



SRP's Women's Interest Network Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer

Friday, October 16, 2009

Thank you, Dick.

It is always a pleasure to be among the SRP family, not only because it is a special warm working environment here, but because of your commitment to the community and the state – virtually at every level.

Let me also take a moment to recognize the good work of SRP “WIN” Chair – Kelly Barr, -- whom I have known since my days in the Legislature -- Linda Coughenour (COKE-n-hour), Manager of SRP Consumer Affairs – and Heidi Schafer -- along with Samantha Horgen and Jennifer Koehler, who coordinated today's event.

It is good to see you, and thank you for the invitation to spend some time with you today.

I understand that you wanted to hear a little personal background, something more than a dry biography. You want to know how history designed my path to becoming Governor.

The first tip I would tell you is the same advice they give you when investing in the Stock market: Diversify. At least, that's what I did.

I was born in Hollywood, California in 1944.

Though, I must confess -- I am somewhat reluctant to admit it -- I was born in Hollywood. It probably sounds less flaky to say Los Angeles; but -- to be perfectly honest -- it WAS Hollywood. My family was living on a Navy Base in Hawthorne, Nevada -- the largest ammunition Navy base in the world, but my mother didn't want her child born there, so she moved to California to live with her sister, and moved back to Nevada, where I lived until I was ten.

But, my father had severe health problems -- from working in the ammunition depot -- so we moved back to California. His condition deteriorated -- and he died when I was 11.

I know what it is like to be a single mom, struggling to make ends meet, while caring for your family. I saw my mother do it.

She bought a small dress shop, and I worked in that store until the time she sold it when I was 20 years old.

It was, really, a classroom for me -- where I learned the importance of hard work, responsibility, honesty and integrity.

I also learned the customer -- the public -- is always right.

I got a degree from Valley College in radiological technology, and, as a licensed certified radiological technician, went to work in the LA County hospital.

That was really the beginning of my career path which has had as many twists and turns as Brett Farve's.

I worked as an office administrator. I worked in a drive-in, because I could make change after counting up the popcorn, coke, etc. I worked in a Kinney Shoe store, a Jewelry store, and a doctor's office -- all at the same time.

I don't think even Brett Farve did that.

Then -- believe it or not -- I decided to become a private investigator. I was married by that time, with my husband in college, so being a private investigator was something I could do on my own time -- not only the investigative footwork, but also writing up the reports late at night so they could be ready for court the next day.

I got a dollar a page -- good money back then.

I then managed a large luxury apartment complex -- and by that time, had my first of three children.

That job gave us a place to stay until my husband graduated.

And, I will tell you, we could not wait to get out of California.

We packed up a U-Haul trailer, and we moved to Arizona in 1970. John opened a practice as a chiropractor.

He showed me downtown Phoenix, and I said, OK, really, where's the downtown? It was pretty much the Westward Ho Hotel, and that was it.

Honestly, I hated it here for the first two years. No ocean. No friends. No family. I called my mother and said, "Can you believe it, 105 degrees outside, and its midnight?"

Well, like so many of us here, the place started to grow on me – heat and all.

I ran for the Legislature as a state Representative and served there from 1983 to 1986, and then as state senator from 1987 to 1996.

As Senator, I held the leadership position of Majority Whip from 1993 to 1996, and helped to win passage of tax relief and budget reform; truth in sentencing; open enrollment, school report cards, and charter schools; clean air and water legislation and state trust land preservation.

I sponsored legislation that created the first Living Will statute in the nation. And, I and my colleagues in legislative leadership also routinely conducted the state's business in 100-day legislative sessions, sending members home to their districts by mid-April with a balanced state budget and a body of work to show for their time at the Capitol.

Oh, for the good old days.

In many ways, you can play a part in bringing back some of those "good old days."

I am talking about those times when women mentored women. When they took time to be with one another – FOR one another – as helpmates in the workforce. It was important then -- and it is important now.

I know that some of you have asked, specifically, what is the state doing to help protect women from violence and abuse?

So, let me mention that currently, our office provides nearly \$2 million to the community to address domestic and sexual violence.

As part of the federal stimulus initiative, my office for Children, Youth and Families, Division for Women received a "STOP Violence Against Women

Grant,” and our Innovative Domestic Violence Prevention Grant supports new strategies and creative ideas for the prevention of domestic violence with a specific focus on children.

These prevention activities decrease risk factors, increase protection, and enable victims to create a safe and violence-free life for their family and the community.

Now, if you will allow me – just a moment to talk – briefly -- about public policy – and something both you and I are interested in -- the Navajo Generating Station.

I won't say the federal government has meddled too long and too deeply in the affairs of NGS and its partners.

But, I can tell you I recently wrote a letter to the EPA expressing my serious concerns about EPA mandates on the State of Arizona.

Frankly, I don't need the federal government telling the Grand Canyon State how to protect ... the Grand Canyon.

Arizonans rely on NGS for jobs, water and electricity, as well as economic stability in Indian country.

OF COURSE, we are all for protecting the Grand Canyon – but it must be done in a reasonable way to achieve real environmental gains in a cost-effective manner.

I just wanted you to know I am very much in your corner – in SRP's corner -- on this issue, and I don't intend to lose this public policy battle.

So, thank you, again, for the invitation to share some thoughts – some PERSONAL thoughts – with you today, thank you for the very warm reception.

And I hope you will invite me back. Thank you.