

AUGUST 10, 2008
ADLAI E. STEVENSON III
ADLAI STEVENSON CENTER ON DEMOCRACY.

WELCOME TO THE 'GRAND JOLLIFICATION' CELEBRATING THE LAUNCH OF THE ADLAI STEVENSON CENTER ON DEMOCRACY AND A SPECIAL THANKS TO SENATOR GEORGE MCGOVERN, REV. JESSE JACKSON, SENATOR RICHARD LUGAR, REPRESENTATIVE JOHN ANDERSON, RICHARD NORTON SMITH, BILL KURTIS. ALDERMAN EDWARD BURKE – TO ALL WHO HAVE COME TO THE "FARM" TO SHARE MEMORIES OF ANOTHER TIME AND ANOTHER POLITICS..

"GRAN JOLLIFCATION" IS FROM AN 1892 BROAD BILL THAT INVITED ONE AND ALL, EVEN "LADIES, PROHIBITIONISTS, POPULISTS AND REPUBLICANS", TO "LET JOY BE UNCONFINED, BLOW YOUR FISH HORNS, RING BELLS," JOIN IN CELEBRATING THE GREAT VICTORY OF CLEVELAND AND STEVENSON.

IN 1887, FIRST ASSISTANT POST MASTER GENERAL ADLAI I, A FORMER CONGRESSMAN, REPLACED 40,000 REPUBLICAN POSTMASTERS WITH 40,000 GOOD DEMOCRATS, A PUBLIC SERVICE FOR WHICH HE WAS REWARDED IN 1892 BY HIS GRATEFUL PARTY'S CONVENTION WITH ITS NOMINATION FOR VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES - HIS VICTORY WORTHY OF A GRAND JOLLIFICATION - AT LEAST FOR DEMOCRATS.

IT HAS BEEN DOWN HILL SINCE THEN THOUGH GOVERNOR STEVENSON WAS ABLE TO REPLACE SOME 30,000 REPUBLICANS WITH DEMOCRATS, ONE OF WHOM ASSURED HIM HE HAD BEEN A LIFE LONG DEMOCRAT EVER SINCE HE RECEIVED HIS STATE JOB.

SO YOU SEE, WE WOULD NOT BE HAVING A GRAND JOLLIFICATION TO LAUNCH THE ADLAI STEVENSON CENTER ON DEMOCRACY IF CERTAIN REFORMS AIMED AT MAKING OUR DEMOCRACY MORE DEMOCRATIC HAD COME SOONER.

MY FAMILY'S FIRST POLITICAL CONVENTION WAS IN 1860. THE REPUBLICAN STATE CONVENTION THAT YEAR CHARGED GREAT GRAND FATHER JESSE FELL WITH ORGANIZING ITS DELEGATION TO THE NATIONAL CONVENTION FOR ABRAHAM LINCOLN - A CONVENTION WELL DESCRIBED BY ALDERMAN EDWARD BURKE'S WONDERFUL HISTORY OF CHICAGO'S CONVENTIONS, "INSIDE THE WIGWAM". FELL, AN ENGAGED CITIZEN, HAD PROPOSED THE LINCOLN DOUGLAS DEBATES OF THREE

HOURS EACH TO BRING LINCOLN TO THE NATION'S ATTENTION. LINCOLN WROTE AND GAVE HIM HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY FOR PROMOTIONAL PURPOSES. ABRAHAM LINCOLN WAS A CANDIDATE OF POLITICIANS ASSEMBLED FOR SERIOUS BUSINESS AT A CONVENTION WHICH TEMPORARILY SWELLED THE POPULATION OF CHICAGO BY 40%. THE PEOPLE WERE ENGAGED, TOO.

I WAS A 17 YEAR OLD SERGEANT AT ARMS TRYING TO CLEAR THE AISLES OF RUMPLED POLITICIANS AND MAINTAIN ORDER AT THE HOT, SMOKE FILLED 1948 DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION IN PHILADELPHIA WHEN I WAS ELECTRIFIED BY A YOUNG UNKNOWN MAYOR OF MINNEAPOLIS, A CANDIDATE FOR THE US SENATE, CHALLENGE THOSE POLITICIANS TO DO THEIR DUTY AND ADOPT A STRONG CIVIL RIGHTS PLANK. AND THEY DID, DRIVING MUCH OF THE SOUTH OUT OF THE PARTY. IT WAS A HOPELESS YEAR FOR THE DEMOCRATS WHO HAD BEEN IN POWER SINCE 1933.

THAT CONVENTION NOMINATED HARRY TRUMAN FOR PRESIDENT, AND COUSIN ALBEN BARKLEY FOR VICE PRESIDENT. THEY BARNSTORMED THE COUNTRY BY TRAIN, RAILING AGAINST THE DO NOTHING REPUBLICAN CONGRESS, AND WERE CARRIED TO A CRUCIAL, NARROW VICTORY IN ILLINOIS BY A FORMER NEW DEAL BUREAUCRAT, OFFICIAL OF THE NAVY AND STATE DEPARTMENTS DURING WORLD WAR II AND ITS AFTERMATH, AN ARCHITECT OF THE UN OF ALL THINGS IN THE HEARTLAND OF AMERICAN ISOLATIONISM: ADLAI STEVENSON, DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR - AND BY PAUL H. DOUGLAS, EMINENT PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, CANDIDATE FOR THE US SENATE. THEY WERE CANDIDATES OF THE PARTY ORGANIZATION - ENDORSED BEHIND CLOSED DOORS. PRIMARY ELECTIONS WERE FORMALITIES WELL INTO MY TIME. PARTY ORGANIZATION WAS STRONG.

IN 1948, DOUGLAS WON. HUMPHREY WON AND MANY YEARS LATER BE MY SENATE SEAT AND JUNIOR. THE GUV WON BY THE LARGEST PLURALITY IN THE HISTORY OF ILLINOIS TO THAT TIME. HIS CAMPAIGN COST \$157,000. GOOD CITIZENS Poured INTO HIS ADMINISTRATION AS THEY HAD THE NEW DEAL AND WOULD THE NEW FRONTIER. THEY WERE NOT CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTORS AND FUND RAISERS. THEY DID NOT PAY TO PLAY. THEY SACRIFICED TO SERVE.

IN 1952, AFTER HIS ELOQUENT WELCOMING ADDRESS, THE GUV WAS DRAFTED FOR PRESIDENT BY THE CONVENTION. HE ENTERED NO PRIMARIES. HE STARTED THE CAMPAIGN AT THAT CONVENTION WITH NO MONEY, NO PROGRAM, NO STAFF - ONLY HARDY VOLUNTEERS WHO

RAISED DOLLARS DOOR TO DOOR AND GATHERED IN SPRINGFIELD TO WORK ON SPEECHES AND POSITION PAPERS UNTIL THEY LITERALLY DROPPED FROM EXHAUSTION. THAT CAMPAIGN ELECTRIFIED THE WORLD.

THE GUV TOOK OUT HALF HOUR BLOCKS OF TIME ON NATIONAL TELEVISION FOR ELOQUENT, SUBSTANTIVE SPEECHES TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. TRUST THE PEOPLE WITH THE TRUTH, HE SAID, ALL THE TRUTH. WHAT WINS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHO WINS. FOR HIM DEMOCRACY WAS NOT A MEANS TO POWER. IT WAS AN END IN ITSELF - A PROCESS BY WHICH AMERICANS WERE INFORMED, ENGAGED AND COULD MAKE A SOUND JUDGMENTS AT THE POLLS.

IN 1956, THE GUV CLINCHED THE NOMINATION AFTER 5 CONTESTED PRIMARIES. TO ENLIVEN THE CONVENTION, HE THREW OPEN THE NOMINATION FOR VICE PRESIDENT. THE BALLOTING SEE SAWED BETWEEN SENATOR ESTES KEFAUVER AND AN OBCURE, JUNIOR SENATOR NAMED JOHN F. KENNEDY. AS KENNEDY MOVED AHEAD AT ONE POINT, I RACED DOWNSTAIRS AT THE STOCK YARDS INN, PAST HIS BROTHER IN LAW, SERGEANT SHRIVER, WHO WAS GUARDING THE GATE, TO EXCITEDLY CONGRATULATE "JACK" KENNEDY. I RETURNED TO MY FATHER'S SUITE JUST IN TIME TO SEE KEFAUVER WIN. IT WAS JUST AS WELL FOR KENNEDY. HE WAS NOT IMPLICATED IN A FAILED CAMPAIGN FOR VICE PRESIDENT, AND THE INCIDENT BROUGHT HIM TO THE NATION'S ATTENTION. 4 YEARS LATER KENNEDY CAME TO THIS HOME SEEKING THE GUV'S SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT. BOBBY KENNEDY'S FIRST STOP AFTER THE 1960 CONVENTION WAS A RALLY ON THIS VERY SPOT - WHICH OVER THE YEARS HAS BEEN HOST TO MORE THAN A FEW OLD FASHIONED EXERCISES IN DEMOCRACY.

THE REPUBLICANS STARTED TELEVISION ADVERTISING IN THE CAMPAIGNS OF THE 50'S. THE GUV COMPLAINED THAT THE ELECTION OF A PRESIDENT WAS NOT A CONTEST BETWEEN PALMOLIVE AND COLGATE. HIS LIFE LONG COMPANION IN ARMS, GEORGE BALL, EXCLAIMED: MOVIE ACTORS COULD SOME DAY RUN FOR PRESIDENT.

IN THOSE CAMPAIGNS AND AS TITULAR LEADER OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY THE GUV COMMENCED THE STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATIONS PROCESS. HIS NEW AMERICA LAID THE PROGRAMMATIC FOUNDATION FOR THE NEW FRONTIER AND GREAT SOCIETY. THE LATE ARTHUR SCHLESINGER SAID JOHN F. KENNEDY WAS EXECUTOR OF THE STEVENSON REVOLUTION. THE OPPOSITION DID MORE THAN OPPOSE. HE WON IN LOSING.

DURING THE PRESENT ELECTION CYCLE, MORE THAN A BILLION DOLLARS WILL BE INVESTED IN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES, MOST OF IT FOR MEDIA AND MARKETING. MONEY POURS IN AT ALL LEVELS. A SEAT ON THE ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT HAS FETCHED AS MUCH AS \$4 MILLION - AND THE PRICE IS RISING. THE OLD NOMINATING CONVENTIONS ARE MEDIA EVENTS OF LITTLE INTEREST TO THE MEDIA.

AMERICA'S FOUNDERS ORGANIZED A REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY WITH A RESTRICTED FRANCHISE GRADUALLY MADE UNIVERSAL. ONE OF THEIR FIRST ACTS AT THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION WAS TO LOCK THE DOORS AND PLEDGE THE DELEGATES TO SECRECY. DEMOCRACY IS FRAGILE. SINCE ANCIENT ATHENS IT HAS TRAVELED A ROAD TO AUTOCRACY AND VIOLENCE. HITLER CAME TO POWER THROUGH THE BALLOT BOX. ALEXANDER HAMILTON WARNED OF WAR FEVERS IN THE HUMAN BREAST. IT TOOK LITTLE MORE THAN A FICTITIOUS ATTACK IN THE BAY OF TONKIN OR HAVANA HARBOR OR FICTITIOUS WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION IN IRAQ TO IGNITE THE FEVERS. RARE IS THE CONGRESSMAN ABRAHAM LINCOLN WHO DEMANDS EVIDENCE OF THE CASUS BELLI.

IT'S A PARADOX, BUT AS THE PRESIDENTIAL SELECTION PROCESS WAS REFORMED, USUALLY IN THE NAME OF MORE DEMOCRACY, IT BECAME LESS DEMOCRATIC. SOME REFORMS LIKE BROADENING THE FRANCHISE WERE FUNDAMENTALLY RIGHT. BUT OTHERS DID NOT PRODUCE THE RESULTS WE REFORMERS EXPECTED. BY 2000, I WAS HELPING SENATOR BILL BRADLEY'S CAMPAIGN IN ILLINOIS SELECT DELEGATE CANDIDATES ON THE BASIS OF RACE, GENDER, RELIGION AND "EXPRESSED SEXUAL PREFERENCE." AT THE CONVENTION THEY WOULD WAVE THEIR FLAGS AND CHEER ON CUE.

AN EPISODIC, VISUAL MEDIA CONVERGED WITH THE WITHERING OF PARTY ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITY TO TRIVIALIZE NEWS AND BY PASS THE OLD PRECINCT CAPTAINS. THE MONEY Poured IN, MOST OF IT FOR MEDIA AND THE MARKETING OF CANDIDATES.

POLITICS NEVER WAS BEAN BAG, AS MR. DOOLEY REMINDED US, BUT IT WAS AND REMAINS THE NOBLEST OF ALL CALLINGS WITH MORE POWER FOR GOOD AND FOR EVIL THAN ANY OTHER. OVER TIME OUR POLITICS LOST ITS BALANCE - AND THE OLD CENTER - AND MUCH OF THE OLD CIVILITY AND HUMOR. THE NEW DEAL, FAIR DEAL, SQUARE DEAL, THE NEW FREEDOM OF WILSON, THE NEW FRONTIER, THE GREAT SOCIETY, THE NEW AMERICA OF ADLAI II - THOSE BURSTS OF IDEALISM AND ACTIVISM -

DISAPPEARED - ALONG WITH THE JOLLIFICATIONS. OURS BECAME THE ERA OF THE DEAL - OF MONEY AND TACTICS, OF POLLSTERS AND CONSULTANTS. AMERICANS WERE INCREASINGLY DIVIDED BY RACE, REGION, RELIGION, GENDER AND EDUCATION.

DEMOCRACY IS FRAGILE, AND IN A NEW INTERDEPENDENT, NUCLEAR, WORLD, ISSUES ARE COMPLEX. PEACE IS NO LONGER THE ONLY CONDITION OF HUMAN SURVIVAL.

IN THE LIFE CYCLE OF NATIONS AND EMPIRES, SOME NOT SO DEMOCRATIC ARE ON THE RISE. CHINA'S OPENING AND ECONOMIC REFORMS STARTED ONLY 30 YEARS AGO. OTHER DEVELOPED DEMOCRACIES ARE MORE EFFECTIVE AT LIMITING THE MONEY IN POLITICS AND EMPOWERING CITIZENS WITH TRUTH.

AND SO THE FLEDGLING ADLAI STEVENSON CENTER AIMS TO BRING POLITICIANS TOGETHER WITH SCHOLARS TO SHARE REALITY FROM ON THE GROUND AND IN THE WORLD. IT AIMS TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES WITH PRACTICAL RESPONSES DEVELOPED AND PROJECTED THROUGH AN INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM OF INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS. MAYBE THE STEVENSON CENTER CAN HELP DEVELOP A BETTER BALANCE BETWEEN THE REPRESENTATIVE POLITICS OF OUR PAST AND THE MORE DIRECT, MEDIA, MONEY DRIVEN POLITICS OF OUR PRESENT.

THE FIRST MAJOR STEVENSON CENTER PROJECT WILL FOCUS ON MEDIA AND INFORMATION. JAMES MADISON STATED THE FUNDAMENTAL PROPOSITION: "A PEOPLE WHO MEAN TO BE THEIR OWN GOVERNORS MUST ARM THEMSELVES WITH THE POWER WHICH KNOWLEDGE GIVES THEM."

THAT'S WHAT GOVERNOR STEVENSON TRIED TO DO. HE WOULD BE PLEASED TO SEE HIS WORK CONTINUED AND AT A PLACE HE LOVED ABOVE ALL OTHERS - HIS HOME.

ON BEHALF OF THE ADLAI STEVENSON CENTER - AND HIS FAMILY - THANK YOU.