'S WORK. HOWEVER, THEIR FATHER HAD TO FIGHT HIS WAY INTO THE ARMY. HE HAD BEEN A DOUGHBOY IN WORLD WAR I

AND BEEN GASSED. ALTHOUGH HE WAS WELL ENOUGH TO PLAY ON THE HARVARD FOOTBALL TEAM AFTER THE WAR, HE SOMETIMES SUFFERED FROM BREATHING PROBLEMS. IN 1942, THE ARMY DESPERATELY NEEDED OFFICERS, AND A MAN WITH A COLLEGE DEGREE, EXECUTIVE EXPERIENCE, AND PREVIOUS WAR SERVICE WAS A TREASURE. EVEN THOUGH HE WAS IN HIS FORTIES AND NOT THAT WELL, THE ARMY TOOK MR. CLARK. HE SERVED IN NORTH AFRICA AND PICKED UP DISEASES TYPICAL OF THAT REGION. ALTHOUGH I AM NOT ENTIRELY CERTAIN, IT SEEMS THAT HE WAS UNABLE TO WORK FULL-TIME AFTER THAT; HE DIED IN HIS FIFTIES.

THOSE OF YOU WHO REMEMBER WALTER NETSCH KNOW HE WAS A FORCE OF NATURE, ALL SIX FEET FOUR OF HIM. HOWEVER, HE, TOO, HAD TO FIGHT HIS WAY INTO THE ARMY. WALTER WAS CLASSIFIED IV-F DUE TO A KIND OF RHEUMATISM. AS HE LATER SAID, "ANY MAN WHO COULD WALK PUT ON A UNIFORM; IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A DISGRACE TO GO DANCING WHILE OTHER MEN WERE AT THE FRONT." BY THE WAY, THE ARMY, IN ITS INFINITE WISDOM, PUT WALTER ON THE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS FOR THE WAR. HE PATROLLED THE BEACHES LOOKING FOR JAPANESE SUBMARINES AND, BEING A NEWLY-MINTED ARCHITECT, DESIGNED "BAUHAUS-STYLE LATRINES" FOR THE ARMY.

WHY DO I TELL YOU THIS? BECAUSE WHEN DAWN WAS RUNNING FOR GOVERNOR AND CRITICS SAID SHE CAME FROM WEALTH AND HAD NO IDEA HOW FAMILIES FARED IN TIMES OF HARDSHIP, WALTER ASKED HER IF HE COULD TELL THIS STORY. SHE REFUSED, SAYING THAT SHE WANTED ILLINOISANS TO VOTE FOR HER ON HER OWN RECORD, NOT ON THE MILITARY RECORD OF HER MENFOLK. IF DAWN HAD BECOME GOVERNOR, SHE WOULD HAVE BECOME COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ILLINOIS NATIONAL GUARD. WHAT WOULD IT HAVE BEEN LIKE TO HAVE A WOMAN WITH THOSE MEMORIES AS THE HEAD OF OUR STATE'S ARM OF THE MILITARY?

DAWN LEFT CINCINNATI IN 1944 TO ATTEND NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY, HAVING LITTLE IDEA WHAT THE UNIVERSITY OR EVEN CHICAGO WAS LIKE. LIKE MANY OTHER YOUNG AMERICANS, SHE WANTED TO USE THE POST-WAR ERA TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE, A WORLD FREE FROM WAR AND POVERTY. WHEN SHE GRADUATED IN 1948, SHE HAD TO FIND A JOB TO SUPPORT HERSELF. SHE WORKED IN THE CHICAGO OFFICE OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ILLINOIS. THE YOUNG WOMAN WHO YEARNED FOR A LIFE IN POLITICS WAS ANSWERING PHONES, TYPING LETTERS, ALL THE THINGS CLERICAL STAFFERS DO.

DAWN ALSO VOLUNTEERED IN THE 1948 GUBERNATORIAL CAMPAIGN OF ADLAI STEVENSON, II. LIKE MANY YOUNG PEOPLE, SHE FOUND STEVENSON INSPIRING. I HAVE OFTEN THOUGHT THAT ADLAI STEVENSON, IN HIS TIME, INSPIRED MORE YOUNG PEOPLE TO ENTER PUBLIC SERVICE THAN EVEN JOHN F. KENNEDY IN THE 1960'S. SHE DID ODD JOBS AND DOUBTLESS LEARNED SOMETHING ABOUT STATE GOVERNMENT.

IN 1949 SHE ENTERED NORTHWESTERN LAW SCHOOL ON A FULL SCHOLARSHIP. TO EARN LIVING EXPENSES SHE, ALONG WITH SOME OTHER LAW STUDENTS, SERVED BREAKFAST AND DINNER TO THE PATIENTS IN THE NEARBY HOSPITALS. THEIR COMPENSATION WAS THEIR OWN BREAKFASTS AND DINNERS. AS I RECALL, DAWN TOLD ME SHE TOOK AN APPLE FROM BREAKFAST AND WHEN LUNCHTIME CAME, SHE BOUGHT A CONTAINER OF MILK AND HAD A LIGHT LUNCH BETWEEN CLASSES

AND STUDYING. DURING ONE SUMMER, THE BEST-PAYING JOB SHE COULD GET WAS AS AN INSPECTOR OF GREYHOUND BUS STOPS. SHE SLEPT ON THE BUS AT NIGHT AND THEN WHEN IT STOPPED THE NEXT MORNING, SHE MADE THE ROUNDS, CHECKING ON THE CLEANLINESS OF RESTROOMS, THE QUALITY OF THE FOOD, ETC.

OF COURSE, SHE WAS A DILIGENT STUDENT. SHE MADE THE LAW REVIEW THE YEAR THAT THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF WAS A CHAP FROM CALIFORNIA NAMED DAN WALKER. THERE WERE OTHER WOMEN STUDENTS, ALTHOUGH NOT ALL STAYED TO GRADUATE. THIS WAS TYPICAL. IN 1951, FOR EXAMPLE, THE GRADUATING CLASS OF NORTHWESTERN'S SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY HAD ONLY ONE WOMAN.

WHEN DAWN GRADUATED IN 1952, SHE WAS THE ONLY WOMAN IN THE CLASS. (I MIGHT ADD THAT HER CLASSMATE HAROLD WASHINGTON WAS APPARENTLY THE ONLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN IN THE CLASS, TOO.) DAWN TOLD ME THAT DURING HER LAW SCHOOL YEARS SHE REALLY "LEARNED TO BE ONE OF THE BOYS." MUCH LATER, A YOUNG MALE POLITICIAN TOLD HER THAT HE COULD DO SOMETHING, PRESUMABLY SOMETHING THAT SHE COULD NOT DO, BECAUSE HE "WAS ONE OF THE BOYS." SHE RETORTED, "I WAS ONE OF THE BOYS LONG BEFORE YOU WERE ONE OF THE BOYS."

UPON GRADUATION, DAWN WORKED AGAIN FOR THE STEVENSON CAMPAIGN, THIS TIME THE 1952 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. SHE WAS A RESEARCHER AND OFFICE MANAGER, HOBNOBBING WITH THE LIKES OF BIG-NAME STEVENSON FANS LIKE THE HARVARD HISTORIANS ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, SR. AND JR., WHO MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY THOUGHT THEIR MAN WAS MUCH TOO GOOD FOR SPRINGFIELD AND ILLINOIS. AFTER STEVENSON LOST, NO GOVERNMENT JOB WAS FORTHCOMING.

FORTUNATELY, DAWN HAD LANDED A COVETED ASSOCIATESHIP AT THE WASHINGTON, D.C., FIRM OF COVINGTON & BURLING. SHE SOON SPECIALIZED IN ANTITRUST LAW.

IN 1954 DAWN REALLY ACHIEVED A REAL FIRST. JUDGE JULIUS HOFFMAN CHOSE HER TO BE HIS LAW CLERK. IT WAS UNHEARD-OF FOR A WOMAN, EVEN ONE WITH AN EXCELLENT LEGAL EDUCATION AND SOME EXPERIENCE, TO BE A CLERK FOR A UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT JUDGE IN THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS. HOFFMAN BROKE THAT BARRIER, AND DAWN CLERKED FOR TWO YEARS. SHE TOLD ME THAT IT WAS A GREAT EXPERIENCE, BUT THAT, UNLIKE MANY LAWYERS, SHE DEVELOPED NO DESIRE TO DON THE BLACK ROBES.

WHEN THE CLERKSHIP TERMINATED IN 1956, DAWN WANTED VERY MUCH TO WORK IN THE MIDDLE EAST, A REGION THAT HAD ALWAYS FASCINATED HER. WHEN THAT POSSIBILITY WENT UP IN THE SMOKE OF THE ANGLO-FRENCH-ISRAELI WAR WITH EGYPT, DAWN HAD TO FIND A JOB IN CHICAGO. SHE CONTINUED STUDYING ARABIC---DOES IT SURPRISE ANYONE THAT SHE WAS STUDYING THAT LANGUAGE?---AND BECAME AN ASSOCIATE AT AN ANTITRUST FIRM HERE IN CHICAGO.

DAWN ALSO BECAME ACTIVE IN THE COMMITTEE ON ILLINOIS GOVERNMENT, A LIBERAL THINK TANK ON THE FRINGES OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN CHICAGO.

CLEARLY, DAWN COULD NOT BECOME PART OF THE REGULAR DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATION. MOST OBSERVERS HAVE SAID THAT WAS BECAUSE SHE DISAGREED WITH MAYOR RICHARD J. DALEY'S POLITICAL VIEWS AND HIS RUNNING OF THE PARTY, THE "MACHINE." I THINK IT IS MORE COMPLEX THAN THAT. DAWN CAME TO CHICAGO WITHOUT ANY BACKING, ANY NATURAL POLITICAL BASE. SHE WAS NOT AN "ETHNIC"; SHE WAS A WASP. WORSE, SHE DID NOT GROW UP IN CHICAGO OR ATTEND THE RIGHT SCHOOLS FOR A DEMOCRAT, WHETHER MALE OR FEMALE.

AFTER MARGARET THATCHER DIED, SOMEONE WROTE THAT THE TORY ESTABLISHMENT NEVER ACCEPTED THE GROCER'S DAUGHTER BECAUSE SHE HAD NOT GONE TO THE RIGHT SCHOOLS. ALMOST ALL OF THE TORIES SHE WORKED WITH WERE NOT ONLY MEN, THEY WORE THE SCHOOL TIES OF ETON, HARROW, RUGBY, OR WINCHESTER.

IN CHICAGO, THE COMPARABLE SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR DEMOCRATIC POLITICIANS WERE DELASALLE, ST. IGNATIUS, AND LOYOLA ACADEMY AND PERHAPS MT. CARMEL. MOSTLY THEY WERE IRISH AND CATHOLIC; THEY CLAIMED WORKING-CLASS IMMIGRANT STATUS, EVEN IF THAT WAS REALLY TRUE ONLY TWO OR THREE GENERATIONS BACK. THEY WENT TO COLLEGE AT DEPAUL OR LOYOLA. UP UNTIL THE 1960'S, IT WAS RARE FOR A DEMOCRATIC POLITICIAN OF THIS TYPE TO ATTEND NORTHWESTERN OR, GOD FORBID, THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.

TO BE SURE, THERE WERE ITALIAN-AMERICAN, POLISH-AMERICAN, AFRICAN-AMERICAN, AND JEWISH-AMERICAN REGULAR DEMOCRATS WHO DID NOT BOAST THESE CREDENTIALS, BUT THEY WERE RARELY AT THE POWER CENTER OF THE MACHINE IN THE 1950'S. AND WOMEN? THEY WERE HOMEMAKERS, SECRETARIES, TEACHERS, NURSES---AND NUNS. THE OLD MACHINE, WHICH SOME OF US HERE SAW IN ACTION, WAS LIKE A PYRAMID: THE PATRONAGE ARMY WAS THE BASE, WITH A DOZEN OR SO WARD COMMITTEEMEN AND, ABOVE ALL, DA MARE, AT THE APEX.

SO DAWN BECAME ACTIVE IN THE FRINGES OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY ON THE NEAR NORTH SIDE. SHE WORKED PRECINCTS AND GREW TO BE QUITE GOOD AT RETAIL POLITICS. STILL, SHE HAD NO POWER BASE.

THEN CAME 1960. OTTO KERNER, JR., BECAME THE GOVERNOR OF ILLINOIS. HE HAD ONLY A SMALL STAFF, BUT INDICATED HE WAS WILLING TO TAKE ON ONE OF THE "LIBERAL OUTLIERS" AS AN AIDE. DAWN WAS WILLING TO LEAVE HER JOB AND WORK FOR KERNER, WHOM SHE ADMIRER GREATLY. THIS WAS THE REAL BEGINNING OF HER CAREER IN ILLINOIS STATE GOVERNMENT.

FROM 1961 TO 1965 DAWN SERVED AS AN "ASSISTANT TO THE GOVERNOR." IT WAS A SMALL STAFF OF ASSISTANTS. SHE WAS HIS LEGISLATIVE AIDE, HIS LIAISON TO THE LEGISLATURE. SHE BIRDDOGGED BILLS COMING THROUGH THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. AT THAT TIME, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WAS MOST ACTIVE IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF THE FIRST YEAR OF EACH TERM.

IN THE FALL, THEY WOULD RETURN FOR A SHORT "VETO SESSION," WHICH RARELY WAS EXCITING. UNTIL RICHARD B. OGILVIE BECAME GOVERNOR IN 1969, I THINK ONLY TWO GUBERNATORIAL VETOS WERE OVERRIDDEN. TYPICALLY, THE LEGISLATORS PASSED THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET, ADDING IN SOME MEASURES OF THEIR OWN, AND THEN, AS THEY PUT IT, "LET THE

GOVERNOR DECIDE WHAT HE WANTED TO DO." THE GOVERNOR OF ILLINOIS ENJOYED THE POWER OF A TOTAL VETO AND AN ITEM VETO FOR ITEMS OF APPROPRIATIONS AND RARELY FEARED AN OVERRIDE BY THE LEGISLATURE.

THE KEY, THEN, WAS GETTING A BILL INTRODUCED AND PASSED BY BOTH HOUSES. MIND YOU, THERE WERE NO COMPUTERS. IN FACT, THERE WEREN'T MANY ELECTRIC TYPEWRITERS, AND PHOTOCOPIERS WERE IN THEIR INFANCY. KERNER RELIED UPON HIS BRAIN TRUST, INCLUDING DAWN, TO CREATE A LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM. USUALLY THE BILLS STARTED IN THE HOUSE, WHICH SPORTED MANY DEMOCRATIC MEMBERS AND WHICH ALSO HAD SOME VERY INDEPENDENT MEMBERS. THE KERNER PROGRAM HAD A CHANCE IN THAT HOUSE.

THE ILLINOIS SENATE WAS A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT ANIMAL. IN THE DAYS BEFORE ONE PERSON-ONE VOTE, THE DOWNSTATERS EXERCISED ALMOST COMPLETE CONTROL OVER LEGISLATION. THEY WERE, WITH RARE EXCEPTIONS, REPUBLICANS. I GOT TO KNOW A FEW OF THE DOWNSTATERS STILL SERVING IN THE EARLY 1970'S, AND THEY WERE PRETTY MUCH LIKE DAWN'S FATHER: FDR WAS "THAT MAN IN THE WHITE HOUSE."

THOSE FROM THE CHICAGO SUBURBS WERE A BIT MORE LIBERAL, BUT BOTH PARTS OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY---DOWNSTATERS AND SUBURBANITES---WERE UNITED IN THEIR FEAR OF BIG, BAD, CORRUPT, DEMOCRATIC MACHINE-CONTROLLED CHICAGO. YET THE STATE-WIDE OFFICERS WERE ELECTED BY CHICAGOANS AND SUBURBANITES. KERNER, A DEMOCRAT WITH TIES TO THE CHICAGO MACHINE ALTHOUGH NOT ALWAYS PART OF IT, WAS "SUSPECT."

THE MOST IMPORTANT REPUBLICAN SENATOR OF THE TIME WAS PROBABLY W. RUSSELL ARRINGTON OF EVANSTON. SOME OF YOU, SUCH AS JIM ANDREWS, REMEMBER HIM. A FEW YEARS AGO I ASKED DAWN HOW SHE AND ARRINGTON GOT ALONG BECAUSE THEY WERE CLEARLY LIKE OIL AND WATER. SHE THOUGHT FOR A MOMENT AND SAID, "WELL, I THINK HE RESPECTED ME BECAUSE I GAVE AS GOOD AS I GOT. HE WOULD COME TO ME WITH LEGISLATION HE WANTED, AND I WOULD TELL HIM WHETHER I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT THE GOVERNOR SUPPORT IT. SO HE HAD TO DEAL WITH ME. " CAN WE IMAGINE WHAT THOSE CONVERSATIONS WERE LIKE?

AFTER THE FLURRY OF BILLS PASSED ON JUNE 30TH, DAWN WOULD REQUISITION THE GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ROOM WITH ITS HUGE, OVAL OAK TABLE AND SEVERAL SIDE TABLES. SHE AND HER STAFF WOULD ORGANIZE THE PASSED BILLS BY TOPIC: TAXES, CRIMINAL LAW, BUSINESS REGULATION, ETC. THEN SHE CALLED HER FRIENDS AT THE COMMITTEE ON ILLINOIS GOVERNMENT TO COME DOWN TO SPRINGFIELD TO HELP HER ANALYZE THE BILLS. THESE WERE OF NECESSITY MARATHON SESSIONS. DAWN TOLD ME THAT ONE NIGHT, IN THE WEE HOURS OF THE MORNING, HAROLD KATZ, A LABOR UNION LAWYER AND PROMINENT LIBERAL FROM THE NORTH SHORE, FINALLY CALLED A HALT. HE SAID, "YOU PEOPLE DO WHAT YOU WANT; I AM GOING TO TAKE A NAP." WITH THAT, HE CLIMBED ONTO THE BIG TABLE AND SLEPT WHILE THE SORTING OF BILLS CONTINUED AROUND HIM.

DAWN REALIZED THAT MANY BILLS PASSED AT THE END CONTRADICTED EACH OTHER. SHE WISHED THAT THE GOVERNOR HAD THE POWER TO RECONCILE THE DIFFERENCES. INSTEAD, KERNER

HAD TO VETO ONE BILL, SIGN THE OTHER, AND TRY TO INCORPORATE THE BETTER FEATURES OF THE VETOED BILL INTO THE NEW STATUTE THE NEXT TIME AROUND. IT WAS AN INEFFICIENT SYSTEM. DAWN CAME TO ADVOCATE THE AMENDATORY VETO, A WAY THAT THE GOVERNOR COULD AVOID A TOTAL VETO, BUT AT THE SAME TIME ASK THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO MAKE CHANGES IN THE BILLS PASSED. IN THE RUN-UP TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION A FEW YEARS LATER, DAWN WROTE AN ARTICLE ADVOCATING THE AMENDATORY VETO AND WAS ITS PRINCIPAL SPONSOR AT THE CONVENTION.

I THINK IT IS SAFE TO SAY THAT DAWN'S APPRECIATION OF THE WEAKNESSES IN THE 1870 ILLINOIS CONSTITUTION GREW DURING THE FOUR YEARS SHE WAS KERNER'S LEGISLATIVE AIDE. SHE CERTAINLY HAD ENORMOUS PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE WITH THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS.

WHEN SHE WAS A DELEGATE AT THE CONVENTION IN 1969 AND 1970, SHE PROBABLY SPOKE ON THE FLOOR AS MUCH AS ANY DELEGATE; SHE CERTAINLY VOICED HER VIEWS ON EVERY MAJOR ISSUE. THIS ANNOYED SOME PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONVENTION, SAM WITWER, BUT I OBSERVED THE PROCEEDINGS CLOSELY AND HAD A DIFFERENT VIEW. I SAW THAT SHE SPOKE FROM HER REMARKABLY BROAD EXPERIENCE IN STATE GOVERNMENT. SHE KNEW MORE ABOUT THOSE ISSUES THAN 90% OF THE DELEGATES.

DAWN PLAYED OTHER ROLES IN THE KERNER ADMINISTRATION. SHE HELPED FORMULATE KERNER'S LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM. FOR PERSONAL REASONS, KERNER PASSIONATELY WANTED TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF MENTAL HEALTH. HE, DAWN, AND SEVERAL OTHERS CONCEIVED A NEW MENTAL HEALTH CODE. WHEN IT PASSED, THE REFORM CLEARLY PUT ILLINOIS INTO THE FOREFRONT OF THE NATION ON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES. BOTH KERNER AND DAWN OPPOSED CAPITAL PUNISHMENT, BUT THEY KNEW THAT THE TIME WAS NOT RIPE TO PUSH FOR ABOLITION OF THE DEATH PENALTY.

DAWN ALSO ACHIEVED A TRUE FIRST WHEN KERNER MADE HER DEPUTY GOVERNOR. AT THAT TIME, WHEN THE GOVERNOR LEFT THE STATE, THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR BECAME ACTING GOVERNOR. SAMUEL H. SHAPIRO, WHO WAS KERNER'S LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, WAS A GENIAL MAN WHO WAS ON GOOD TERMS WITH BOTH KERNER AND DAWN. SHAPIRO WAS CONTENT TO PLAY THE CEREMONIAL ROLE OF ACTING GOVERNOR AND NOT INVOLVE HIMSELF IN THE DAY-TO-DAY ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNOR'S STAFF. KERNER NAMED DAWN "DEPUTY GOVERNOR," APPARENTLY THE FIRST TIME THAT ANYONE HAD HELD THAT TITLE, CERTAINLY THE FIRST TIME A WOMAN, GOD HELP ILLINOIS, HAD ASSUMED THAT ROLE. YOU CAN IMAGINE THE REACTION: "PETTICOAT GOVERNMENT", "WHAT IS OTTO THINKING OF?", "HOW CAN THAT WOMAN LAWYER FROM CHICAGO RUN THE SPRINGFIELD OFFICE?" FROM WHAT I'VE HEARD, THE DOWNSTATERS AND REPUBLICANS WENT BALLISTIC!

EVENTUALLY DAWN REALIZED THAT SHE HAD A RIVAL FOR KERNER'S EAR AS FAR AS LEGISLATION WAS CONCERNED. THAT WAS THEODORE ISAACS, KERNER'S DIRECTOR OF REVENUE AND A LONG-TIME PAL FROM THEIR DAYS IN THE ARMY. DAWN WOULD SUGGEST THAT KERNER SIGN A BILL AND KERNER WOULD COMMENT, "WELL, TED THINKS I SHOULDN'T SIGN IT." EVENTUALLY DAWN

GREW TIRED OF BEING BACK-DOORED. WHENEVER SHE SPOKE OF KERNER TO ME, SHE SAID SHE THOUGHT THAT HE GOT INTO TROUBLE WITH STOCKS BECAUSE ISAACS MISLED HIM. SHE CONSIDERED KERNER AN HONORABLE MAN WHO WAS AN EXCELLENT GOVERNOR AND, AS IN THE CASE OF THE KERNER COMMISSION ON RACE IN 1968, A PUBLIC SERVANT WHO RENDERED GREAT SERVICE TO THE NATION. I THINK SHE ALWAYS THOUGHT HE WAS INNOCENT OF THE BRIBERY CHARGES FOR WHICH HE WAS CONVICTED.

BY 1965 DAWN HAD HAD ENOUGH. SHE HAD SERVED KERNER FOR FOUR YEARS, OFTEN WORKING INCREDIBLY LONG HOURS. WHEN I CAME TO SPRINGFIELD IN 1971, I SOMETIMES, BUT NOT ALWAYS, WORKED AFTER SUPPER. A JANITOR WITH SEVERE OSTEOPOROSIS WORKED THE EVENING SHIFT AND WOULD DRAG HIMSELF INTO MY OFFICE ABOUT 8 P.M. HE WAS PRETTY CHEEKY. ONCE HE SAID TO ME, "ARE YOU STILL HERE? YOU REMIND ME OF THAT LAWYER WOMAN THAT WORKED FOR KERNER; SHE WORKED ALL NIGHT, TOO!" I REALIZED HE WAS REFERRING TO DAWN AND SAID, "YOU MEAN DAWN CLARK NETSCH?" AND HE SAID, "YES, THAT DAWN CLARK. SHE CLOSED DOWN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE AT NIGHT AND I'LL BET SHE OPENED IT IN THE MORNING!" WHEN I TOLD DAWN THAT STORY, SHE SAID SHE REMEMBERED HIM AND ADDED, "WELL, I SUPPOSE I DID OPEN AND CLOSE THE OFFICE."

SO SHE QUIT IN EARLY 1965, AND, AFTER A FEW MONTHS, BEGAN HER CAREER AS A LAW PROFESSOR AT NORTHWESTERN. MUCH HAS BEEN MADE OF HER BEING THE "FIRST WOMAN ON THE NORTHWESTERN LAW FACULTY," BUT IN FACT, MANY LAW SCHOOLS ALREADY BOASTED AT LEAST ONE WOMAN PROFESSOR. THOSE OF YOU WHO REMEMBER SOIA MENTSCHIKOFF OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO LAW SCHOOL KNOW WHAT I MEAN WHEN I SAY THAT SOIA HAD AN EVEN MORE POWERFUL PERSONALITY THAN DAWN. THERE WAS A GOOD REASON WHY SOIA'S STUDENTS CALLED HER "THE CZARINA" OR "THE GREAT RUSSIAN EARTH MOTHER."

DURING THE LATE 1960'S DAWN CONTINUED HER ACTIVITIES IN LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC POLITICS AND IN THE EFFORT TO CALL A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION FOR ILLINOIS. SHE HELPED WRITE STUDIES OF ILLINOIS CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES AND DECIDED TO RUN FOR A POSITION AS A DELEGATE TO THE CONVENTION. SHE RAN FROM THE NEAR NORTH SIDE AND HAD SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT FROM THE LAKEFRONT LIBERAL COMMUNITY.

HERE'S THE CURIOUS PART: THE 42ND WARD REGULAR DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATION ALSO SUPPORTED HER. WHY DID GEORGE DUNNE SUPPORT HER? I AM NOT CERTAIN, AND DAWN NEVER OFFERED ME HER VIEW ON THE SUBJECT. THE REGULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY THREW ITS WEIGHT BEHIND DAWN AND A YOUNG LAWYER NAMED MALCOLM S. KAMIN, WHOSE TIES WITH THE PARTY WERE SOMEWHAT CLOSER THAN DAWN'S. THIS WAS DAWN'S FIRST RUN FOR OFFICE. PERHAPS GEORGE DUNNE THOUGHT SHE WAS GOING TO WIN ANYWAY, PERHAPS HE THOUGHT THAT CON CON WAS A RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT POST, PERHAPS HE THOUGHT THAT BY ENDORSING HER HE COULD WIN SOME FAVOR WITH THE LIBERALS, OR AT LEAST WITH DAWN HERSELF. WHO KNOWS?

ON DECEMBER 8, 1969, DAWN TOOK HER SEAT AT THE CONVENTION ALONG WITH THE THREE COLLEAGUES HERE. DAWN AND MARY LEE LEAHY, JOINED BY SEVEN MEN, FORMED A STUDY GROUP

THAT WAS CALLED "THE CHICAGO NINE" OR "THE INDEPENDENTS." ALL WERE ESSENTIALLY LIBERAL OR NON-MACHINE DEMOCRATS. AS THE CONVENTION PROGRESSED, THEY SOMETIMES HELD THE BALANCE OF POWER ON CERTAIN ISSUES WHEN THE DOWNSTATERS AND REPUBLICANS WERE IN OPPOSITION TO THE CHICAGO DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATION DELEGATES, "THE REGULARS."

DAWN LOBBIED THE NEW PRESIDENT OF THE CONVENTION TO BE APPOINTED THE CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT. I HAVE NO IDEA WHY SHE DID THAT. SHE HAD NO REAL EXPERIENCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT. MAYOR DALEY, WHO WANTED HOME RULE FOR CHICAGO ABOVE ANYTHING ELSE IN THE NEW CONSTITUTION, WOULD HAVE OPPOSED THAT APPOINTMENT. IN THE END, DAWN BECAME THE VICE-CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE ON REVENUE AND FINANCE. A BELLEVILLE LAWYER WHO HAD A MORE EASY-GOING DISPOSITION (THAT MASKED A HARVARD LAW DEGREE AND SHARP MIND, BY THE WAY) WAS THE CHAIR. FRANK CICERO, WHO IS HERE TONIGHT, WAS THE OTHER "INDEPENDENT" ON THE COMMITTEE.

DAWN OFFERED HER VIEWS IN TESTIMONY BEFORE SOME OTHER COMMITTEES. RON SMITH, WHO WAS A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXECUTIVE ARTICLE, REMEMBERS THAT WHEN SHE TESTIFIED BEFORE THAT COMMITTEE, SHE SPOKE TO HER PROPOSAL FOR THE GUBERNATORIAL POWER OF THE AMENDATORY VETO. RON SAID THAT SHE WAS THE ONLY WITNESS WHOM THE COMMITTEE REQUIRED TO TAKE AN OATH. HE THINKS THAT "THE GUYS" WERE JUST TEASING HER. PROBABLY DAWN THOUGHT NOTHING OF IT.

DAWN HAD SOME DIFFICULTIES WITH CERTAIN LONG-TIME REPUBLICAN DELEGATES. SHE WAS NEVER A FAN OF THE PRESIDENT, SAMUEL W. WITWER. I THINK SHE NEVER UNDERSTOOD THAT FOR SAM THIS WAS THE GREATEST OPPORTUNITY OF HIS CAREER. HE HAD DEVOTED MUCH OF HIS LIFE SINCE 1947 TO THE CAUSE OF ILLINOIS CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM. SAM WAS ALMOST DESPERATE TO PRODUCE A CONSTITUTION THAT WAS NOT ONLY GOOD FOR ILLINOIS, BUT THAT THE VOTERS WOULD ADOPT. IT WAS ALMOST AN OBSESSION WITH HIM. HE TOLD ME IN LATER YEARS THAT IF THE PRODUCT HAD FAILED, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN BLAMED AND HE WOULD HAVE LEFT THE STATE. DAWN ALSO WANTED A GOOD AND "SALEABLE" CONSTITUTION, BUT NOT AT THE SAME LEVEL OF DESIRE. I THINK DAWN FAILED TO UNDERSTAND THAT SAM'S FEELINGS IMPELLED HIM TO MAKE MANY OF THE DECISIONS HE DID. SOMETIMES SHE OPENLY OPPOSED HIM, AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WAS THEN STRAINED.

AS I RECALL, THE WOMEN DELEGATES NEVER VOTED AS A BLOC OR PRESENTED A "WOMEN'S AGENDA." AT THAT TIME FEMINISM HAD NOT SPREAD INTO ILLINOIS POLITICS, AND DAWN WAS SOMETIMES BLISSFULLY UNAWARE OF BEING TREATED ANY DIFFERENTLY BECAUSE OF GENDER. IF SHE RAN INTO DIFFICULTIES, SHE JUST KEPT ON PLUGGING AWAY.

AT THE CONVENTION, THAT MEANT FROM 8 IN THE MORNING UNTIL 10 AT NIGHT. SHE WAS INDEFATIGABLE. IN FACT, DURING THE LAST WEEKS OF THE CONVENTION, ANOTHER DELEGATE SPIED HER RE-DRAFTING THE "ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE," A DOCUMENT TO BE SENT TO THE VOTERS, AT 8:30 ON A SUNDAY MORNING. HE WAS NOT SURPRISED TO SEE HER WORKING AT THAT HOUR.

I MENTIONED THE COMMITTEE ON REVENUE AND FINANCE. IN APRIL, 1970, THE COMMITTEE WAS DRAFTING ITS REPORT TO THE PROPOSED FINANCE ARTICLE, A POTENTIALLY REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH TO BUDGETING AND PUBLIC FINANCE. THEY NEEDED A LEGAL RESEARCHER, I WAS ONE OF THE FEW LAWYERS IN THE RESEARCH POOL, SO GUESS WHO WAS SECONDED TO THE COMMITTEE?

THE COMMITTEE COUNSEL, A POLITICAL ECONOMIST, WARNED ME. HE SAID THAT THE CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE, JACK KARNS, AND THE VICE-CHAIR, DAWN CLARK NETSCH, WERE OPPOSITES IN PERSONALITY ALTHOUGH BOTH WERE BRIGHT. HE SAID JACK TRIED TO ACHIEVE A CONSENSUS BEFORE VOTING, WHILE DAWN TRIED TO PUSH AHEAD WITH POLICY DECISIONS. HE SAID THAT IF JACK GOT HIS WAY, THE COMMITTEE WOULD NOT MOVE AHEAD, WHILE IF DAWN GOT HER WAY, THEY WOULD PUSH FORWARD, PROBABLY TOO FAST FOR THE REST OF THE CONVENTION TO ACCEPT.

I SAT TO THE SIDE AND WATCHED THE COMMITTEE. IT WAS A GRADUATE COURSE IN POLITICAL BEHAVIOR. THERE WERE THE "REGULARS," WITH WHOM DAWN WAS IN AGREEMENT ON SEVERAL ISSUES. THERE WERE THE BUSINESSMEN, WHO KNEW AND LIKED DAWN PERSONALLY, BUT WHO WERE RARELY WITH HER. I REMEMBER THAT FRANK CICERO, HERE TONIGHT, WAS THE "DETAIL MAN." HE WAS THE ONE WHO COULD SEE ALL THE LITTLE NUANCES, THE DETAILS OF THE PROPOSALS, AND THEIR POTENTIAL PITFALLS. DAWN WAS INCREDIBLY KNOWLEDGEABLE. BUT SHE ALSO TRIED TO BE THE CENTER OF THE DISCUSSION, AND SOMETIMES THAT CREATED ISSUES WITH THE OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

WHEN THE COMMITTEE COUNSEL AND I DRAFTED THE COMMITTEE'S REPORTS, DAWN OVERSAW OUR EFFORTS. NOTHING GOT BY HER. SHE HAD BEEN A STAFFER AND KNEW HOW IMPORTANT IT WAS TO HAVE GOOD STAFF---AND TO SUPERVISE THEM.

I ALSO OBSERVED THE TENSION IN DAWN WHEN SHE THOUGHT THAT A REVENUE PROVISION THAT A "PURE" OR "IDEAL" CONSTITUTION SHOULD HAVE CONFLICTED WITH A REVENUE PROVISION THAT WAS CLEARLY MORE APPROPRIATE, OR AT LEAST MORE ACCEPTABLE, IN ILLINOIS IN 1970. HERE THE ACADEMIC, THE SCHOLAR OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT POLICY, CLASHED WITH THE ELECTED DELEGATE TO AN ILLINOIS CONVENTION. SOMETIMES SHE WROTE A DISSENT ADVOCATING A "PURE" PROVISION, BUT ONLY AFTER THE "PRACTICAL" PROVISION HAD BEEN ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE COMMITTEE CREATED A PROVISION FOR THE INCOME TAX THAT ESSENTIALLY CRYSTALLIZED THE STATE INCOME TAX ILLINOIS HAD ADOPTED IN 1969. THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE KNEW THAT IF THEY WENT MUCH FARTHER, THE VOTERS, ESPECIALLY THE ANTI-ANY-TAX GROUP, WOULD SINK THE ENTIRE CONSTITUTION AT THE REFERENDUM. SURELY, DAWN KNEW THAT. BUT SHE DISSENTED, AT LEAST ON PAPER.

THIS IS NOT THE OCCASION TO RECOUNT THE HISTORY OF "DAWN AND THE CONVENTION." HOWEVER, I WANT TO MENTION TWO ANECDOTES THAT ILLUSTRATE SOMETHING ABOUT HER PERSONALITY AND ROLE. WHEN THE COMMITTEE COMPLETED THE FINANCE ARTICLE AND SOLD IT TO THE CONVENTION, THE COMMITTEE HELD A CELEBRATORY PARTY. THINGS GOT RATHER "HAPPY," AS I RECALL. PROBABLY SOMEBODY SPIKED DAWN'S DRINK, AND SHE WAS NOT A HEAVY DRINKER. ANYWAY, THE GUYS COAXED HER INTO SINGING "THE INDIAN LOVE CALL." SOON WE HEARD, "I AM

CALLING YOU, YOU, YOU...." (DON'T LAUGH; DAWN COULDN'T SING EITHER.) BY THAT TIME THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS HAD LEARNED TO APPRECIATE EACH OTHER, AND DAWN SHOWED SHE COULD BE A GOOD SPORT.

THEN THERE WAS THE POKER CAPER. THE PRESS CORPS USUALLY SAT IN THE TERRACE LEVEL OF THE OLD STATE CAPITOL, RIGHT UNDER THE CHAMBER WHERE THE DELEGATES WERE DEBATING. A PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM RAN THE PROCEEDINGS DOWN THERE, AND BOTH REPORTERS AND THOSE DELEGATES TAKING A BREAK WOULD LISTEN, WAITING TO SEE IF THEY SHOULD RUN UPSTAIRS FOR A VOTE. ED GILBRETH OF "THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS" TOLD ME LATER THAT ONE AFTERNOON DAWN ASKED THE REPORTERS WHAT CARD GAME THEY WERE PLAYING. "POKER" WAS THE ANSWER. "OH, I HAVEN'T PLAYED POKER IN YEARS." THE REPORTERS LOOKED AT EACH OTHER, THINKING, "BOY, THIS IS A WAY TO TAP INTO THE NETSCH FAMILY TREASURY", AND INVITED HER TO JOIN THEM. THEY FORGOT WHAT AN INCREDIBLY QUICK STUDY DAWN WAS! AN HOUR LATER, HAVING TAKEN SIX OF THE SEVEN POTS, SHE GATHERED HER WINNINGS INTO HER PURSE AND SAID, "OH, I BETTER RUN UP FOR THAT VOTE, THANKS FOR THE POKER GAME." WHEN I TOLD THAT STORY AT A CON CON REUNION FOUR YEARS LATER, DAWN SAID SHE DIDN'T THINK THERE WAS ANYTHING ODD ABOUT HER BEING ABLE TO RESURRECT HER POKER SKILLS.

AFTER THE VOTERS ADOPTED THE CONVENTION'S PRODUCT ON DECEMBER 15, 1970, DAWN SET ABOUT TRYING TO MAKE SURE THAT THE CONSTITUTION WAS IMPLEMENTED PROPERLY. AS I WAS ONE OF THE LEGISLATIVE STAFFERS CHIEFLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT TASK, SHE SOMETIMES LOBBIED ME. SHE DROVE ME NUTS ON OCCASION, AND I TOLD HER SO. SHE HAD THE VIEW THAT SEVERAL PROPOSALS SHE FAVORED AND THAT EITHER THE DELEGATES OR THE VOTERS REJECTED WERE "PART OF CONSTITUTION IMPLEMENTATION" AND COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY I CONCERNED MYSELF ONLY WITH THE DOCUMENT AS ADOPTED, NOT AS SHE WANTED IT TO BE.

CHIEF AMONG THESE WAS ADOPTION OF A MERIT SYSTEM OF CHOOSING JUDGES, THAT IS TO SAY THAT THE GOVERNOR OR PERHAPS THE SUPREME COURT APPOINTS A JUDGE FROM AMONG THREE NOMINEES SELECTED BY A SEMI-INDEPENDENT COMMISSION. SHE HAD NO USE FOR THE ELECTION OF JUDGES BY THE VOTERS. FOR THE REST OF HER POLITICAL LIFE, SHE WORKED TOWARDS THAT END, THE ADOPTION OF AN APPOINTIVE, COMMISSION-SCREENED SYSTEM OF SELECTING JUDGES FOR ILLINOIS. THERE WERE OTHER ISSUES, BUT THIS WAS PARAMOUNT.

PERHAPS THAT WAS ONE REASON WHY SHE THREW HER HAT INTO THE RING FOR THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION FOR THE ILLINOIS STATE SENATE IN 1972. IN CHICAGO, THE SENATE SEATS ARE DECIDED IN THE DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY. THE REGULARS RAN ONE OF THEIR OWN; THEY CERTAINLY DID NOT WANT DAWN. AGAINST ALL ODDS, SHE WON THE NOMINATION IN MARCH, 1972; ELECTION IN NOVEMBER WAS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION.

DAWN IMMEDIATELY BEGAN TO PLAY A ROLE IN THE STATE SENATE, TAKING AN ACTIVE PART IN THE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS. THAT CAUCUS FEATURED ANOTHER FRESHMAN WHO HAD ALSO BEEN A CON CON DELEGATE, RICHARD M. DALEY. AT THAT TIME, DALEY BELIEVED STRONGLY IN PARTY DISCIPLINE, PARTY-LINE VOTING, ETC. I THINK DAWN AND RICH AGREED ON SEVERAL ISSUES, APART

FROM JUDICIAL SELECTION, OF COURSE, BUT THEY CERTAINLY HAD DIFFERING VIEWS ON HOW THE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS SHOULD FUNCTION. BY THEN, DAWN HAD BECOME SOMETHING OF A WOMEN'S RIGHTS ADVOCATE AND CLEARLY HAD THE PROGRESSIVE WOMEN'S GROUPS AS A POLITICAL BASE. SHE WAS THE SENATE SPONSOR OF THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT.

IN THAT SESSION, FROM 1973 TO 1975, I WAS THE PARLIAMENTARIAN OF THE HOUSE AND OCCASIONALLY OBSERVED DAWN IN ACTION IN THE SENATE. SHE REMAINED TRUE TO FORM: EXTRAORDINARILY HARD-WORKING, WELL-PREPARED, AND WITH A CLEAR LEGISLATIVE AGENDA. ALTHOUGH SHE WANTED TO BE "ONE OF THE BOYS" WITH HER COLLEAGUES, THAT WAS TOUGH GIVEN THE STATE SENATE ORGANIZATION.

AFTER THE 1974 ELECTION, DAWN AND SEVEN OTHER DEMOCRATS WHO DISLIKED HAVING THE "REGULARS" RUN THE CAUCUS FORMED A STUDY GROUP CALLED "THE CRAZY EIGHT." UNLIKE THE STUDY GROUP AT CON CON, "THE CHICAGO NINE," THIS GROUP COULD WIELD POWER IN THE ELECTION OF THE PARTY LEADERSHIP. ALTHOUGH THEY DID NOT ALWAYS VOTE AS A BLOC ON BILLS, THEY ALL REFUSED TO VOTE FOR THE REGULAR DEMOCRAT WHO WAS PRESUMED TO BE THE SOLE CAUCUS CANDIDATE FOR THE SENATE. THEY WERE RUNNING A TERRIFIC POLITICAL RISK. THE REGULARS WERE APPALLED. BUT THE CRAZY EIGHT HELD OUT. THEY RECEIVED ONE POSITION IN LEADERSHIP AND SOME CHANGES IN LEGISLATIVE PROCEDURE.

OF COURSE, DAWN BORE THE BRUNT OF THE REGULARS' ANGER BECAUSE SHE CAME FROM CHICAGO. RICH DALEY, CHAIR OF A COMMITTEE, REFUSED TO CALL HER BILLS FOR A HEARING AND VOTE. AS HE TOLD ANOTHER CRAZY EIGHTER, "WE HAVE TO HAVE PARTY DISCIPLINE." WHEN DAWN CHAIRED ANOTHER COMMITTEE AND SPONSORED BILLS SENT TO THAT COMMITTEE, THE REGULARS WOULD NOT VOTE WITH HER. I HAVE HEARD THAT AT ONE POINT SHE EVEN HAD TO MAKE A MOTION ON THE FLOOR TO "DISCHARGE COMMITTEE," THAT IS TO HAVE HER BILL REMOVED FROM HER OWN COMMITTEE'S JURISDICTION AND SENT DIRECTLY TO THE FLOOR OF THE SENATE.

THIS TENSION BETWEEN THE "CRAZY EIGHT" AND THE "REGULARS" WENT ON THROUGH THE 1970'S. WHEN DAWN BEAT THE "REGULAR" CANDIDATE IN THE 1974 DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY, IT WAS CLEAR THAT SHE WAS UNBEATABLE IN HER DISTRICT. IN 1981, THE REDISTRICTING COMMISSION MET TO MAKE SEISMIC CHANGES IN THE STATE SENATE AND HOUSE DISTRICTS. THE DEMOCRATS ON THE COMMISSION DID NOT PROTECT HER. THEY CREATED A DISTRICT THAT INCLUDED HER HOME, BUT WAS FOR THE MOST PART "NEW TERRITORY." UNLESS THE NETSCHES MOVED, WHICH WAS REALLY OUT OF THE QUESTION, DAWN WOULD HAVE TO SPEND AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF MONEY AND TIME CAMPAIGNING AMONG VOTERS WHO DID NOT REALLY KNOW HER. PROBABLY SHE WOULD HAVE WON, BUT AT A GREAT COST. IN EFFECT, THE REGULARS WERE IMPOSING A FINANCIAL PENALTY UPON DAWN.

FORTUNATELY, THE PERSON CHOSEN TO BREAK THE TIE BETWEEN THE REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS WAS SAMUEL H. SHAPIRO, AN ALLY OF DAWN'S FROM THE KERNER ADMINISTRATION DAYS. THE REVISED MAP GAVE DAWN MOST OF HER OLD DISTRICT BACK, AND I HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT IT WAS SHAPIRO WHO SAID, "STOP BEATING UP ON HER."

HERE LET ME SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THE FINANCING OF DAWN'S CAMPAIGNS. WALTER WAS NOT ONLY AN ADORING HUSBAND; HE WAS HER CHIEF CONTRIBUTOR. HEIR TO A TRUST FUND, HE DID NOT NEED HIS ARCHITECTURAL FEES TO SUPPORT DAWN, HIM, THEIR DOGS, THEIR UNIQUE HOUSE, AND AN INCREDIBLE ART COLLECTION. IN LATER YEARS, WHEN DAWN ADVOCATED CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM, SHE WAS AGAIN CONFLICTED ABOUT THIS. WHEN SHE SAID TO ME, "I DON'T THINK CANDIDATES SHOULD TAKE LARGE CONTRIBUTIONS OR THAT ONLY RICH PEOPLE SHOULD BE ABLE TO RUN FOR OFFICE," I POINTED OUT THAT FIRST, WOMEN HAD A TERRIBLE TIME RAISING CAMPAIGN MONEY, AND SECOND, A GOOD HALF OF HER CAMPAIGN FUNDS CAME FROM ONE CONSTITUENT, WALTER NETSCH. SHE ADMITTED THIS WAS TRUE.

I THINK THAT DAWN GREW RESTLESS IN THE SENATE IN THE 1980'S. THE "CRAZY EIGHT" HAD ACHIEVED MANY OF THEIR GOALS; THE REPUBLICANS REGULARLY CONTROLLED THE SENATE, WHICH MEANT THAT FEW DEMOCRATS COULD IMPLEMENT LEGISLATIVE AGENDAS; AND SHE WANTED TO HOLD EXECUTIVE OFFICE. SHE MADE A SORT OF PEACE WITH SENATOR DALEY WHEN THEY COMBINED FORCES TO REVISE THE MENTAL HEALTH CODE, A CAUSE SHE HAD ESPOUSED SINCE THE 1960'S.

STILL, HER POSITION WITHIN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY WAS NOT ALL THAT SURE. SHE HAD A POLITICAL BASE AMONG SOME WOMEN AND AMONG THE LAKEFRONT LIBERALS, BUT THAT WAS IT. AT THE TIME, THE ILLINOIS DEMOCRATIC PARTY OPERATED ON WHAT I CALLED THE "WHOSE KID IS IN LINE" PRINCIPLE. MANY HIGH-PROFILE CANDIDATES WERE THE CHILDREN---AND UNTIL RECENTLY THAT MEANT SONS---OF PROMINENT DEMOCRATIC POLITICIANS. IN CHICAGO THEY WERE THE SONS OF WARD COMMITTEEMEN OR ALDERMEN. THAT OFTEN EXTENDED TO THE STATE LEGISLATURE AND TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE OFFICES.

DAWN TOLD ME THAT WHEN SHE WANTED TO RUN FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL IN THE 1980'S, SHE FOUND THAT SHE WAS "BEHIND" NEIL HARTIGAN AND ROLAND BURRIS IN THE LINE. HARTIGAN WAS A "REGULAR", THE SON OF A POWERFUL WARD COMMITTEEMAN. HARTIGAN HAD ALSO BEEN WALKER'S LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR. BURRIS WAS FROM CENTRALIA, WHICH IS FAR DOWNSTATE, BUT HE WAS A CHICAGO BANKER AND HAD SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT IN THE CHICAGO AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY, WHICH WAS BEGINNING TO FLEX ITS MUSCLES IN THE 1980'S.

FINALLY, DAWN DECIDED THAT IN 1990 IT WAS NOW OR NEVER. SHE RAN FOR STATE COMPTROLLER. ALTHOUGH SHE HAD LITTLE SUPPORT DOWNSTATE, SHE WAS ABLE TO GARNER ABOUT 55% OF THE VOTE. SHE WAS THE FIRST WOMAN ELECTED TO STATE EXECUTIVE OFFICE IN ILLINOIS. BY ALL ACCOUNTS, SHE DID A SUPERB JOB. HER LEGAL AND FISCAL ACUMEN WERE TRULY ON DISPLAY IN THE POSITION OF STATE COMPTROLLER. SHE WORKED WITH GOVERNOR JIM EDGAR, A REPUBLICAN, ON SEVERAL FISCAL MATTERS, OFTEN QUITE CONGENIALLY. UNFORTUNATELY, THE STATE TREASURER, WHOSE POSITION COMPLEMENTS THAT OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER, WAS PAT QUINN, AND THAT RELATIONSHIP WAS LESS AMIABLE.

THE REPORTS FROM THE COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE WERE EXCELLENT; I ONCE TEASED HER BY ASKING, "DID YOU WRITE THEM YOURSELF?" SHE WORKED WITH THE AUDITOR GENERAL OF ILLINOIS

ON DEVELOPING UNIFORM SYSTEMS OF ACCOUNTING FOR STATE AGENCIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

HER STAFF APPARENTLY ADORED HER. ON THE LAST NIGHT OF THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION, WHEN THE HOUSE AND SENATE WERE SOMETIMES IN SESSION ALL NIGHT, THE STATE OFFICERS' STAFFERS WERE ALWAYS EXPECTED TO STAY AT THEIR POSTS UNTIL THE SESSION WAS OVER. DAWN KNEW THAT WAS HARD ON THEM, ESPECIALLY ON THE MOTHERS OF SMALL CHILDREN. DAWN TOLD THEM IN THE EARLY EVENING, "YOU ALL GO HOME. I NEED ONLY MY SECURITY OFFICER/CHAUFFEUR AND I CAN HANDLE ANY QUESTIONS THAT THE LEGISLATORS HAVE."

BY 1994, IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR DAWN TO THINK SHE COULD TURN HER EXPANDED POLITICAL BASE INTO A SUCCESSFUL RUN FOR GOVERNOR. FOR HER, THIS WAS THE BRASS RING. SHE HAD WANTED TO SIT IN THAT CHAIR "ON THE SECOND FLOOR" FOR THREE DECADES. FIRST, SHE HAD TO WIN THE DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY. IT WAS A FOUR-WAY CONTEST, AND ROLAND BURRIS WAS IN THE LEAD AT THE BEGINNING. DICK PHELAN OF CHICAGO ALSO HAD A FOLLOWING.

DAWN HIRED SOME SAVVY POLITICAL CONSULTANTS AND BEGAN TO FIGHT HER WAY UP IN THE POLLS. WHEN I SAW THE FIRST TV ADS, FEATURING HER AS "FIRST IN HER CLASS AND THE ONLY WOMAN IN HER CLASS AT NORTHWESTERN LAW SCHOOL," I CRINGED. WHO LIKES THE SMARTEST KID IN THE CLASS? AND DOWNSTATERS WERE NOT FANS OF THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT OR "WOMEN'S LIBBERS." THEN CAME THAT "STRAIGHT SHOOTER" AD, THE ONE WITH THE LAW PROFESSOR SINKING ALL THOSE BALLS INTO POCKETS IN A POOL GAME. IT WAS BRILLIANT. THE CAMPAIGN TOOK OFF.

AND THEN WHEN SHE MANAGED TO WIN THE PRIMARY, BAD THINGS STARTED HAPPENING. TO THIS DAY, I DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHY DAWN DID NOT CHOOSE SOMEONE TO "RUN WITH HER" IN THE LIEUTENANT-GUBERNATORIAL PRIMARY. AS ONE OF MY MALE COLLEAGUES AT JOHN MARSHALL SAID, "WHY DIDN'T SHE CHOOSE SOME YOUNG MAN, NOT A LAWYER, FROM DOWNSTATE, A GUY WITH A WIFE, TWO CHILDREN, AND A DOG, WHO COULD CAMPAIGN DOWNSTATE SAYING, 'SHE IS OLD ENOUGH TO BE MY MOTHER, BUT SHE IS TERRIFIC, AND WE GET ALONG FINE.'" INSTEAD OF A CAMPAIGN PHOTO OF WALTER, DAWN, THE DOWNSTATE GUY, AND HIS FAMILY, WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN A "THREE GENERATIONS FAMILY PHOTO", WE SAW PHOTOS OF WALTER, DAWN, AND THE DOGS. SHE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER.

MOREOVER, THE WINNING CANDIDATE FOR THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION FOR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR WAS ANOTHER WOMAN, PENNY SEVERNS OF DECATUR. DURING THE PRIMARY, SEVERNS HAD "RUN WITH" PHELAN, WHO HAD TAPPED HER AS HIS PREFERRED CHOICE. SHE WAS HIS POINT WOMAN IN CAMPAIGNING AGAINST DAWN, CRITICIZING HER REVENUE PLANS AND PARTICULARLY HER PROPOSAL FOR EDUCATION FINANCE REFORM BASED ON A COMPLICATED "TAX SWAP" THAT ALMOST NOBODY UNDERSTOOD. WHEN DAWN AND PENNY ENDED UP RUNNING TOGETHER, IT WAS HARD TO BELIEVE TWO CHILDLESS WOMEN WHO WERE TALKING ABOUT EDUCATION FINANCE. ILLINOIS WAS ALSO NOT READY FOR TWO WOMEN AT THE TOP OF THE TICKET, AND MANY OF THE DEMOCRATIC "REGULARS" IN CHICAGO BEGAN TO PULL THEIR SUPPORT.

BY THE TIME SUMMER ARRIVED, IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE INCUMBENT JIM EDGAR WAS LEADING AND THAT, AT LEAST ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL, IT WOULD BE A REPUBLICAN YEAR, BIG TIME. DAWN'S TASK WAS TO HOLD THE DEMOCRATIC TICKET IN ILLINOIS TOGETHER AND WIN AT LEAST SOME OFFICES. WHEN EDGAR HAD OPEN HEART SURGERY, SHE VERY PROPERLY SUSPENDED HER CAMPAIGN WHILE HE WAS RECUPERATING.

THE CAMPAIGN NEVER RECOVERED. PEOPLE WHO KNEW THAT I KNEW BOTH CANDIDATES ASKED ME IF DAWN WERE "A REGULAR PERSON." SOME WOMEN TOLD ME THEY COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT SOMEONE AS WELL-OFF AS DAWN UNDERSTOOD WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO PAY PROPERTY TAXES FOR SCHOOLS, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE SHE HAD NO CHILDREN. I POINTED OUT THAT HER PUBLIC RECORD SHOWED THAT SHE DID HAVE COMPASSION FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN AND THAT SHE WAS ALMOST OBSESSED WITH GIVING EVERY CHILD A SOUND EDUCATION, BUT FEW WERE LISTENING. CAMPAIGN FUNDS WERE NOT FORTHCOMING, ENDORSEMENTS WERE NOT FORTHCOMING---AND WORST OF ALL, AT LEAST ONE CHICAGO COMMITTEEMAN REFUSED TO PUT HER NAME ON THE PALM CARDS HE DISTRIBUTED TO THE VOTERS IN HIS DISTRICT. THE MEDIA REPORTED SOME UNFORTUNATE COMMENTS DAWN MADE ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL, COMMENTS THAT SOUNDED LIKE A COMPETITIVE LAW PROFESSOR, NOT SOMEONE WHO WANTED TO HELP THE PEOPLE OF ILLINOIS.

IT'S SAD TO SAY, BUT DAWN RECEIVED ONLY 34% OF THE VOTE, ABSOLUTELY THE LOWEST PERCENTAGE IN A TWO-PERSON RACE FOR THE ILLINOIS GOVERNORSHIP. I WANT TO ADD ONE THING: JUDY BARR TOPINKA TOLD ME THAT WHEN SHE RAN FOR GOVERNOR AS THE REPUBLICAN NOMINEE IN 2006, SHE FACED MANY OF THE SAME PROBLEMS DAWN HAD FACED TWELVE YEARS EARLIER: LACK OF SUPPORT FROM THE PARTY REGULARS, LACK OF SUPPORT FROM DONORS, AND PERHAPS A QUIET SEXISM, A REFUSAL TO ENVISION A WOMAN AS HOLDING "THE SUPREME EXECUTIVE POWER" OF THE STATE.

IF DAWN REGRETTED RUNNING FOR GOVERNOR, SHE NEVER TOLD ME. SHE OFTEN SAID THAT SO MANY PEOPLE CAME UP TO HER AND SAID, "I VOTED FOR YOU, MRS. NETSCH," THAT SHE WAS CONVINCED THAT IF ALL OF THEM HAD REALLY VOTED FOR HER, SHE WOULD HAVE WON THE GOVERNORSHIP BY ACCLAMATION.

WELL, THAT WAS THE END OF DAWN'S POLITICAL CAREER. SHE REMAINED A LAW PROFESSOR PART-TIME AND A POLITICAL COMMENTATOR PART-TIME. SHE DEVOTED FULL TIME TO CAUSES THAT SHE THOUGHT WOULD MAKE ILLINOIS A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE. SOME OF US DESPERATELY WANTED BLAGOJEVICH TO APPOINT THE OCTOGENARIAN WIDOW TO FILL BARACK OBAMA'S SENATE SEAT IN 2008. SHE WOULD HAVE CROWNED HER PUBLIC SERVICE WITH TWO YEARS IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE. BUT IT DIDN'T HAPPEN.

THIS HAS BEEN A LONG MEMOIRE, BUT I WANT TO CONCLUDE BY OFFERING ANSWERS TO TWO QUESTIONS I AM OFTEN ASKED:

- 1) WHAT KIND OF GOVERNOR WOULD DAWN HAVE MADE? AND
- 2) WHAT WILL BE DAWN'S LEGACY?

AS TO THE FIRST, IT'S HARD TO SAY. PROJECTING BACK TO WHAT ILLINOIS POLITICS WERE LIKE IN 1995 TO 1999, I THINK I WOULD SAY SHE WOULD HAVE HAD A VERY DIFFERENT APPROACH FROM THOSE OF HER PREDECESSORS AND SUCCESSORS. MY GUESS IS THAT 40% OF HER WORK WOULD HAVE BEEN ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT, ABOUT 50% "OKAY", AND MAYBE 10% "REALLY BAD." SHE WOULD HAVE HAD WONDERFUL, EXPANSIVE IDEAS AND TRIED TO GET ALONG WITH OTHER OFFICIALS AND THE LEGISLATURE. BUT I THINK THAT MAYBE SOME LEGISLATORS AND SHE COULD NOT HAVE GOTTEN ALONG.

AS TO HER LEGACY, I HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT SHE WAS MUCH MORE THAN JUST "THE FIRST WOMAN" WHATEVER. TAKING OUT THE GENDER ISSUE, DAWN CLARK NETSCH CAN AND SHOULD BE REMEMBERED AS SOMEONE WHO CAME TO ILLINOIS, WHO MADE IT HER HOME, WHO LOVED ILLINOIS AND ILLINOISANS, AND WHO WANTED TO MAKE ILLINOIS A BETTER STATE.

THERE IS A LINE IN THE STATE SONG, "BY THY RIVERS GENTLY FLOWING, ILLINOIS, ILLINOIS" THAT GOES: NOT WITHOUT THY WONDROUS STORY, ILLINOIS, ILLINOIS, CAN BE WRIT THE NATION'S GLORY, ILLINOIS, ILLINOIS.

FUTURE GENERATIONS OF ILLINOISANS WILL LOOK AT DAWN CLARK NETSCH'S STORY AND PERHAPS, JUST PERHAPS, SAY, "NOT WITHOUT THY STORY COULD WE TELL THE STORY, THE OFTEN GLORIOUS STORY, OF ILLINOIS, ILLINOIS."

THANKS, DAWN. THANKS FOR 43 YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP. THANKS FOR SHOWING ME---AND MANY, MANY OTHERS---WHAT CAN BE DONE FOR ILLINOIS. REST IN PEACE, DAUGHTER OF ILLINOIS.