

Elsie Hillman's Remarks at Memorial Service for RSC State Chair

Anne Anstine - 1997

Most people in this lovely church do not know me or what makes me privileged to share thoughts with you as we celebrate the wonderful life of Anne Anstine.

It is only because I, too, have lost somebody so dear to me -- a mentor of my own age, a political partner - but even more than just a friend, Anne became part of my family!

As I stand here looking at this gathering, I realize the many faces of Anne Anstine, which we have all seen for ourselves -- and we are bound today by the thread of common love for this delightful lady!

I will never think of Anne in the past tense, because each day each memory becomes clearer and dearer because I know there will not be new ones.

We were -- or are -- the blond and the brunette - hardly the Bobsy twins except in the way we thought and shared fun in our lives. I cannot tell you how many late nights we sat up with a vodka in one hand and pencil in the other as we wrote the plans or the speeches for the next morning. We giggled, wiggled our tired toes and shared the gossip of the day because most of it would be forgotten by morning!

We tried to laugh our way through defeat and cried easily in victory -- and though we may have acted like kids, each shared experience with Anne brought me closer to an understanding of what was really important in a person.

Her commitments to her wonderful family, to John, her children and her grandchildren - and to her childhood friends and extended political family was awesome! her church and faith, in good times and bad, was steadfast -- and then came her politics - a state on which many people play but few really perform.

She was a star!

What made me love her so much was because she was real. In our many years working together, I never had any doubt about where she stood on any issue. She understood the art of compromise but never did she abandon her own true beliefs, which she carried with wisdom and dignity. She never "sold out" and I loved her for that!

When I started in politics in 1952, I only did it because I like "IKE" knowing little how addictive politics could be. Despite some years in which this "dilettante" was tested, I survived long enough to play in the big league -- Anne's league.

When retirement time came for me after 22 years as the Republican National Committee woman for PA, I knew that there was only one person that I could present with such tremendous pride to my colleagues with the absolute certainty that she would bring not only experience and commitment, but dignity and graciousness to this position. I may not be all of these things myself, but my predecessors were all outstanding women all of whom became, because of their personal qualities, Distinguished Daughters of PA. Anne joined their ranks last year, making this body even more distinguished.

Anne died as she lived -- with honesty and integrity -- a certain straightforwardness that always set her apart from the rest of us. She shared love with those around her, family and friends, with courage and dignity and, I might add, a touch of womanly vanity!

On one of my last visits, as we were chatting, I told her how much better she looked than when in the hospital, and she said "do I really?" I said, "I wouldn't lie to you - of course you do!" She smiled and then said, "In that case, you can tell people you've seen me!"