

James F. Arduini

Democrat For

ILLINOIS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

71ST DISTRICT

At the age of 12 I received my first experience of a political campaign. My father was running for Rock Falls City Alderman. My siblings and I, armed with informational pamphlets, were given neighborhoods and street corners to cover. Although I could think of more enjoyable things to do at that time, it started me on my trek to this point in my life.

In my family, community involvement is a given, my father served as mayor of Rock Falls, I have a cousin who has served on that council as well. My uncle has served on the Whiteside County Board for over 40 years, more than 20 as the chairman. Family tradition, along with that first experience, has sparked and maintained my interest in public service and I have been actively involved since.

Upon discharge from active duty in the U.S. Navy in 1970, I came home to the Sterling-Rock Falls area to begin my life with my wife, Sandi, and raise our two boys. During this period I attended Sauk Valley College and served as a Precinct Committeeman in Whiteside County. Not unlike most people, my working years, were involved in volunteer programs for community and schools and youth programs. I worked for nearly 20 years in the Insurance and Investment field. In 1983 I made my first run at public office, winning the Alderman-At-Large seat on the Sterling City Council. Proudly, I was the youngest ever to be elected to that council at that time. Since then, many other young candidates have served on that council and I like to feel I may have had some influence in getting more of them to serve because of my involvement. This experience provided me the opportunity to be involved in major community development programs to renovate our severely decaying downtown area. I worked under a very strong organizational mayor who allowed me many opportunities to develop my own organizational skills and gave me more responsibility as time went on. During this time I stayed active in volunteerism with groups such as the Latin American Fiesta Committee, United Way and St. Jude's and continued working in youth and educational programs.

In the 1990's another great experience was presented to me when I was appointed to the CGH Hospital Board of Directors Finance Committee. Again I was able to work with some of the finest community leaders in our area. It gave me the chance to experience the administration of a public facility of this type and allowed me in on the ground floor of major expansion programs that have developed into

the incredible facility we have in our community today. At this time I also took on the challenge of continuing my education and earned a BA in Business Administration and a BA in Accounting from Mount St. Clare College.

After this period I worked in education as a school-to-work program coordinator for Whiteside Career Center in Sterling and then moved on to work for the Morrison Institute of Technology in Morrison, Illinois. These positions gave me a great appreciation for education and especially technical education. I worked with businesses and industry developing relationships that helped me understand the issues faced by workers and employers in today's economic environment. I also worked with both urban and rural school districts which provided me insight into the many similar as well as diverse problems they face in today's financial educational environment.

After our retirement, I was elected to the Whiteside County Board from District #1 in Sterling. This provided me another great learning opportunity with the county to develop a further understanding of the issues faced on this level. Landfill management, highway and road maintenance, and budgetary issues all have added new knowledge to my personal database.

And to this end I feel I am in a position to take an entire community worth of experience to the State level. There needs to be a more community-oriented philosophy to the problems this State faces. We need to work together, be open to compromise and employ a more common-sense approach to solve the issues we face. I truly believe that the lessons I have learned from the great people I have served under demonstrate that problems are not resolved and goals are not attained without a community of people who are willing to work together.

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