

MARY NARDIZZI
2/11/93

Joe Petrucci -
Wunsch } don't see you
John } guys though -

When Don Heagy asked me to say a few words about one of our honorees tonight, Mary Nardizzi, I can say no request could have made me happier. Mary and I go back to the John Dent days. When she came on staff around 1975, I had been on staff for about seven years and consequently involved in County politics for approximately the same amount of time. Mary had already been involved for over ³⁰forty years. What one is able to learn from just being around someone with that kind of longevity is, ^{as you can imagine} almost incomprehensible.

Since that time we have developed ~~what I believe is~~ a very close personal relationship not only because of our love and belief in the principles of the Democratic Party, but because Mary and I discovered that we were related. You see, my grandmother was Mary's Godmother when she was born. Well, since I never had the chance to know my real grandmother, to say that Mary has been like a Grandmother to me is not an exaggeration. She has always been there when I was in need, politically or otherwise.

But what is Mary all about? What makes a person like Mary do the things she does for her friends both political and non-political? How would we describe someone like her?

Energetic, loyal, generous, faithful, enthusiastic, these

adjectives describe Mary. She has, for over fifty years now worked on behalf of the Democrats that she feels strongly about or even those that she didn't feel strongly about, but who received the endorsement of the Democrat party. ~~Because~~ she has and will work for ~~those~~ candidates because she is loyal and faithful to her party. And she works tirelessly not only at the polls but also on the phone and cornering anyone she can about her candidates.

And she can never be accused of being wishy-washy. Anybody who knows anything about her knows that she is opinionated. She has a way of letting you know, in no uncertain terms, about how she feels about an issue or **HER** candidate. If you have ever had the opportunity to sit around her dining room table, where she cooks for 50 regardless of how many are there, and offers a perspective about county politics ^{which} that can only come from those many years of involvement in this wonderful process, ~~then~~ you realize just how astute she is and how lucky you are to have the benefit of that advice. She draws upon all those years of experience relating the current political question to some contest from the years past; confirming for everyone at the table that ^{the} many lessons of the past have applications in the present and the future.

As valuable as this information is, it is another of Mary's qualities that strikes me as even more important; her ability to raise the level of the enthusiasm and excitement about the candidate and the election. When she launches into an analysis of

the topic at hand she does so with a twinkle in her eye and a few extra decibels in her voice and you start moving to the edge of your ^{seat} chair. For those of us in this room who eat, sleep and breathe politics, which I guess covers most of those present, it's like a shot of adrenalin. She has a way of lifting your spirits and those of the entire campaign.

Mary is a living metaphore. ~~She is an Icon. Representing all that is good and proper about politics. When the front page of the Tribune-Review or the lead story on the TV news programs relates how some nefarious politicians took advantage of the system I wish we could counter balance that story describing Mary or someone like her.~~

We as a society made a decision over two hundred years ago that allows people, in a very orderly government process, like you and I to be involved in the operation of our government and that ideal—the concept is truly Mary. One could transpose the definition of representative government for Mary Nardizzi. She is more than an example of this ideal---she is the ideal. She is the spirit of representative democracy contained in that beautiful smiling countenance. When the forefathers gathered in Philadelphia to draft the "great experiment" they surely were thinking about Mary and people like her; they had the foresight to know that if this country were to survive, ^{and succeed} we would need people working and believing as Mary does. She is the embodiement of our Constitution, of our ideals taught to us in school, freedom of

speech, lawful assembly, unhampered and free elections.

Abraham Lincoln once wrote that "Public Service is the rent we pay for living on this earth". I would submit that Mary has paid not only her rent but everybody's in this room tonight.

We were all disheartened by the nationalistic fighting in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Soviet Union. And the diplomatic experts and the foreign correspondents tell us that it's because the leaders can't understand or appreciate what democracy is all about. I say to you that all that needs to be done is to let Mary invite them to dinner sometime and I guarantee you that social occasion, at #6 South Hamilton Ave. will do more than all the diplomatic attempts to date in showing them what democracy and free and open government is all about.

Mary, I want to thank you for all the hundreds, if not thousands of candidates who you helped over the years, ^{for} the Democratic Party in which you believe so strongly, for the sacrifices you have made for ~~both~~ ^{them} and for me, and for being my friend. God Bless you and may you stay active for another 50 years.