Beat: Politics

PROFILE: Maryland Deputy Speaker Pro Tem, Carolyn J.B. Howard

25 Years of committment and leadership

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USPA NEWS - The third most powerful Member of Maryland's House of Delegates, Deputy Speaker Pro Tem, Carolyn J.B. Howard is not your ordinary tenured politician. She stands about 5 feet 5 inches tall, is very soft spoken, and is not someone who feels compelled to speak on every issue before the Legislature.

It was on a cold and rainy night in early February 1991 that I first met the lady that is now Maryland's Deputy Speaker Pro Tem. A hundred or more people had gathered for a special meeting of the Prince Georges County Democratic Central Committee. The committee was to hear public testimony and ultimately select its nominee to replace Del. Sylvania Woods, Jr. (D-24), who had abruptly resigned his seat in the Maryland House of Delegates.

Carolyn Howard was no stranger to this Committee or the House of Delegates. She had served in the House representing the 24th Legislative District from 1988-1990. She narrowly lost her re-election campaign in 1990, and when the opportunity arose, Carolyn Howard stepped forward, ready and eager to serve.

The process to appointment is extremely political and is almost always done from the inside, with overwhelming support and consideration given to the recommendation of the State Senator and remaining Delegates in the District. It is felt that they know the community better than anyone, and are most qualified to state who should fill the vacancy.

For perspective purposes, In February 1990, it was almost unheard of for a local Central Committee to deviate from this unwritten rule. Things have certainly changed over the years.

ENTER CENTER STAGE - Carolyn J.B. Howard

NO, Carolyn Howard was not the choice of her Senator nor the remaining Delegates that evening, but she had something that proved to be far more powerful on her side; the People of Maryland's 24th Legislative District.

They came out in droves to support their former Delegate, and at the end of the night, by a split vote, Carolyn J.B. Howard had made history. She was the nominee of the Prince George's County Democratic Central Committee and was subsequently administered the Oath of Office by the late Governor William Donald Schaefer (D-Baltimore) on March 7, 1991. She was once again a Delegate in the Maryland General Assembly representing the People of the 24th legislative district.

The Deputy Speaker Pro Tem has never forgotten that night, and often recounts it with a warm smile and that sparkle of pride in her eyes that says, I am so proud to be here representing the People of Maryland and my constituents in the 24th Legislative District.

That pride and remembrance is apparent to all those who interact and come to know Delegate Carolyn J.B. Howard. Words her colleagues in the House and Senate use to describe her are; intelligent, respected, thoughtful, caring, considerate, compassionate, dedicated, unassuming, passionate, and willing to listen to opposing viewpoints.

In Delegate Howard' 25 years in the Maryland General Assembly, she has never once been suspected of, or questioned for an ethics charge or violation, she has never been suspected of even the slightest infraction or wrongdoing, and is only in the press for those things she is most proud of; her efforts for, and in, the community she serves.

Leaders of this caliber, and strong ethical character, are perceived as the exception, not the rule, in politics today, but for Delegate

Howard, she would not have it any other way.

I met with Delegate Howard briefly on the floor of the House about a week ago, catching-up and talking about some of these things, as well as her future ambitions.

The Delegate spoke of some accomplishments, but focused on how much more there is to be done. She said she is humbled and honored every time she walks into the House Chamber to do the people's work.

As for her future, she plans to stay as long as she is an effective voice for the people.

As we were concluding, Delegate Howard spoke of a new role she has undertaken; a mentor. She wants to instill a little of what has made her so successful over the past 25 years into those who are coming into the Legislature from Prince George's County, as well as those who aspire to serve.

With that, she turned and introduced me to Del. Alonzo Washington (D-22) who was appointed to the General Assembly in December 2012.

Delegate Howard was first elected Deputy Speaker Pro Tem in 2007, serves on the Ways and Means Committee, is vice-chair of the Education Subcommittee, and is on the prestigious Rules and Executive Nominations Committee.

Congratulations Delegate Howard on 25 years of service in the Maryland General Assembly.

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