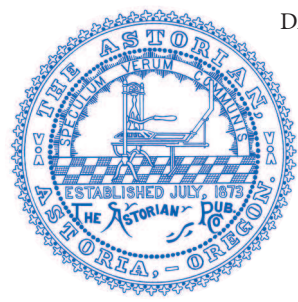


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OUR VIEW

Mayor Larson leaves a much improved Seaside

Seaside has always been popular, combining an amazing Pacific Northwest seashore, entertaining business districts and cozy residential neighborhoods. All this was true 14 years ago and is still true today. So just how much difference has departing Mayor Don Larson made?

Bad mayors sow discord, let things drift and act from self-interest. They are so obvious you can almost smell them coming down the street.

In contrast, good mayors lead quietly and build support for the valid ideas that percolate up from the public. Good mayors are most apparent in the form of countless, often unnoticed signs that the complex economic and civic interactions in a city are going well. People begin looking around and saying, gee, this is a cool place.

Larson obviously is a good mayor. His near decade and a half in office have been a time of urban renaissance in Seaside. Though some of the city's achievements are the subtle victory of not messing up a good thing, many are positive acts that would not have happened in the absence of a progressive and engaged team of elected officials and citizens. Such teamwork is almost impossible to sustain without a supportive mayor.

Parts of Seaside's downtown were showing signs of wear and tear in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The under-utilized building stock could have become a blight when the Great Recession dug in its claws in 2008. Certainly Seaside, like most American towns, had its struggles in that bad spell. But instead of slipping backward, it manifestly improved in many tangible ways.

Our story on Larson's retirement announcement summarized some of this good stuff: a skate park, a new library and the North Holladay Drive renovation. The boat ramp at Broadway Park. Upgrades to city buildings. Four bridges, built to tsunami standards and the Recycling Center on Avenue S. In addition, it's important to note that other successes would have been difficult in the absence of forward-thinking city leadership. These include a thriving business community and the recently passed bond to build a safe new school complex. Success breeds success.

Above all, Larson is a firm and enthusiastic believer in Seaside. Speaking with him, one comes away with the impression that any place fortunate enough to keep and attract such a mayor must be a place worth visiting, living in and investing in.

Can Seaside stand improvement? Certainly. Everyplace can. Traffic congestion, affordable housing, seismic safety and other pressing issues will keep city leaders and staff busy for years to come. But thanks to Don Larson, they are starting with a city that already is an example of excellence.

Fish and Wildlife must continue river gillnetting

It was good to see at last week's Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting in Salem that Lower Columbia River commercial fishermen still have a fire in the belly to preserve their way of life.

Jobs that produce original economic value are increasingly precious things in rural America. Salmon have been a source of family income in places like Astoria, Warrenton and Ilwaco, Wash., for generations. Fishermen have invested lifetimes and life savings in the boats, gear, permits and expertise needed to carefully tend gillnets, which have been fine-tuned for more than a century to catch their intended targets while preserving naturally spawning salmon and other nontargeted species.

There is at least some remaining acknowledgment on the state level of the decades of promises made to the fishing families and communities of the Lower Columbia. As the Fish and Wildlife commission chairman said last week, state law requires that salmon management "enhance the economic viability of recreational and commercial fisheries and the communities that rely on them. That's a dual mandate."

All the port towns on the Columbia estuary explicitly recognize and treasure the vital role that recreational fishing plays in our economies and cultures. Many choose to visit and live here specifically in order to partake in our world-famous sport fisheries for salmon, albacore and other species.

But we can appreciate and encourage private and charter sport-fishing, while still working to preserve the commercial fishing that built these towns, and which still puts paychecks in local pockets and delicious salmon on local dinner tables.

The commission must continue with plans to extend gillnetting on the river's mainstem, at least until such time as alternative gears and off-channel sites are adequate, and until state lawmakers keep the other commitments they have made to ensure fairness for the commercial fleet.



Don Larson



Gwen Ifill's life and example

By DAVID BROOKS
New York Times News Service

Smartphones change death. When I heard that Gwen Ifill had died on Monday, I pulled out my phone and scrolled through the photo album.

There were pictures of Gwen and her "NewsHour" colleague Judy Woodruff laughing uproariously together, doing little exploding fist-bumps, which I sneakily took while she was heroically covering the political conventions this year.

There was a picture of her joyously driving a boat full tilt during a "NewsHour" party a few summers ago, the wind blasting into her clothes and face. There were pictures of her posing with friends of mine who had come to visit the set. Everybody who came wanted a picture with Gwen.

Every reminiscence you read about Gwen will describe her smile. It was not subtle. It shone from her face like some sort of spiritual explosion.

Once, during a walk through Rock Creek Park, she told me that if she didn't go to church on Sunday she felt a little flatter for the whole week. A spirit as deep and ebullient as hers needed nourishment and care, and when it came out it came out in her smile, which was totalistic and unrestrained.

Tough business

Gwen worked in a tough business, and being an African-American woman in that business brought its own hardships and scars, but Gwen's smile did not hold back. Her whole personality was the opposite of reticent, and timidity was a stranger to her. When the Ifill incandescence came at you, you were getting human connection full-bore.

And you had better honor it. After the photos, I searched Monday through our email exchanges. I don't know how Gwen was with her other friends, but she'd send me short, sometimes cryptic emails every couple of weeks. Sometimes it was a compliment, sometimes a bit of gossip, sometimes it was a jokey offer to rub out someone who'd been nasty to me, and sometimes she was just the sort of friend who checks in: "For some reason you have been on my mind. Are you well?"

Gwen was ebullient, as I've



AP Photo/Don Emmert
 PBS journalist and debate moderator Gwen Ifill and then-Democratic vice presidential nominee, Sen. Joe Biden, D-Del., left, shake hands at the end of his vice presidential debate with Republican rival, Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin in St. Louis, Mo., in 2008.

mentioned, but she was not soft. She was authoritative, an executive and confident.

I suppose every profession has a few people like this, people who love the whole profession, who pay compliments when its standards are met and who are tough when they are not. Gwen talked a lot about her extended family, but also a lot about newsrooms and who were the great colleagues in them.

I would say she was an ambitious person. She liked moderating the big debates, even though she was a bundle of nerves just before. But she was not ambitious the way some other TV people are. Gwen was adored wherever she went, but she let the adoration roll off her, without it affecting her understanding of what was real.

She was ambitious for quality. She worked for low money at PBS. She worked doggedly on her programs, and whenever I did anything that diminished the "NewsHour" she let me know directly.

Love of country

She loved her country, too. She relentlessly promoted female and African-American journalists. She had a strong affinity for badass women of all types. She kept her journalistic distance from the Obamas, but she knew what a step it was to have an African-American president.

The night before Obama's inauguration in 2009, a group of journalists met in David and Katherine Bradley's house. At the end of the evening they gathered around the piano and sang civil

rights anthems and some hymns. Everybody knew the first stanza to "Amazing Grace," but only Gwen knew the last three, which she sang alone, in honor of the past labors and future promise.

By 2012 she sensed that racial ugliness was coming out into the open. She began getting more racist reactions on social media and she moved to support her friend Jeffrey Goldberg of The Atlantic, who was getting anti-Semitic ones. Keep your head down and keep writing, she urged Goldberg; it's what they don't want you to do. Gwen knew what was coming.

These days it is normal to bash Washington, to want to "drain the swamp" and to attack the mainstream media. The populists are in and the establishment is out.

But I confess, when I looked at the front of The Times website on Monday and saw a photo of Stephen K. Bannon, on leave from Breitbart as chairman and rising in power, and then underneath it a photo of Gwen, who is passing from this world, I wanted to throw up. This is not progress and this is not good news.

Gwen's death merits a bit of the reaction that greeted the death of the writer Samuel Johnson centuries ago: She has left a chasm, which nobody else can fill up and which nobody has a tendency to fill.

Now that Gwen is dead, who is the next best thing? There's nobody. There are many great people who will follow her example. But nobody quite reminds you of Gwen.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Two conclusions

Two conclusions can be drawn from the historic 2016 election. First, when President-elect Trump declared that the election was rigged, he was merely bragging about something else he had done. Second, a woman cannot be elected president in this country.

WILLIAM BELL
 Astoria

Best interests

In the recent election, where local issues were voted on by the voters of Warrenton, the mayor of the city, Mark Kujala, and many of the City Council representatives recommended to the voters that they not vote for a citizens' issue — that was brought up for a vote by obtaining all of the signatures of the required number of people in Warrenton — so that the voters could gain control of the process of selling off city

assets. The mayor and the council felt that this would just cause delays in normal city activity, for which they are elected.

In the calendar year 2015, the City Council came within one vote of approving the sale of the second most valuable asset the city of Warrenton owns to a company that is currently leasing the property that this company wanted to swap for other land that they own in the Warrenton area.

Many local voters felt that this was potentially a political favor to this company, as it was a transaction that would have no competitive bids. Many citizens of Warrenton believe that this was, on its face, a very unfavorable sale for the citizens of Warrenton, and so a petition was circulated in the community by volunteers going door to door to explain the issue and have it put to a vote, which just occurred this week. Local politics sometimes leads

to sweetheart deals that are wonderful for the politicians, and terrible for the voters. I feel that the passing of this issue in this last election is a victory for the citizens of Warrenton, and a warning to all politicians in the future to avoid conflicts of interest, and work in your constituents' best interests, as you were elected to do.

SCOTT WIDDICOMBE
 Warrenton

Enforce the law

Regarding the "Warrenton Police Looking into gun incident near grade school" story in the Nov. 8 issue of *The Daily Astorian*: If the police had been enforcing the law regarding parking in fire zones near the school, none of this would have occurred. If the cops won't enforce the law, change the law.

HUGH MCKENNA
 Warrenton