

Positive Political Change in Chicago?

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

Global Research, March 04, 2019

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#)

Is the city of many nicknames ready for political change for the better, serving its residents more equitably?

Familiar nicknames include the Windy City, referring to political, not atmospheric, wind; Second City (to NY), Sinatra's My Kind of Town, That Toddlin Town, for poet Carl Sandburg the City of Big Shoulders, among many others.

William "Big Bill" Thompson was Chicago's last Republican mayor, his second of two terms ending in November 1931 – undemocratic Dems running the city since then with one exception.

The late Harold Washington's 1983 mayoral triumph ushered in hoped for change, the city's first Black mayor, after being nominated, saying "(w)e were slow to move from the protest movement into politics," adding:

"We were lulled to sleep thinking that passing a few laws was enough. But we've got to be involved in the mainstream political activity. That's what's happening here in Chicago."

He served until November 25, 1987, the city's 41st mayor, a cut way above his predecessors and successors, dying prematurely in office at age-65, a tragic loss.

He was found slumped over his desk in city hall unconscious, rushed to nearby Northwestern Memorial Hospital where attempts to revive him failed – leaving supporters shocked, dismayed, and deeply saddened over the loss of the only mayor in memory who addressed the rights and well-being of ordinary city residents.

Heart failure took him, a larger than life figure in stature and physical size with an unhealthy enlarged heart, what the diagnosis of his death confirmed.

No one like him followed as city mayor. He was an exception to the rule. Long ago alderman Paddy Bowler saying "Chicago ain't ready for reform" didn't apply to Harold, what many Chicagoans called him affectionately.

Winners of Chicago Dem mayoral primary elections automatically go on to defeat GOP rivals in the general election, how it's been for almost 90 years, this time no different with a twist.

Of the 14 Dem aspirants competing in the February 26 primary, six were African-Americans, two winning more voter support than others. They'll meet in the general election for the mayoral post on April 2.

For the second time in Chicago history, a Black candidate will become mayor, the second woman ever to hold the post. Jane Byrne served as city mayor from April 1979 – April 1983.

A personal note: After leaving office and losing its perks, amenities, chauffeured limousines and all the rest, Byrne stood in front of me in the same line at our local bank, waiting like others to reach a teller to conduct our business – what city mayors have subordinates do for them along with other personal chores, no longer when returning to private life.

On April 2, either Toni Preckwinkle or Lori Lightfoot will become Chicago mayor, whether a crack in longtime machine politics is achieved remains to be seen.

Several progressive challengers entered the race to succeed establishment Mayor Rahm Emanuel, former congressman, Obama chief of staff and investment banker – known as Mayor 1%, serving the city's privileged class, disdainful of its ordinary mass majority.

Preckwinkle and Lightfoot finishing ahead of other mayoral aspirants bore testimony to Chicagoans wanting political change – getting it another matter entirely, but hope springs eternal even in a city known for corrupt machine politics fed by deep-seated political patronage.

Machine favorite Bill Daley losing was a positive sign, brother of former Mayor Richard M. Daley, son of Richard J. Daley. The family ran Chicago for 43 years, supported by a rubber-stamp City Council, much the same under hardline neoliberal corporatist Emanuel.

The late Chicago-based Citizens Committee to Clean up the Courts chairman Sherman Skolnick called him the “acting deputy chief for North America of Mossad.”

His father, Benjamin, was involved in smuggling weapons to the Jewish Irgun underground terrorist group (co-led by future Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin) in Palestine pre-1948.

Emanuel served as an IDF volunteer during the 1991 Gulf War, holding dual US/Israeli citizenship, notoriously pro-war throughout his political career. He won't be missed.

Hopefully Chicago's next major will be more social-minded, cut out of the Harold Washington mold, supporters calling his time in office the city's camelot period lost with his untimely death, his legacy dismantled by successors.

He was a people's mayor, a community leader with ties to grassroots organizations, combined with political savvy, independent of city machine politics – all of the above reasons for his popularity, able to forge progressive multi-racial/multi-ethnic coalitions, successfully dealing with opposition machine pols.

His time in office was Chicago's finest hour. Can it be resurrected by Preckwinkle or Lightfoot? Supporters believe they represent progressive social change.

Preckwinkle is president of the Cook County Board of Commissioners, a former Chicago City Council member, an advocate of affordable housing, a living wage, and other social issues, a strong opponent of notorious city police brutality and use of excessive force against least advantaged residents.

Lightfoot was a federal prosecutor, earlier involved in investigating Chicago corruption. She formerly served as chief administrator of the city's Department of Professional Standards, a defunct police oversight group.

Most recently, she serving as a senior equity partner in the Litigation and Conflict Resolution Group at Mayer Brown LLP, providing services for the firm's clients. Her responsibilities included involvement on its Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Weeks ahead of Chicago's April general election, ordinary city residents hope their new mayor will serve all Chicagoans equitably – a positive sea change in pre-and-post Harold Washington's tenure if things turn out this way.

*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons below. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

Award-winning author Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. He is a Research Associate of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG)

His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html>

Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com.

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Stephen Lendman](#), Global Research, 2019

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Stephen Lendman](#)

About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."
<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived

programs.

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca