

CITY BEAT

The Columbia Chronicle | December 4, 2006

Cook County pres resigns

District commissioner Bobbie L. Steele appoints son to post

By James H. Ewert Jr.
City Beat Editor

Even before recently re-elected Cook County Board member Bobbie L. Steele resigned from office Nov. 30, many were criticizing the move as just another chapter in Chicago's long history of patronage politics.

Although Steele received much of the flak for appointing her son, Robert Steele, to her 2nd District county board seat, the decision remains in the lesser known hands of the Democratic committeemen.

After replacing the ailing John H. Stroger earlier this year as the Interim Cook County Board President, Steele chose not to run for re-election as president, but as commissioner, the position she formerly held since 1986.

Because Steele is resigning before assuming her re-elected position, she will receive the pension benefits from her last held job: Cook County Board President, not Cook County Commissioner. Her new pension will be \$136,000, which is twice what a commissioner receives.

In her place as county commissioner, Steele is appointing her son, Robert Steele, who currently works for the Chicago Park District.

Steele's decision to appoint her son as a replacement has led many county commissioners to criticize the move.

Tony Perica, 16th district Cook County Commissioner and unsuccessful opponent of Todd Stroger for Cook County Board President, said Steele's decision does not send the right message to the people of the county after an election based on political reform.

"That seems to be par for the course now, you can't get elected to anything unless you're a

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Macy's protestors carry on



Keith Bishton/The Chronicle

Dons Grey (left) shouts into Mike Moren's megaphone on Nov. 24 in front of the Macy's store, 111 N. State St. The group calls itself Field's Fans Chicago and wants the Marshall Field's name to return.

Group attempts to revive Marshall Field's name

By Mary Elizabeth Medawar
Staff Writer

When people strolled down State Street in search of the perfect gift Nov. 24, Black Friday, they encountered an interesting group: protesters in front of Macy's, 111 N. State St., dressed in 1890s garb, carrying anti-Macy's signs and shouting for a boycott. And these protesters plan on maintaining a presence for the rest of the holiday season.

"Not everyone likes the Bears, not everyone likes the Sox or Cubs, but everyone likes Field's," said Chicago resident Jim McKay, 43, organizer of the protest.

When Federated Department Stores acquired May Company in 2005, it was not welcome news to Marshall Field's customers, especially those in Chicago. Since Sept. 9, when New York-based

Macy's officially replaced the Field's name, angry Field's fans boycotted Macy's and held protests to discourage further business.

The group of 100 people that marched in front of the State Street department store on Sept. 9 held a follow-up protest of an estimated 80 people on the biggest shopping day of the year, the day after Thanksgiving. Clad in 1890s dresses and hats, women carried signs that read "Give the Lady What She Wants!" which was a phrase Marshall Field used often. Men dressed in 1890s suits gave speeches, playing such characters as John G. Shedd, who was president of the company after Marshall Field.

Mckay started the webpage www.FieldsFansChicago.org in November 2005 when he heard the news that Field's stores would lose their name to Macy's. However, McKay said the blog didn't take off until July 2006, when the Field's website was redirected to

Macy's. The blog includes hundreds of posts from people complaining about the tacky changes Macy's has made, saying it is "Wal-Mart with pretension."

Macy's has widened its shopping aisles, inserted sitting areas outside of fitting rooms and installed self-service price scanners, said Jennifer McNamara, Macy's corporate spokeswoman.

Other changes in Macy's included designer lines as Prada, Armani and Jimmy Choo, being replaced with less expensive brands like Alfani. Field's signature green paper shopping bags have also been switched to white plastic ones with the Macy's red star logo.

"We know Marshall Field's was a passionate name and people were dedicated customers," McNamara said. "There's a much longer history with the Chicago Marshall Field's. In

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Artifacts on film

Field Museum exhibit showcases Cheyenne Indian treasures

By Eric Kasang
City Beat Editor

Both time and politics play a part in the complexity of exhibiting American Indian artifacts. Oftentimes, the items are too old and fragile; other pieces, while once displayed without much cultural sensitivity, are now shown carefully, with respect to American Indian customs and tradition.

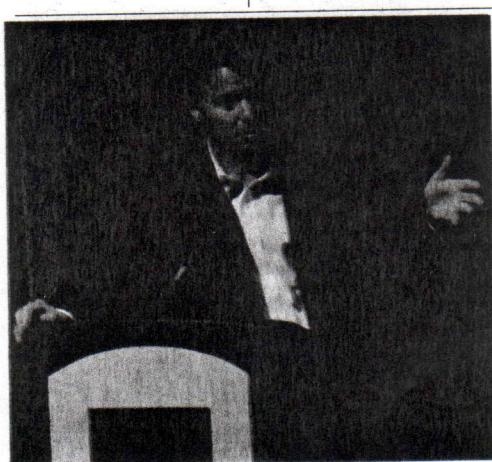
However, the Field Museum, 1400 S. Lake Shore Drive, has taken a novel approach to showcasing Cheyenne artifacts through photography.

"Cheyenne Visions," a new exhibit, showcases art and artifacts through 34 pictures taken by Chicago photographer Diane Alexander White. Set to various themes like "Chiefs and Elders," "Childhood," "Women's Work" and "Warriors," White captured colorfully beaded moccasins, scissortail fans and feathered fans set to different colored backdrops.

The exhibit, presented by Field Museum curator Jonathan Haas and Cheyenne chief and sun dance priest Gordon Yellowman, was originally intended to bring both sacred and fragile Cheyenne objects to native communities in Oklahoma and Montana, according to Janet Hong, Field Museum project manager for exhibits.

"Some are definitely sacred," Hong said. "There are some important bows and arrows and quivers; there's a quiver made of mountain lion skin. I'm not sure if that's a sacred object, but normally we wouldn't be able to display that [because it's] very fragile."

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Mauricio Rubio/The Chronicle

Former vice-presidential candidate John Edwards promoted his book 'Home: The Blueprints of Our Lives' on Nov. 28 at the Harold Washington Library. After his speech, Edwards fielded questions about a possible run for president in 2008.

Hopes for 'Home' go beyond book sales

Former U.S. Senator speaks about future political plans

By Allison Riggio
Assistant City Beat Editor

Former vice-presidential candidate John Edwards stopped in Chicago on Nov. 28 to sign copies of his book, *Home: The Blueprints of Our Lives*, at the Harold Washington Library, 400 S. State St. Edwards spoke briefly about the book and took questions from the roughly 300-member audience before closing the afternoon with a book signing.

The former North Carolina senator opened the floor to audience questions, which quickly shifted gears from *Home* to politics and

Edwards' future political plans, a topic partly prompted by Edwards himself.

"I haven't talked about—and I hope I get a chance to talk about—what I think is the first and most important responsibility of the next president," Edwards said. "I hope somebody will now ask me that question."

Edwards, who currently directs the Center on Poverty, Work and Opportunity at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, announced he is considering running for the Democratic nomination in the 2008 presidential election. Edwards ran for the same spot in the 2004 election, but was chosen instead as John Kerry's vice-presidential running mate.

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Steele:

Choosing new commissioner up to committeemen

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son or a daughter or a brother-in-law of somebody," Peraica said. "It's really putting our democracy in danger."

Peraica said there is nothing commissioners or voters can do now. He said the matter is now in the hands of the district committeemen to decide who will be the next 2nd District commissioner. Committeemen are generally party leaders and are elected from within their party, in this case the committeemen are Democratic.

Cady Gibbons, executive director of the Cook County Democratic Party, said there will be a meeting of committeemen next week to vote on the appointment. At the meeting the committeemen will have weighted votes that vary based on the number of Democratic ballots cast per ward in the March primary.

"In other words, if you took some of the wards that had a higher weighted vote, those ward's committeeman would be critical votes in the appointment process," Gibbons said.

Of Chicago's 50 aldermanic wards, 18 lie within Steele's 2nd district. Gibbons said the chairman for the meeting will be 24th Ward alderman Michael Chandler.

Edwards:

Experts say book tour good way to boost public image

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Though Edwards is staying in the public eye with *Home* he will need to gain a substantial electoral base if he wants to have a shot at the Democratic slot on the 2008 ballot, according to Martha Kumar, a professor in the Political Science Department at Towson University in Maryland.

"Without an electoral base I think it's really hard to run, particularly at a time when I think experience ... is going to be important—and that includes being a current office-holder," Kumar said.

Edwards believes the next president has a responsibility to restore America's role as a world leader, but also spoke about issues concerning global warming, healthcare, the effectiveness of the Electoral College and the issues surrounding campaign financing.

"[In a race] you spend an enormous chunk of your time on the phone raising money," Edwards said. "It's one of the criteria for determining whether you're a serious legitimate candidate or not."

Edwards, however, thinks that this should not be the only way to judge the success of a campaign.

"The criteria should be: Do you have the maturity of judgment, do you have the depth of

Let it snow



Mauricio Rubio/The Chronicle

An woman navigates through the early morning snow on Wood and Harrison streets near the Rush University Campus.

Jay Stewart, executive director of the Better Government Association, a nonprofit government watchdog group based in Chicago, said Steele's decision comes as no surprise.

"They're not doing anything the law does not allow them to do, they're simply taking the law and using it to some extent to serve their own ends,"

— Jay Stewart, executive director of the Better Government Association

Stewart said, "As long as you leave it in the hands of the committeemen, you're going to have a high degree of political shenanigans."

Stewart said he is more disturbed by Steele appointing her son to her position than by her taking a higher pension.

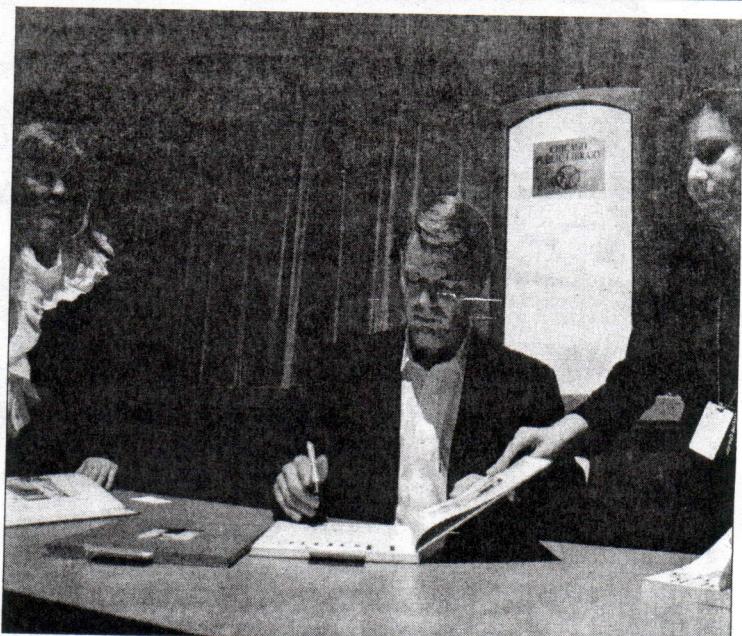
"I think a lot of people would take the money, but then to

equivocate and say you don't know whether or not you're going to stay on [as commissioner] simply to have greater say in who takes the position, that's disingenuous," Stewart said. "Announce you're not running for re-election, take the pension and then let the voters decide in a primary or a special election as to who's going to take the position."

Stewart said handing down positions from parents to children is nothing new, citing how U.S. Rep. Dan Lipinski received his appointment from his father, Bill Lipinski, and Todd

Stroger's appointment by his father, John, for Cook County Board president. Stewart said he would like to see some changes in the appointment process, starting with who is involved in the procedure. Instead of having committeemen decide who to place in the position, Stewart said special elections would be a better idea.

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Mauricio Rubio/The Chronicle

John Edwards signs copies of his new book, 'Home: The Blueprints of Our Lives,' at the Harold Washington Library, 400 S. State St., on Nov. 28.

attended the book signing because she has supported Edwards since the 2004 presidential race when she was first able to vote.

While she said she's unsure who might come out as the Democratic nominee in 2008, she has some concerns that Edwards might not have a strong enough presence among younger voters to build a lot of support.

Even though Edwards was a vice-presidential candidate, many young people still do not know who he is, Brininstool said. She added, though, that this may actually work to Edwards' benefit if he chooses to run, since John Kerry's loss may hold a bad connotation with young voters.

Jacobs said that Edwards might be one of the top four or five potential nominees for the

Democratic presidential candidacy in 2008. Decisions for both political parties will likely be made public within the next five months.

"This is the time when people start putting the ducks in order and getting ready to announce," Jacobs said.

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