

A Personal Story" by Eleanor McGovern with Mary Finch Hoyt.

Eleanor McGovern began that uphill climb Nov. 25, 1921, when she arrived 30 minutes after the birth of her twin, Ila.

Her parents, Earl and Marian Stegeberg, farmed near Woonsocket. It was a hard life, made even more difficult by the early death of her mother when the twins were 11 and their sister, Phyllis, was 4.

Her father withdrew into a sadness that truly never broke until the birth of his first grandchild, the McGoverns' oldest daughter, Ann, in 1945.

Eleanor and Ila became the family housekeepers.

"I have a memory of trying to bake a cake," Eleanor McGovern says. "I had a recipe, but I came to an ingredient I didn't know—baking powder. So I left it out. That was a very flat cake."

In high school, the twins stayed in Woonsocket, doing housekeeping in exchange for room and board. They took turns going home weekends.

Living in town allowed them to take part in activities such as debate. That was how they first encountered a Mitchell teenager who already had made a name for himself. George McGovern and his partner debated the Stegeberg twins—and lost.

"Having high admiration for George, we adore the woman who beat him," says Harrington, McGovern's former state representative.

But the two didn't really meet until they were freshman at DWU. In "Uphill," Eleanor McGovern talks about how he asked her on a first date.

Now she admits she had advance warning. Eleanor worked in the dean's office, Ila down the hall. Ila stuck her head in the door to tell her sister a request for a date was coming.

"And don't you dare refuse him," Ila hissed at her twin.

"It never occurred to me he would ask me for a date," Eleanor McGovern says. "He was a big man on campus."

"I'd say within a year of that our first date I was pretty sure Eleanor was the one," George McGovern says.

"It was a dreamy spring. I had never known anything like it before. My only concern was that George might not care so much as I. Then on a beautiful clear afternoon he urged me to skip class with him and as we strolled slowly down the street south of campus, he reached down and took my hand. I had my answer. A clasping of hands meant everything then."

Their campus life was short. Eleanor McGovern quit her business courses at DWU. Her sister left for Rochester, Minn., and nurse's training, and Eleanor gave financial support.

The world had changed, too. After Pearl Harbor was bombed on Dec. 7, 1941, George McGovern volunteered for service in the Army Air Corps. He was called up in 1943.

The couple considered delaying marriage until after he returned from combat but decided not to wait. On Halloween Day 1943, they were married in the Methodist church in Woonsocket.

"My father liked George very much, but he didn't think we should get married, and he said he would not take part in the wedding," Eleanor McGovern says. "But he came that day and gave me away."

The newlyweds took a train to Muskogee, Okla., the next day, Eleanor sometimes sitting on their suitcase in the aisle.

She lived alone in a rented bedroom while her husband returned to the base. They saw each other twice a week.

She followed him to Kansas, Texas, Nebraska and Idaho, before returning home to await the birth of their first baby.

"I had really wanted to get pregnant," she says. "George was going overseas, and I wanted to have a baby."

He would not see Ann until she was 5 months old.

After the war, he completed his degree at DWU. The son of a Wesleyan Methodist pastor thought he, too, would follow that path.

As a student pastor's wife, Eleanor McGovern had her first taste of being in the public eye.

"A lot is expected of a minister's wife," she says. "And with two children very small (daughter Susan had arrived a year after Ann), I wasn't ready."

In any case, it didn't last long. George McGovern left seminary, earning a doctorate in history. He taught at DWU before leaving to help reinvigorate the South Dakota Democratic Party.

Three more children, Teresa, Steven and Mary, arrived.

And in 1955, Eleanor McGovern officially became a politician's wife when her husband ran for the U.S. House of Representatives. "I was happy when George went into politics," she says. "People in my family cared about what was happening in the country."

The first campaign was the toughest, she says. Then, they fell into a similar rhythm.

She began the last campaign, in 1980, with typical humor. As a temporary home in Mitchell, staffers rented the McGovern's an aging apartment, with linoleum floors, ancient cupboards and poor lighting.

"When George and Eleanor arrived for the first time to see it—looking ever so much like an apartment they had when they first married—Eleanor looked around, smiled and said, 'Well, George, it looks like we're starting over,'" Harrington says. "They didn't seem to mind at all."

While he served in Congress, she pursued her own interests, primarily children and families and the choices confronting women as the stay-at-home '50s transformed into the turbulent '60s.

Eleanor McGovern spoke out for adequate day care. "She was ahead of her time in accepting that as appropriate," says Berniece Mayer of Sioux Falls, a former McGovern staffer.

Until the demands of her husband's political career—particularly his bid for the presidency in 1972—required her to travel, Eleanor McGovern served as, often, a single parent.

"I'm sure Eleanor's had periods where she wishes she'd never been married to a politician, somebody running for Congress, running for the Senate, running for the presidency, running, running, running," George McGovern acknowledges.

"There was one period when I was representing South Dakota in the House of Representatives when I came out here 25 weekends in a row, and that plays havoc with your wife and your kids," he says.

"I was determined to help with George's career, not only by taking responsibility for the family, but by contributing ideas. In fact, I never considered it 'George's' career—it was 'ours.'"

Sometimes Eleanor McGovern did think "Stop!" she says, but "I never said it. It meant so much to him. He loved being a politician, and he accomplished a lot."

But if she could change anything, she would not have moved the children so often. "If I had to do it over again, I'd stay with them in South Dakota," she says.

The McGovern's have 10 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. A second great-grandchild is on the way.

Their children are scattered from Montana to England. There are only four now, since their middle child, Terry, died in 1994, after years struggling with alcoholism.

The sadness from her daughter's death will never leave Eleanor McGovern.

"There are pictures of her in the bedroom," she says. "When I go by, I always find myself softly reaching out and touching her picture."

Her husband later wrote a book about their daughter, "Terry." It was therapy for him, she says, but Eleanor McGovern has chosen to speak only rarely about her daughter's addictions.

It's OK that they have differences of opinions, he says.

"We don't worry about the fact that sometimes there could be a little tension and differences of opinion and irritation," he says.

"We just take that as a part of life. You can't expect complete harmony in a marriage. You have to give the other person a little freedom, too, to move to the things that they're interested in."

"Even today I have fleeting pangs of anxiety when I leave where I am to go to someplace else. I can describe it only as a vague sense of loss of place."

So he travels the country, and she generally stays home.

"She's had lots of opportunities in her lifetime to be in the public eye, and she goes out of her way to stay out," Christy says. "Some time ago she decided to let George do that."

The death of her sister, Ila, in 1996 also was a blow. "It left quite a void in my life," Eleanor says.

Books can't fill that gap, but they often fill her days. Her husband calls her the best-read woman he knows. Eight or 10 magazines come to the house every week; she reads them all.

She loves birds, particularly meadowlarks. Mayer remembers taking Eleanor McGovern out in the prairie to hear their sweet sound. When time wouldn't permit, a local radio announcer would tape the bird calls for her.

It would take her home, even in a Washington, D.C., suburb.

"Many times I ached for Woonsocket and Mitchell, for cottonwoods and elms, for schools, shops, markets, doctors' offices, more often than not sprinkled with dear friends or relatives, all within walking distance."

#### HONORING TOM GREEN FOR HIS SERVICE TO TENNESSEE

**HON. JIM COOPER**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 18, 2005*

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Tom Green. The humorist Will Rogers once said that the secret of his success was that he never met a man he didn't like. The same can be said of Tom Green. He makes friends with everyone, everyday, everywhere. He is the ultimate people person, always asking—and, much more important, caring—about you, your family, your friends, and remembering the details perfectly for decades. I wish I had a fraction of his talent.

Tom is well known back home for his wonderful family, for his continuing and tireless efforts benefiting the Natchez Trace Parkway, as well as for his dedication and service to Nashvillians during his long business career and, more recently, as a key member of my district staff.

The Natchez Trace is the pioneer roadway that connected Nashville with the lower Mississippi River at Natchez. In modern times

the Trace fell into disuse and was nearly lost to history. In 1934, Congress ordered a survey of the old wagon road, and, in 1937, provided initial funding for construction of what would eventually become the 444-mile-long Natchez Trace Parkway running through rural Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee. Today, the Parkway is one of the most visited national parks and serves as a unique thoroughfare, allowing us to ride in comfort along an ancient trail through some of the most beautiful scenery in our country.

Tom has helped the Natchez Trace Parkway for decades, from the days of legendary Congressmen Jamie Whitten of Mississippi and Tom Bevill of Alabama. He worked hard to secure federal funding to complete and beautify the Parkway. Everyone associated with the Parkway knows that Tom is a great organizer, motivator, and promoter of the Trace. Just stop and eat a ham biscuit at the famous Loveless Café at the head of the Trace and you'll hear Tom's name mentioned frequently and with deep respect. Without Tom's efforts, the Natchez Trace Parkway would not be the link between the past and future of our region that it is today. Everyone in the Southeast United States is indebted to Tom for his vision. He helped save the Trace before it was too late.

His tireless work on the Natchez Trace Parkway is just one of his important contributions. Tom is a true servant of his community. Born to remarkable parents in Lewisburg, Tennessee, he served in WWII and came home to graduate from the University of Tennessee, manage the local co-op and open a small business. He was so popular he was elected Mayor of Lewisburg. Later moving to Nashville, he helped many Middle Tennessee businesses expand, thanks to his keen credit decisions while heading up industrial development projects for Third National Bank. Those years were the golden age of Third National under the leadership of the legendary Sam Fleming, but it was men like Tom Green that brought the loans to the bank. Money is a commodity; customer relationships are more precious than gold.

Tom went on to help all Nashvillians when he spent more than a decade as the associate general manager of the Nashville Electric Service, the local electric utility. Just one of the many people Tom helped was an African-American barber in a poor part of town. The barber would call Tom to tell him about an upstanding citizen who just couldn't pay their electric bill that month, but would pay when they found work. He asked Tom to keep their lights on and Tom did just that. As a former banker, Tom knew how to make character loans, whom to trust and whom not to. Despite being a monopoly, NES kept the goodwill of its hardworking customers and Tom made even more lifelong friends at a time when most white Nashvillians did not care much about goodwill in the black community. The barber is still in business in the same location and I have visited his barbershop with Tom. The barber's name is Vernon Winfrey, and he is the father of Oprah Winfrey. Tom bent over backwards to help him before he had any realistic hope of fame or fortune. That's the kind of guy Tom is.

Married for 53 years to Pat Green, the Greens are the parents of four outstanding grown men and grandparents of eleven children. Tom is an active member of the Nash-

ville Downtown Rotary Club and Christ the King Catholic Church and finds time to volunteer at the Nashville's "Room in the Inn" program for the homeless and at St. Thomas Hospital. Pat is a renowned local teacher who is directly descended from Abraham Lincoln's first-grade school teacher. Needless to say, the Green family is well educated.

Tom's generous spirit and joyful approach to life immediately come to mind when anyone thinks of him. No matter how busy his day may be, Tom always has a smile, an encouraging word and a couple of minutes just to talk . . . sometimes more than a couple of minutes. He'll pick up the conversation just where you left it . . . the day before, a week or a month ago. He always knows the news and has lots of tips about everyone's background, interconnections, and exactly how to approach everyone. His mind is better than a computer database. There's never been anyone like him.

Of course, I am the lucky one. Tom Green has been a key part of my office staff for the past several years. No one could ask for a more positive, uplifting presence in the office, or a better person to represent you out in the community. Not only does he know everyone, he also has great ideas. For example, last year Tom Green persuaded Vernon Winfrey to make available Oprah Winfrey Scholarships to Nashville Tech Community College. Now all future generations will benefit from an old interracial friendship, formed on the basis of taking a business risk to keep the lights on for decent, hardworking people who were temporarily down on their luck.

I am truly fortunate and want to take this moment to thank Tom for bringing his integrity, his energy and his ever-present sense of humor to my Congressional team. He can outwork a dozen people half his age. I want to take this moment to publicly offer my thanks, and the thanks of everyone in the 5th Congressional District of Tennessee, for Tom Green's extraordinary service to our community, our state and our country.

#### SUPPORTING REACH OUT AND READ PROGRAM

### HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 18, 2005*

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of the Reach Out and Read program. The Reach Out and Read Program is a program that promotes early literacy by making reading a standard part of pediatric primary care by encouraging doctors and nurses to advise parents about the importance of reading to children. Reach Out and Read programs are located in over 2,000 hospitals and health centers around the country. Annually, more than two million children participate in Reach Out and Read. My district is proud to have 14 Reach Out and Read programs that provide over 15,000 books to nearly 11,000 West Virginia children annually. I have participated three times in Reach Out and Read Programs in Kanawha and Roane Counties in my district.

By building on the unique relationship between parents and medical providers, Reach Out and Read helps families and communities

encourage early literacy skills so children enter school prepared for success in reading.

President Bush included Reach Out and Read in his fiscal year 2006 budget request, continuing a multi-year effort to support this vital reading program. Reach Out and Read has a strong track record of raising non-federal dollars and is capable of more than double the impact of its 2006 appropriation. In January Reach Out and Read undertook a major 2-year initiative to increase the number of children reached by 50 percent through mid-2007. This bold step will greatly increase the number of West Virginia children who grow up in a household where early reading is encouraged.

Reach Out and Read assists families and communities in encouraging early literacy skills so children enter school prepared for success in reading. The continued support of this program is critical to the success of the Reach Out and Read program.

#### TRIBUTE TO CHUCK AND SHELBY OBERSHAW

### HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 18, 2005*

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to two outstanding leaders in my community who are to receive the Golden Baton Award from the San Bernardino Symphony Guild in recognition of their proactive role in fostering the culture of music in the Inland Empire. Today, I join family and friends in honoring Chuck and Shelby Obershaw for their remarkable achievements and express enormous pride in this recognition that has been afforded to them.

Chuck Obershaw was raised in the Inland Empire where he devoted himself to his family, friends and community. He selflessly served as a para-glider trooper in the 187th regiment of the 11th Airborne Division before returning to San Bernardino in the 1940s.

Chuck's accomplishments are as remarkable as they are diverse. He has served as President of the San Bernardino Area Chamber of Commerce, the San Bernardino Motor Car Dealers, the Air Force Association, and the Norton Air Force Base Chapter. In these capacities, he has been an integral contributor to the management and administration of community affairs and worked tirelessly for a better way of life for all of San Bernardino's residents.

Shelby Obershaw also proved the importance of serving your community. After moving to San Bernardino in 1959, she dedicated all her energy to shaping the minds of the future leaders of tomorrow as a dedicated teacher in various area high schools.

Her list of accolades is no less illustrious. They include election to the San Bernardino City Unified School District Board of Education, serving as President for 2 years, Director of the San Bernardino Chamber of Commerce, and member of the San Bernardino Chapter of the National Assistance League. She has also received the California PTA Honorary Service Award and the Citizen Achievement Award from the League of Women Voters.