



LEGISLATOR

Kate Brophy

*Representing Arizona's
which encompasses*

By Tim Linden

(Both questions and the answers have been condensed and paraphrased.)

WHERE DID YOU GROW UP AND WHAT KIND OF CHILDHOOD DID YOU HAVE?

I was born in Arizona and grew up in Bisbee. My dad was a rancher though we lived in town as my mother's preference was for us (Kate and her sister) to be town girls. But I spent a lot of time on our ranch and more days than I care to count in feed years in the searing heat. My father eventually sold the ranch and got into real estate development. We moved to Tucson when I was in 4th grade and that is where I lived until I moved to Phoenix 26 years ago with my husband.

TAKE US THROUGH YOUR COLLEGE YEARS AND YOUR EARLY WORK EXPERIENCE?

I went to the University of Arizona (in Tucson) and studied both history and Spanish. I did think that I might be a teacher but very early on – in fact at the end of my freshman year – I began working about 30 hours a week in a local bank. I was their Girl Friday and I did just about everything – I was a teller and a vault teller. I did accounting work and I was involved in the commercial loan department. We were a full service bank.

Somewhere along the line, while I was in college, I decided I would go into the banking world as a career. I went into a bank management training program. At the time you could either pick branch management training or go into the commercial businesses lending department. I chose that route which was somewhat uncommon for women. Over the next 13 years I

worked for three different banks and worked my way up into senior management positions.

YOUR HUSBAND OF 26 YEARS, BOB MCGEE, IS ALSO A BANKER. DID YOU MEET HIM IN THE BANKING WORLD?

I did meet him in banking. He had received a promotion and was transferred to Phoenix and I got a promotion to handle the loan portfolio that he had and that's how I got to know him. I had a rule that I did not date within my profession and so after I met Bob I did try to set him up with a number of my friends because I thought he was quite a catch. But he did ask me on a date and I decided to go. We had to inform our supervisors that

we had a conflict of interest and we did have to have a change in our work assignments. Within three months, we were engaged and three months later we were married.



AFTER MOVING TO PHOENIX AND BEGINNING TO RAISE YOUR FAMILY, YOU DID QUIT THE BANKING WORLD. HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN POLITICS?

I decided to be a stay at home mom and raise our three

FOR PROFILE

McGee

District 11 in the House, Central Phoenix

sons. But over the years I got involved in various activities including doing accounting for several churches and for some small businesses. And then I got involved in my son's school district, which is the Washington School District, the largest in the state. There came a time when the school district was having lots of problems and they were hiring and firing a lot of superintendents. There was a group of us that got very involved politically and were able to get two new board members elected. Soon thereafter, one of the other board members resigned and I applied to be appointed to the vacant seat. I did get picked and then I was elected and re-elected to the position. I served for about eight years retiring in late 2007.

WHEN AND HOW DID YOU DECIDE TO RUN FOR THE ARIZONA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES?

I took a little break in late 2007 after retiring from the Board of Education. I had one son in college and I was working on getting the next two into college, which is quite a job. Arizona State Senator Steve Pierce lined me up to go to

the Farm Bureau campaign school, which gave me a good idea of what to expect and what it takes to run and win an election. And then it just happened that in the next election cycle there were two empty seats in District 11. That was most unusual but I took the opportunity to run for office and I won.

DID YOU COME TO THE LEGISLATURE WITH AN AGENDA IN HAND?

I did have a five point plan, which were the five areas that affected my constituents the most. That included balancing the budget, creating jobs, relieving some of the regulatory and tax burdens facing business, dealing with illegal immigration and all the issues around it and getting involved in educational issues. There are eight school districts that have at least part of their district within my legislative district.

HOW HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE BEEN IN THE LEGISLATURE AND HAVE YOU ACCOMPLISHED YOUR GOALS?

I would say that we have done pretty well but there is so much more to be done. I have done a lot of work behind the scenes

in committees dealing with the unintended consequences of some of the bills that have been passed, and trying to derail bills that are just not good public policy. I can tell you that 1335 bills were introduced in the last legislative session. There are not 1335 good ideas in a lifetime let alone in one legislative session.

I would say the biggest shock to me has been the micro-management that is carried out by our state Legislature, which does have a Super Majority for the Republicans. I do not understand how they can be so against overregulation at the federal level and do the same thing, and worse, at the state level. There is much well-meaning legislation but the unintended consequences can be very severe. For example there was a bill that was vetoed by the governor that would have required Tucson and Phoenix to put every contract out to bid. It was long and complicated but one of the unintended consequences is that it would have called into question the tax benefits of bonds.

These are the kinds of things that I am concentrating on. It seems basic but we have to understand what a bill does and what its impact will be before it is enacted.

You have to look at these bills before we pass them and see how they are going to play out at ground level.

WITH 1335 BILLS TO EXAMINE DURING A SESSION, THAT APPEARS TO BE AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK?

It is. There is a group of us that takes bills in our expertise, and examines them and reports to the others. In fact, I have to applaud the agricultural industry for how it approaches the legislature. The agricultural lobby is very good at looking at a problem and doing an excellent job of explaining why it needs the change and what it will do. I have a tremendous respect for the farmers and those in agribusiness in our state. In fact, I am an honorary member of the Rural Caucus.

AS A NEWCOMER TO THE POLITICAL ARENA, HAVE YOU BEEN FRUSTRATED BY HOW IT WORKS?

I have seen that with the election cycle every two years and term limits things have changed. You have to guard against running to get re-elected right after you get into office. The leadership of the Legislature used to reach those positions because of their longevity in office and

their ability to work with other legislators. That is no longer the case. Also the leadership used to have more control over the membership and protocols were followed. I am very much a protocols person and protocols don't seem to be followed. We have lost some historical perspective. It seems like some legislators just want to pass bills for the sake of passing them. It is important that we look at the bills on the books and the stories behind them. Every bill has a story.

YOU MENTIONED IMMIGRATION REFORM, WHICH IS NOT AN EASY ISSUE. WHAT IS YOUR TAKE ON THAT SUBJECT?

It is a very important issue but there are a number of separate matters that get classified under the immigration reform banner. In the first place we have to secure our borders and they have to be safe for border traffic and border commerce. The violence in Mexico has leaked across our borders. I recently heard what former Arizona Governor and current Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano said about our borders being safe and I think we must live in a parallel universe. Our borders are so unsafe and she is saying

they have never been safer. There is a cognitive dissonance that is unexplainable.

HAVE YOU PICKED A CANDIDATE TO SUPPORT IN THE NEXT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION?

No I am still shopping. Right now I am in the anything but Obama camp. I hate to say it but he has not done a credible job.

WHAT IS IN YOUR POLITICAL FUTURE?

We are going through redistricting right now so I am not certain which district I'll be running in, but I have filed my re-election papers. If the people elect me I will continue to serve.

OUR MEMBERS PRODUCE THE FINEST FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN THE WORLD, DO YOU CONSUME OUR PRODUCTS?

Very much so. When my three sons are home our grocery bill goes much higher and it is filled with fresh foods including fruits and vegetables, meats and fish. I am a very big believer of eating fresh foods that are grown and produced locally. ☺



Rep. McGee at the Paradise Republican Women's Club