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PRINCETON PERSONALITY BY JEAN STRATTON



SHARING INFORMATION: "Eagleton's purpose is to encourage participation and knowledge of politics. Informed and participating citizens are the strength of our democracy. You have to get people the information about how to register and how elections are administered." Ingrid Reed, Policy Analyst and New Jersey Project Director, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, is committed to helping New Jersey residents learn more about elections and government in their home state.

Public Service and New Jersey Issues Have Been Focus of Ingrid Reed's Career

On Election Night, November 4, 2008, Ingrid Reed will share her knowledge of politics, as she serves as election moderator at the Princeton Public Library. As Policy Analyst and New Jersey Project Director, Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, Ms. Reed looks forward to an exciting evening with fellow Princeton residents.

"We start before the returns come in," she explains. "We talk about what we should be watching in New Jersey. The library has a wonderful audio-visual system, and we tune into the news channels. Then, we take a break when people come in with local results. It's an informal type of thing, and I try to help point out things and interpret results for people."

This will not be the first time Ms. Reed has served as election night moderator, and in fact, it is only one of the many roles she has undertaken in her varied and public service-oriented career. Underlying all of her endeavors has been a focus on New Jersey and an effort to improve and implement a wide spectrum of policies beneficial to the state and its communities, especially in areas of land use, government organization, campaign finance, and urban revitalization.

Her interest in public policy and active citizenship was kindled early on, when as a young girl she saw that her parents paid close attention to community affairs. The example was set.

"My parents had a respect for civic life," she recalls. "We always knew what was happening, and we also had two newspapers every day; the Philadelphia Inquirer in the morning and the Bulletin in the afternoon."

Born in Germany, Fred and Ruth Wagner emigrated separately to the U.S., later met in Philadelphia, and married. They settled in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., where Ingrid was born, then moved to Vineland, N.J. when she was six.

School Band

The oldest of four girls, Ingrid was active in many school and recreational activities. "I loved school, and I loved the Girl Scouts," she says. "I played the glockenspiel in the school band, and worked on the newspaper. I also took piano lessons, rode my bike a lot, and went to sleep-away camp. I remember making colored water with crepe paper when I was little. I enjoyed being with people, and was very gregarious."



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Ingrid enjoyed reading the Nancy Drew mysteries, popular with young girls, and spent a lot of time in the library. She was also active in her church youth group.

Vineland was a diverse community then, she recalls. "There were a lot of Italian Catholics, as well as a large Jewish group, black professionals, and a smaller German Lutheran group. Everyone seemed to get along well. I remember people in the neighborhood as being very kind, and they were always around. I always felt I was treated with respect. There were lots of friends in the neighborhood, we'd play outside, and often go to each other's homes for dinner. Also, my sisters, Barbara, Doris, and Susan and I were friends growing up, and we are still very close today."

Ingrid's early childhood coincided with the outbreak of World War II, and her German heritage might have caused a problem. "I don't remember any difficulties," she says, "and if there were any, my parents probably kept them from us. As a fertilizer manufacturer, my father was part of the infra-structure, and I sometimes went with him to visit the different farms. "I also remember my dad going to the Red Cross in Vineland. It was the only way he could get word about his family in Germany. There was a wonderful woman, Edith Ramsey, in the Red Cross, who was so helpful. Interestingly, I still have a passport photo of the four of us, my parents, my sister, and myself from 1939. We were planning to visit Germany, and then the war broke out, and of course, we didn't go."

The family's World War II experience with the Red Cross was actually not their first, recalls Ms. Reed. "I was born on February 14, and when I was two weeks old, there was a big flood in Wilkes-Barre. We had to be evacuated and taken by the Red Cross to Philadelphia. They say I was carried out in a wash basket!"

Friends and Family

After the war, Ingrid concentrated on school and fun with friends and family. "I loved the movies, especially the musicals. Ones about George Gershwin and Chopin. I also loved the Mario Lanza movies and all the wonderful music. The movies cost 12¢ then, later 15¢, and you had newsreels and cartoons as well as the movie. One of my favorites was *Holiday Inn* with Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire."

The family often went to a lake in the Poconos in the summer and also to Ocean City at the New Jersey shore. Ingrid loved both places, and later worked as a mother's helper in the Poconos.

She also had to help in the house. As she says, "We had chores. We did the washing on Monday, ironing on Tuesday, and always grocery shopping on Friday nights. Then, we'd get a popsicle after. Later, as a teenager, I did a lot of baby sitting.

"Also, since I was the first child, I was often teaching my parents. For example, I had to show my mother how to write a permission slip for school."

Ms. Reed also remembers her parents sending many packages of clothing, coffee, and cigarettes to Germany. Her parents' families were in East Germany, and times were very difficult for them.

School was very important to Ingrid, who was an excellent student. "I especially liked my English teacher in high school, Mr. Barry. He was very strict, and we had to learn 20 vocabulary words a week and use them in a sentence. He was very good at teaching literature. The way he taught it, he was completely confident that we would enjoy this.

Good People

"I feel lucky that my teachers were really good people. All of them. I was diligent, and I liked to learn. Everything was a kind of new adventure. Good teachers help to make that happen."

After graduating from high school as valedictorian, Ingrid went to the University of Pennsylvania, where she majored in economics and minored in art history. "Penn was a much more worldly place than I was used to," she recalls. "It was a whole new world to me. I made very good friends, and some were from New York. We used to go to the Philadelphia Orchestra on Friday afternoon, and I remember seeing Eugene Ormandy come on stage.

"When I went to college, my father was skeptical about it, wondering what I'd do after, but it was a wonderful opportunity. I took economic courses at the Wharton School and art history from Grant Manson, who wrote a book on it. That was a great class. And what intrigued me at Penn was how I was interested in both the practical (economics) and the aesthetic (art) and was able to combine them. This was later to be the case in my work, too."

After graduating Phi Beta Kappa in 1958, Ingrid considered applying to the Wharton School as a graduate student. The lure of New York City proved too strong, however, and she and three classmates went to the Big Apple to get jobs and share an apartment. "I was looking forward to the next adventure," she points out.

Before arriving in New York though, she and a college friend had another adventure when they toured Europe for three months after graduation. "It was Europe on \$5 a day," she says, with a smile. "We had earlier worked as waitresses at Howard Johnson, and we dyed our waitress shoes, and wore them all over Europe. People didn't wear sneakers in those days, as they do now.

"We went any place we had a contact, including England, Denmark, Paris, Barcelona. And I was also happy to go to Germany to see relatives. My parents had been the only family members to leave Germany. I never knew my grandparents, so it was wonderful to see relatives."

Christmas Eve

Returning to the U.S., Ingrid got a job with the Life Insurance Company of America as a research assistant. "I worked on a new project, concerning how life insurance companies were investing directly in large real estate development rather than simply in mortgages."

During the Christmas holidays of 1958, Ingrid visited her parents in Vineland, and at a party met Marvin Reed, also from Vineland. As Mr. Reed, former Mayor of Princeton Borough, recalls, "My parents always threw a Christmas Eve party, and invited Ingrid's family. This year, she came. She was just back from a trip to Europe and was taking a job in New York. We talked and talked."

At the time, he continues, "I was taking night graduate studies at NYU in communications, and she was

living in a residence hotel. I suggested we get together after my class, and convinced her to take the subway from 86th Street down to Greenwich Village. It got to be a habit, and then I started going in to see her on weekends. We both especially liked the theater.”

They were married a year later, after Christmas in 1959, and moved to Princeton, where Mr. Reed was living.

“I stayed home two weeks,” recalls Ms. Reed, “and then went to an employment agency. They sent me to ETS, which had just moved to Rosedale Road and was modernizing by introducing information technology. I was asked by then comptroller David Brodsky, who was heading the new initiative, to manage the proposal contract register, that is, keeping track of the different testing programs.”

This was a new field for Ms. Reed, and she looked upon it as a new challenge. This was an example of her willingness to say ‘yes’ and take on new projects, which she saw as exciting learning experiences.

Betty Friedan

As Ruth Mandel, Director of the Eagleton Institute of Politics, points out, “Ingrid is all about ‘yes’. She says ‘yes’ to life, ‘yes’ to showing up, yes to engaging.”

The Reeds’ first child David was born in 1961, and the family moved to Glenacres in West Windsor. Daughter Liza came along in 1964. “This was the Betty Friedan generation, with the emphasis on feminism,” recalls Ms. Reed. “I wanted to be part of that world. I worked until two weeks before David was born.”

She then became involved in the League of Women voters, which kindled her interest in civic work. “With the League, you were an observer at a lot of municipal meetings, planning boards, etc. I was especially interested in water and health issues. I began to understand how complicated the world was. Working with the League, we were involved with issues, such as knowing your town, knowing your school system, but also subjects like nuclear proliferation. I met lots of interesting women at that time.

“I faithfully attended planning board meetings, and in 1972, I ran for the West Windsor Township Committee as a Democrat. My platform emphasized that West Windsor needed a master Plan that should respect historic villages, emphasize responsible planning, including density on Route One. During the campaign, I was criticized for trying to create ‘super cities’.”

Ms. Reed’s bid was unsuccessful, but her focus on planning did not go unnoticed, and as she says, “The Republicans who won were reasonable about the issues, and followed through on the planning.”

She continued her interest in public affairs, and was especially concerned about the importance of regional issues. “While I was observing the planning board, I got an understanding of the regional nature of so much of what was happening. I became involved with the Stony Brook Watershed, and got good training on water issues, and learned more about the environment.”

In the Forefront

Also, at the time, she points out, “Feminism was becoming an important issue. In 1973-74, the Women’s Political Caucus, a bi-partisan community effort, looked at all the boards in Mercer County, noted vacancies, and the number of women serving. There were very few, and there were no women on the Mercer County Planning Board. I was appointed. Most women who get involved in politics run because they care about the community.”

Ms. Reed served on the board for 18 years, and was chair for 11. In 1975, she was asked to join the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, as Assistant for Special Projects to the Deputy Commissioner. Always in the forefront of her thinking was community-oriented and regionally-responsible planning to move forward effectively.

As she says, “My focus, starting with my initial experience as an observer at the West Windsor Planning Board meetings, was the importance of the region. A municipality simply can’t work just on its own. All of my civic responsibility has been focused on regional and state issues. Traffic doesn’t respect municipal borders, water doesn’t respect municipal borders.”

Ms. Reed’s career took a new turn when she went to work for the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. She served as Director of the Rockefeller Public Service Awards, a national program, from 1975 to 1981, and later as assistant dean.

“Donald Stokes, the new dean, was getting a new staff, and some friends suggested I apply. I wasn’t sure I should work for the ‘company’ in a ‘company’ town, but I put in my resume, and Don Stokes asked if I’d like to direct the Rockefeller Public Service Awards Program, which were given through the Woodrow Wilson School. These awards recognize people doing exemplary work in government. There was outstanding service being done in so many different areas, including environment, civil rights, etc.

“Like many women, I hadn’t really worked in 13 years, but I had learned a lot through the League, the Planning Board, running for office, and the Department of Environmental Protection. It was a good foundation.”

Parallel Need

Barbara Lawrence, now Executive Director of the Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation in Teaneck, and formerly executive director of New Jersey Future, was a graduate student at the Woodrow Wilson School when she met Mrs. Reed, who was then assistant dean.

“Ingrid also ran the Rockefeller Public Service Award Program at that time, where she encountered some of the most innovative non-profit and government executives in the country and brought them to the school. Through this awards process, she met Henry Richmond, who founded a group in Oregon to ensure that the state implemented good land use laws. Ingrid saw the parallel need in New Jersey, and offered the Woodrow Wilson School as the venue for groups to come together to examine our situation and decide how to move forward. New Jersey Future was ‘born’ in the basement of Robertson Hall with Ingrid as a co-founder. She has served on the board for the full 20 years of its existence, and is now its Chair.

“From the beginning of my 30 years of working with Ingrid, she has been involved in some of the most interesting public policy challenges facing our state. To this day, when I want to know who in New Jersey is involved in a meaningful way with some issue, I turn to Ingrid. She has been a wonderful mentor to me and many other people who turn to her for advice.”

Pam Hersh, Vice President of Government and Community Affairs for the Princeton HealthCare System, agrees with that assessment, pointing out Mrs. Reed’s ability to serve as a positive role model.

Energizer Bunny

“I have interacted with Ingrid in all of my professional jobs in Princeton — as reporter, editor, University administrator, hospital administrator. Her wisdom and her incredible ability to impart that wisdom has influenced me and made me better at each one of those jobs.

“As we grew from professional colleagues to personal friends, my kids also fell under the Ingrid spell. It was not just her words reflecting such remarkable analytical clarity about complex political and social issues, but more importantly, her actions. She tirelessly pursued what was not just best for her, but what was best for the community — best for others in that community, whether it be the Princeton community or the larger community of New Jersey. My kids have pursued careers in areas that need addressing in society and are passionately involved in political causes in large part, I believe, because of Ingrid Reed. And, she had the good sense to hook up with Marvin Reed — together, they are like the Energizer Bunny couple of community activism for the public good.”

During the years at the Woodrow Wilson School, Ms. Reed, as Ms. Lawrence notes, was instrumental in the establishment of a state development and redevelopment program, New Jersey Future. As Ms. Reed says, “Trenton had gone through very difficult times, and the state was a big player. My work in terms of the regional effort was to codify the state’s commitment to the development of Trenton to revitalize the city. We developed a plan for the downtown, which became a model for other cities. That plan is continuing to revitalize Trenton after 20 years. I’ve never been as optimistic as I am now.”

Also while at the Woodrow Wilson School, Mrs. Reed was honored to receive the Kellogg National Leadership Fellowship, which over a three-year period enabled her to take time off to travel and pursue a project that would add new dimension to her work.

“I wanted to learn more about the private side of real estate development,” she explains. “We do depend on private investment to provide housing, and it was a fit with my public service work, advocating for compact development.”

Ms. Reed spent three months in Chicago at an architecture firm, studying in depth a development project, as well as traveling both in the U.S. and abroad. “Through the Kellogg program, I went to the U.N. Decade of Women Conference in Nairobi. I met all these incredible women from around the world. The next year, through the program I traveled to Asia, where Marv was able to join me.”

Career Change

In 1992, she made a career change, moving to Rockefeller University in New York, as Vice President for Public Affairs and Corporate Secretary. In this role, she needed to apply administrative skills, work with the faculty, as well as in communications and outreach.

While at Rockefeller, Ms. Reed was elected to the National Academy of Public Administration. “This promotes exemplary public service and a respect for government management,” she explains. “It is commissioned by Congress to look at various aspects of public service.”

Change came again in 1996, when Ms. Reed left Rockefeller University, and returned to her native state. “After four years at Rockefeller, I felt my work was done, and I wanted my roots to be more local. I even thought of retiring. But Ruth Mandel was named director of the Eagleton Institute, and she turned to a number of people to see how we could use our commitment to education and public service to help New Jersey. I had known Ruth and worked with her, and she talked to me about it.”

As Dr. Mandel points out, “Eagleton had always focused on American politics and government, both national and state. We had a special interest in New Jersey, and I wanted to recruit someone in our ranks who would bring more of New Jersey to Eagleton and more of Eagleton to issues in the state. Ingrid sprang to mind immediately. I had long been aware of her long-standing love affair with her native state. Next to the governor, she may be our state’s biggest booster and most loving critic. I decided to liberate her from commuting to her position at Rockefeller University in Manhattan by tempting her with a daily drive down Route One to Rutgers University in New Brunswick.

“We created something called The New Jersey Project as a loose title for exploring issues and identifying topics that would be consistent with Eagleton’s interests. I asked Ingrid to look around, talk to people, visit with organizations, and come back with recommendations about what and who could benefit from research, education, or public service projects we might undertake.”

Typical Day

So, any thought of retirement was put on the back burner. A typical day for Ms. Reed might include teaching a class on election procedures, writing a newspaper column, conducting original research with students, conferring with New Jersey candidates for office, moderating political debates, and attending speaking engagements.

“I enjoy the fact that Eagleton is creating new information, doing research, and helping people understand new things,” says Ms. Reed. “The work we have done providing information on how elections are run and administered, how municipalities are managed, how television applies, all help people get information and insight.”

She is encouraged that there has been a big increase in voter registration in New Jersey from 2004 to 2008, including among younger voters, ages 18 to 29. “We have to make sure they know where to vote and how to work the machines,” she adds. “Also, we want people to know they can still register to vote in New Jersey through October 14 by going to their municipal building or going on line at www.njelections.org. They can also

apply for an absentee ballot up to October 28 by going to njections.org and down-loading an application.”

As a Princeton area resident for nearly 50 years, Mrs. Reed has also taken careful note of what is going on in her own community. Never just an observer, she is a participant. She co-chaired the Princeton Borough campaign for consolidation effort in 1979, and has also paid close attention to the results of development in Princeton.

Strong Community

“Princeton is a strong community. I think it is a model for compact communities, and can serve very well as we develop new places and re-develop old places. I am encouraged about the way we have been careful that new development enhances Princeton. I’m conscious of that when I walk by the library and the Albert Hinds Plaza. Whenever Princeton has put a shovel in the ground, it has been done carefully and with an effort to enhance the community. And it has set very good standards for developers.”

Both she and Mr. Reed are members of the Congress for the New Urbanism, “which promotes private compact communities like Princeton that are walkable, mixed use, and offer public transportation.”

When not involved in speaking engagements or board meetings (including those of the Princeton Adult School or Community Foundation, among others) or any of the numerous other demands of her busy life, Ms. Reed enjoys the theater, music, travel, gardening, cooking, and reading. She no longer has time to embroider or make her children’s clothes, as she once did, but as she says, “What I can fit into my life is gardening. It gives me enormous pleasure to grow something and then also to make a bouquet and give it to someone.

“I really enjoy cooking, too, especially leftovers. Friends call me ‘the leftover queen’. I love to make something delicious out of leftovers.

Interesting Places

“Marv and I like McCarter and the Princeton Symphony” she continues. “We have also enjoyed Theatre Intime and programs at the Arts Council and the library. And we attend productions at Passage Theater in Trenton.”

The Reeds have a *pied à terre* in Manhattan (which they share with Princeton residents Ruth and Bernie Miller), and they enjoy the theater and opera in New York. They also spend time with their children and four grandchildren in Boston and near San Francisco. “Fortunately, our children live in interesting places!” reports Mrs. Reed.

“We always love to travel, and last July we went to Colmar, the Borough’s sister city in France, and then we continued by train to Lyon and Aix-en-Provence.

“My husband has two especially great qualities,” she continues. “He’s my ‘techie’ (he fixes my computer, etc.) and he’s my travel agent. And I wonder if when I stop working, I’ll be as lucky and thoughtful as he has been. I do know that I have certainly felt very fortunate to have had so many people in my life who have opened and expanded my world.”

And she, in turn, has done the same for so many others, and with such enthusiasm and energy. As Ruth Mandel says, “‘Ingrid’ is a synonym for good citizenship. She is an active, visible citizen everywhere she shows up — in our condominium association (where somehow she finds time to chair a landscaping committee and answer my questions about rogue weeds), in Princeton Borough, at Eagleton, and Rutgers more broadly, and across the state.

“Ingrid has an amazing level of energy, and absorbs an amazing amount of information everywhere she goes. She is endlessly engaged and endlessly curious. She is indefatigable!”

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