

Dixy Lee Ray's odd reign ends

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Gov. Dixy Lee Ray likes to ride almost anything.

A blimp, hydrofoil, logging truck, steam locomotive, farm tractor, supertanker, airplane, garbage truck and sports car — she sat at the controls of all of them when she was not behind her desk in the governor's office.

Only one ride caught her by surprise. It was a twisting, turning rollercoaster trip through Washington state politics. She was thrilled on the way up but the downhill slide came quickly and was steeper than she expected.

She bought her ticket in 1976 when she decided she was a Democrat. Before that, as a University of Washington professor, director of the Pacific Science Center, and Atomic Energy Commission chairman during the Nixon administration, she was rigidly independent.

Her victory in the Democratic primary four years ago caught political observers off guard. She was riding a post-Watergate tide for non-politicians.

Her campaign themes were reduced government spending, less regulation and greater administrative efficiency. People liked her fresh, homespun approach. Her stocky figure, adorned in an open-collared shirt, blazer and skirt over knee socks and canvas shoes signalled something different.

She became the Washington governor by more than 133,000 votes in her first try for public office.

Visitors to her office looked askance when a painting of her two pet dogs appeared on the reception room wall in the space traditionally reserved for the governor's portrait.

Many of her new directors were recruited from the ranks of her early campaign supporters with little regard for ability. She was forced to replace two in her first year. Several others quit or were fired later.

Her rapport with the Legislature was strained from the beginning. She vetoed a bill to ban supertankers on Puget Sound, angering many fellow Democrats.

Her relations with the press turned icy when she abruptly cancelled news conferences at the Capitol. She complained the press corps was persecuting her. She disliked sparring over her inconsistencies.

A passionate supporter of nuclear energy, she lectured anyone who would listen. Because she thought President Carter was not pushing nuclear power hard enough, she told reporters he had wax in his ears and was frightened in his mother's womb.

She belittled all critics, particularly environmentalists. Ralph Nader, a favorite target, was described as "a totally ignorant man (with) no credentials and no expertise in anything."

In her second year, problems with appointees continued. Her choice for adjutant general of the Washington National Guard came under fire when it turned out he was receiving a police disability pension. She charged the press with "character assassination." She eventually backed off, but not before some ranking officers who belittled her choice were fired or demoted.

More surprising was her budget request for the following two years, a 36-percent increase. Conservatives swallowed hard. Relying on a healthy economy, she sweetened the medicine with some modest tax reductions and cuts in a state-supported welfare program for temporary assistance. Most recipients were able-bodied anyway, she insisted.

Often she vetoed bills without telling key legislators in advance. Once a group of voters came to watch her sign a bill for buying a park. Chins dropped when she vetoed the measure as the sponsor watched helplessly.

As the primary election approached, she dismissed her Democratic challenger, State Sen. Jim McDermott, as a free-spending liberal tied to teacher unions which she openly detested on grounds the teachers were more interested in paychecks than students.

McDermott, joined by three Republicans vying for their party's nomination, made her behavior in office the primary issue. A sagging economy forced reductions in her budget as her opponents predicted.

Her personnel turnovers, feuds with legislators, hostility toward the news media, and abusive attacks on almost anyone who didn't share her beliefs were too much for voters to bear.

When the results were in, McDermott swamped her by more than 87,000 votes. It was the first time in 72 years a first-term incumbent governor failed in the primary. Her ride on the state's political rollercoaster was over.

Researcher reports homing instinct

WASHINGTON — A British researcher says human beings may have senses similar to those that allow birds, fish and other migratory animals to find their way home over long distances.

R. Robin Baker, a zoologist at Manchester University, said in a report in the last Friday issue of Science magazine that his experiments also suggest that, as with some other animals, magnetism may have something to do with the ability of people to sense direction.

Baker, using blindfolded college students, bused them along twisting routes up to 30 miles from the university. Then he asked each volunteer, still blindfolded, to guess the direction back to the starting point.

The results: Some volunteers were right. Most pointed within 45 degrees of the correct direction, and only a few were completely disoriented.

Although none of the correct guessers said they remembered the route to the release point, some did say they were able to orient themselves by feeling the sun on their faces.

Baker said most of the correct guessers were surprised they were right. And there were as many correct guesses on cloudy days as on sunny days.

He then ran a second group of experiments in which some of the volunteers had bar magnets attached to their blindfolds. The others were given identically sized pieces of brass, but all thought they had magnets.

The volunteers with the magnets did significantly poorer than those without. Graphs show relatively equal numbers of them pointing literally in all directions. But the students without magnets were as accurate as those in the previous experiments.

Baker said the results seem to show the ability to find directions apparently involves sensing the surrounding magnetic field, because the ability is impaired by wearing a magnet.

But he said the results are inconclusive because the magnets were not of uniform strength and, although they were originally aligned so their north poles pointed in the same direction, many of them slipped in the elastic blindfolds during the drive.

Other research has indicated that some animals have the ability to use the Earth's magnetic field for navigation.

No one has ever tested humans before.

Staubach's remark angers Democrats

DALLAS — Former Dallas Cowboys quarterback-turned-sports commentator Roger Staubach told his TV audience about a recent conversation he'd had with his daughter, Amy, 4, indicating she, too, knows about the bomb.

Sportscaster Frank Gleiber had encouraged Staubach, a staunch supporter of Ronald Reagan, to discuss how best to stop the St. Louis Cardinals' offense.

"In fact, I talked to my daughter Amy this morning about it and she said the No. 1 problem was the bomb," Staubach replied.

The remark repeated nearly word for word a comment Carter made during the presidential debate last week regarding his daughter's fears about nuclear proliferation.

Staubach explained his daughter Amy was referring to a different kind of bomb — the long touchdown pass — that Cardinal wide receiver Mel Gray is proficient at catching.

But the remark riled Carter supporters and CBS sports officials called the press booth to tell Staubach to lay off the politics.

"Johnny Carson has done it (made fun of the Carter debate remark) every night on NBC. Why don't they call him? I'd say Amy Staubach, at age 4, knows as much about football as Amy Carter knows about nuclear proliferation."

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TECHNICAL DATA
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LOAD: 8 Ohms
IM Distortion @ Rated Power: 0.07%
Total Harmonic Distortion @ 2 Watts: 0.05%
IM Distortion @ 2 Watts (SMPTE 4-1): 0.05%

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TECHNICAL DATA
*CONTINUOUS POWER: 45 Watts/Channel
BANDWIDTH: 20 Hz-20 kHz
TOTAL HARMONIC DISTORTION: 0.05%
LOAD: 8 Ohms
IM Distortion @ Rated Power: 0.03%
Total Harmonic Distortion @ 2 Watts: 0.05%
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