Contents

List of Tables and Figures vii

Foreword by US Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky ix

Preface xi

1. The Beginning 1
2. Choosing Sides 6
3. Organizing a Campaign 20
4. Raising Money 49
5. Sending Your Message 70
6. Winning the Traditional Media War 105
7. Getting the Word Out in the Digital Age 136
8. Canvassing the Voters and Election Day 155
9. The Campaign to Elect Will Guzzardi 178
10. Challenges to Democracy 193

Notes 205

Selected Bibliography 225

Index 233
Tables and Figures

Tables

4.1. Typical Campaign Budget: Campaign to Elect Will Guzzardi, 2014 50
4.2. Budget after Major Endorsements Brought Large Campaign Contributions 51
9.1. Illinois General Election Results, State Representative, 39th District, 2008 and 2010 179
9.2. Illinois Democratic Primary Results, State Representative, 39th District, 2012 181
9.3. Illinois Democratic Primary Results, State Representative, 39th District, 2014 190

Figures

3.1. Campaign Organizational Chart 24
3.2. What Every Great Coffee Chair Has to Know 32
3.3. Campaign Pitch by Donald Page Moore 35
4.1. Cabaret and Dinner Invitation 63
5.1. Campaign Telephone Script 78
5.2. Letter to Recruit Campaign Support 80
5.3. Thirteen Steps in a Participatory Campaign 86
5.4. Campaign Reporting Procedures 94
6.1. Simpson Campaign Button 119
6.2. Will Guzzardi Campaign Flier 120–121
6.3. Step-by-Step Guide to Holding Successful News Conferences 126
6.4. Script for Alderman Election Radio Ad 131
6.5. Paul Wellstone for U.S. Senate Commercial 132
7.1. Mandy Wright for Wisconsin’s 85th Assembly Campaign Website 145
7.2. Local Politics: How to Start a Successful Political Blog 146
7.3. Campaign Precinct Walk List 150
8.1. Canvass Instructions from IVI-IPO 156
8.2. Canvass Report Form from IVI-IPO 160
8.3. Opening the Polls Instruction Sheet from IVI-IPO 168
8.4. Closing the Polls Instruction Sheet from IVI-IPO 176
9.1. Sample Campaign Thank-You Postcard 184
9.2. Guzzardi Dialogue on Reddit 186
9.3. Guzzardi Endorsements 187
9.4. Voter-Signed Postcard Pledging to Vote 189
Imagine for a moment if every person who is eligible to vote actually did. If that happened, the policies that govern our country would be quite different. Politicians and policy makers would have to be far more responsive to the wishes of ordinary American voters, including all those families that struggle to make ends meet, afford college tuition, or retire comfortably.

It is obvious that there are far more everyday people than corporate CEOs, Wall Street moguls, and multimillionaires and billionaires. The superwealthy have done quite well under current laws and regulations they helped write.

I have run for office fourteen times and won thirteen elections. I tell aspiring candidates that in many ways my first losing race for Cook County commissioner in 1986 was the most important because I learned so much about how to do it better. I regrouped, ran, and won for Illinois state representative in 1990, where I served until running for Congress in 1998. After nine elections, I am still privileged to be there.

Before being elected, I was a community organizer and consumer advocate. Since that time, I have always believed that people power CAN trump big money, but only if you act on the lessons you will learn in Winning Elections in the 21st Century. I was a national cochair of the presidential campaign of my friend Barack Obama when few thought he could ever be elected, but “Yes we can!”

You will find that there is no magic bullet to conducting successful election campaigns. The good news is that it is a learned craft, and you can learn it.

This book will teach you how to take full advantage of all the new technologies, including use of social media, small-donor online fund-raising, targeting outreach to voters, vote analytics, and how technology can improve direct voter contact both door to door and on the phone.

Although we must take full advantage of all the new technologies, remember that personal contact is still the greatest predictor of whether a potential voter goes to the polls, mails her ballot, or votes online. According to academic studies, there is nothing more effective. It is the face at the door, the neighbor
on the phone, the candidate personally asking for the vote—person-to-person contact is ultimately the best.

You can learn how to win elections here. Coauthor Dick Simpson, a friend and colleague for many years, writes from real-life experience. Dick Simpson was a nonmachine Chicago alderman in the days when the Daley machine ruled. A winner in a city that invented the term “politics is not beanbag,” he knows what he is writing about. Earlier versions of the book became the standard handbook for participatory campaigns such as mine around the country. This new book, coauthored by another political scientist and former officeholder, Betty O’Shaughnessy, provides the definitive guide for citizens in our battle for a better future.

Winning Elections in the 21st Century is the book I recommend for candidates, campaign staff, volunteers, and citizens. There are few experiences more exciting or challenging or important than working in a competitive election for a candidate you believe in—and maybe that candidate is, or someday will be, you!

—US Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky
Campaigns today have new technology available, but the most successful ones merge that technology with proven techniques from the past. In the same way, this book rests upon the foundation of our earlier work. Author Dick Simpson, after winning his election as a Chicago alderman, published the first *Winning Elections* book in 1972. It has been in print continuously since then. Author Betty O’Shaughnessy was elected as a township trustee and has written on elections in books such as *The Keys to City Hall*.

Yet, the last edition of *Winning Elections* was published in 1996. The vast changes in electioneering since required an entirely new book. Too much has changed.

We have tested the new chapters and materials on our students at the University of Illinois–Chicago and Loyola Academy, where we teach. Their comments and questions have helped us hone the examples and explanations we provide here.

Techniques such as voter analytics, social media, and effective use of the Internet developed by presidential campaigns are now available to candidates in state and local elections. In *Winning Elections in the 21st Century* we describe campaign methods as old as Cicero’s Roman campaigns two millennia ago and Abraham Lincoln’s campaigns before the US Civil War. However, these techniques are merged with the latest whiz-bang technologies now available.

In our book we also seek to help candidates, students, and citizens consider the opportunities and challenges these campaign tools provide. To harness them properly, new laws are needed but also a greater awareness of their potential to either promote or undermine democracy.

We write primarily about participatory campaigns, in which the maximum number of citizens participates, as opposed to campaigns funded by a few wealthy individuals and interest groups with the money and expertise to buy elections. We explain how people power can prevail with the right candidates, issues, and support.

In short, we hope to inspire and empower readers to dive into the fun and
excitement of electoral politics. For those already engaged, we show you how to win elections.

In creating this book, we are indebted to many people. We were taught the craft of running and winning elections by folks such as John Kearney, Sherwin Swartz, and Milton Rakove. We worked with leaders such as Robert Houston, Don Rose, Tom Gradel, and too many others to mention.

Chapter 9 was originally drafted as a student paper by Elise Doody-Jones and fact-checked by campaign manager Erica Sagrans and candidate Will Guzzardi.

The staff members at the University Press of Kansas have made the book infinitely better. We are especially indebted to Fred Woodward, who masterfully guided it from acquisition to publication; to Larisa Martin, the production editor; to our copy editor, Melanie Stafford; and to all the others who brought this book to you.

Winning Elections in the 21st Century is about participatory politics, in which citizens find candidates they want to elect to office and then, with or without party support, put together a voluntary campaign that wins. It is written to help citizens win campaigns over party machines, big money, or high-tech manipulation of voters. It is meant to provide you the tools of democracy, but you have to decide to use them.
Winning Elections in the 21st Century
Chapter One

The Beginning

A campaign is composed of individuals and their decisions. There is the choice by a candidate to run, choices by leaders and participants to work, and the strategic decision by the candidate and campaign leaders to take public stands on some issues and ignore others. There is as well the selection of a campaign theme and basic principles and the decision by each voter whether to vote for a candidate. Each choice has consequences both for the person making the decision and for the outcome of the election. A campaign is finally won or lost by specific decisions made by individuals.

This book inevitably focuses upon mechanical and generalized aspects of running a winning campaign. Whether a campaign is a local race for city council or school board or a national campaign for member of Congress or president, it is composed of individuals and their choices. This chapter focuses upon these personal decisions, which breathe life into an otherwise mechanical process, making each campaign unique.

Everyone in the campaign makes a decision to devote time, talent, and money. For the candidate and key campaign leaders, this decision is of a different magnitude than that required of volunteers, workers, and contributors. Not only do the candidate and key leaders risk more of their time and fortune but also they risk more of themselves. Ordinary citizens provide the support necessary for victory, but the candidate and campaign leaders must launch the campaign.

Democracy is not possible unless some citizens willingly decide to become candidates for public office, campaign staff members, and volunteers. Committed individuals must decide to become involved in politics from candidate to volunteer if democracy is to flourish.

Deciding to run for public office is an especially important choice. A candidate risks her name, must pay debts incurred in the campaign, and may be
ridiculed by the opposition. Most of all, a candidate must ask people to elect her to office. She may find it distressing to stand in front of stores shaking hands or to go to friends and associates asking for money. Yet candidates are their own best fund-raisers and workers. A candidate simply must learn to ask people to support her if she is to run a good campaign.

No candidate is really drafted. Some friends or citizen groups may ask if she is interested in running, but, at some point, she must decide to run and begin to seek the help and support necessary to win. If she decides to run, the campaign is launched. If she refuses or hesitates, the campaign is lost, and someone else steps forward. The decision of one person—the candidate—to risk all on the bid for public office is the most important decision of the campaign and one that only the candidate can make.

There are many concrete reasons for a candidate not to run—it will mean time lost from her family, take her away from the profession she has spent years building, and cost a lot of money. The positive reasons to run seem terribly abstract—her election will give the community a strong representative and spokesperson, she can make government more efficient, and she can pass legislation to improve her community. In addition, she can bring integrity, leadership, dedication, and experience to public office.

Personal ambition and ego also enter into the decision. A candidate may run in order to serve as a spokesperson, to get into the limelight, to get paid a better salary, or to prove to herself that other people really love her. These motives may seem shallow or selfish. However, some combination of public and private reasons that differs for each candidate must overcome all the practical reasons not to run. After the decision to go ahead is made, the other decisions about how to mount the most effective campaign are simpler.

Timing is also key. There is an old saying: “In politics, timing is everything.” You can be involved in politics, learn the craft, and make a positive impact, but like a sailor in a small boat, when the winds of change are at your back you will move forward more easily. When there are no winds, you will be dead in the water.

Thus the decision to run for an office is not an abstract one. It is not a question of “Should I ever run for office?” Rather, it is “Should I run for this particular office in this election under these particular, unique circumstances?”

It is easier to win an open seat than to run against a popular incumbent. It is best to run for office when conditions are favorable. Yet, to make an impact you sometimes have to run for office or support a candidate when it is not clear that she will win. In the end, the decisions of the candidate to run and of staff and volunteers to support her are critical.
Decisions by Others

Key campaign personnel also face difficult decisions. To become staff members, people might have to take leaves of absence or interrupt their careers to work on the campaign full time. Like the candidate, staff must expect endless hours of work and separation from their families. They struggle with the questions of whether they can do the job and whether they are willing to make the necessary sacrifices. It is one thing to support a candidate, to give a few hours or to donate a few dollars to the campaign, but serving as a campaign leader requires dedication, and usually, personal commitment to the candidate.

The sacrifice required of others is in many ways the greatest burden a candidate undertakes. A campaign will disrupt many people’s lives and require their contributions of time and money. This places on a candidate the responsibility of conducting the campaign in a fashion that will make it worth these sacrifices—and of continuing the campaign even though a candidate might sometimes wish to back out. All those who take a leadership position in a campaign undertake an action with great consequences both for themselves and for their community.

After the decisions to run and to support a candidate are made, campaign leaders must still decide upon a general theme and take positive actions that will symbolize to the press and to the community what the campaign is all about.

In Dick Simpson’s first campaign for Chicago alderman, he proposed a citizen ordinance to the city council to limit the power of the mayor in school board appointments. This made it clear that if elected, he would not be a “rubber stamp” alderman for Mayor Richard J. Daley. Such actions on the part of a candidate create the enthusiasm and support necessary to win. Thus, a candidate and staff must find creative ways of dramatizing the campaign. Unless they do, even personal appearances by the candidate, paid political ads, creative use of social media, and precinct work are likely to be insufficient.

Existential choices, controversial issues, bold action—these are some of the human stuff of campaigns. The campaign structure and hard work in the precincts provide a base, but good campaigns embody issues and actions that cannot be completely planned in advance. They require the same personal courage and careful decision making as the original choices to stand for election and to staff the campaign.
Case Studies

Winning Elections in the 21st Century draws from campaigns around the country. Our own campaigns enable us to give you the feel of campaigns from the inside, so we use frequent examples from campaigns in which we have been directly involved. In addition, we use examples from other states and other campaigns to illustrate diverse campaign choices and methods.

We make two basic assumptions in Winning Elections in the 21st Century: (1) This book describes participatory politics, which means there are a large number of volunteers involved in a campaign; and (2) the candidate is well qualified for the position and has a genuine platform on which to run. Otherwise, without massive resources or unusual circumstances, most candidates will not be able to win.

Of course, no book can substitute for experience. On our website, http://pols.uic.edu/political-science/chicago-politics/how-to-win-elections, we provide a variety of Internet resources in which experts discuss the various aspects of local campaigns from precinct work to fund-raising.

We recommend that after you read this book you work on a campaign—preferably a winning campaign. When you reread the book afterward, you will understand many elements that eluded you the first time through.

The Next Step

Many of you have positive goals, such as an end to poverty and racism in the United States. To realize such aspirations requires reforms to the political system. To do that we must elect leaders who support these goals and develop a constituency to support these leaders.

Instituting new values, electing new leaders, evolving new procedures of greater participation, and developing a constituency of conscience can certainly be pursued at the national level. The ultimate success of such strategies, however, depends upon the creation of an informed constituency and capable leaders in local communities. That is why Winning Elections in the 21st Century focuses primarily on local elections.

We seek to provide an introduction to innovative campaigning both for students of politics and political practitioners. During the past several decades there has been a tendency to divorce political science from real politics. Our book brings them together.

We make recommendations as to how to win elections, how to achieve your goals, and how to alter our political system. Winning Elections in the 21st Cen-
tory is an introduction to the study of electoral politics in the United States as it is actually practiced and as it can be improved.

Our book sets out the requirements for winning campaigns against strong opposition. Its message is simple: you can fight city hall and win.