

Deborah Grey – *Power Parliament and Preston Manning: My Life as a Reformer*

11th Annual Mel Smith Lecture

Thursday, February 5, 2009

Thank you very much. It's great to be here. Seems at my age, it's just good to be anywhere (audience laughs). Some of you are a whole lot younger than I. I went to Trinity Western back in the dark ages, long before it was degree granting, and some of your parents were kids back then as well. It's delightful to be back.

I noticed that the first ten Mel Smith lecturers were men. I read their lectures online this past week while I was doing my homework and getting things ready. So, we might as well start the next decade off with a woman, why not?

In Ottawa, I operated in a sea of men. It was a man's job, the old boy's club there, and to illustrate that, I'll tell you this story. It took place in an airplane, on the tarmac in Ottawa. We were waiting to come west, sitting on the tarmac, seemingly forever. I was sitting in my seat, behaving, which was nice, and the fellow sitting beside me looked at me and said "Hello, do you work in Ottawa?"

I said, "Yes, I do; I work there part-time. I live in Northern Alberta, but I work in Ottawa."

"Oh," he said, "What do you do?"

"I'm a Member of Parliament," I said. It went in, and it went round and round. But there was really no place to for him to categorize what I had said.

He was rather embarrassed and asked, "Did you say you work for a Member of Parliament?"

I said, "No, sir, I am a Member of Parliament." And it went in, and it went round and round again for far too long.

Then he kind of got it and said "Oh, excuse me, I'm so sorry. I heard the words 'Member of Parliament' and I could quite clearly see that you're a woman. I just assumed you were a secretary."

So I let him stew on that for a very long time, and I smiled my best smile and after what seemed like an eternity, I'm sure to him.

Finally, I turned to him and said, "That's okay, Sir. I understand that stereotyping happens; that's the way it is. But I do have a secretary. And *his* name is Robert."

It seems we've come a long way. I suspect we have a long way to go.

I'm often asked why I left Ottawa so soon. "Deb, why did you go? We miss you; you should still be here on Parliament Hill." I did 15 and a half years; that's more than most people do for

murder in this country (audience laughs).

It's not easy being a politician. Like the little girl who asked, "Daddy, Daddy, do all nursery rhymes begin with, 'Once upon a time?'" He said, "Oh, no, Sweetheart. Most of them begin with, 'If elected, I promise to...'" (Audience laughs).

Someone asked the question, "If we all quit voting, will they all just go away?"

This is one of my favourites, and I have been subject to this many, many times. "What's the difference between a politician and a trampoline? You have to take your shoes off to jump on a trampoline." (audience laughs). I have been subjected to that in Home Depot, at motorcycle rallies, in churches, you name it. Unfortunately, it just seems fair game to beat up the politician. However, I've always been able to hold my own, and still do, even though I've been out of office for 5 years.

Ronald Reagan said, "Politics is not a bad profession. If you succeed there are many rewards. If you disgrace yourself, you can always write a book." And I have copies of mine for sale just out the doorway there (audience laughs).

Don't we really all just have one desire though? And it is this: "Lord, make me the kind of person my dog thinks I am." Wouldn't that be wonderful if we could all be like that? It's too bad that so many denigrate the role of Member of the Legislative Assembly, or Member of Parliament.

I served in the federal arena, and to me, it's sad that it seems fair game to go after [politicians]. When I have people attacking me, I say, "You know, there is absolutely nothing stopping you from going and doing it, and being better at it than I was." That usually shuts them down fairly quickly.

I've been asked to talk about Power, Parliament and Preston Manning tonight. I know a little bit about all three of these topics, and I'm happy to give you my take on it, as a storyteller, not as an academic. I'm not a political scientist, I'm not a philosopher. I'm a practitioner. I come at it tonight with that view.

My goal is that you would be entertained, inspired, and challenged, to think something new and to try something new. Mel Smith would like that a lot, because he did that; he was a champion of so many new things and cutting edge ideas.

I want to hang my thoughts tonight on three posters that I've received over the years.

1. **"A ship in a harbour is safe, but that's not what ships are built for."**
2. **"I want to leave my paw prints in the sands of time."** (That wise philosopher was Garfield the cat.)
3. **"There are two things we can give our kids; one is roots, and the other is wings."**

Let's look at how my life and faith and politics have been shaped by these sayings, and yours can and will be, too.

1. "A ship in a harbour is safe, but that's not what ships are built for."

I am the fourth of five kids, fourth girl and we have a younger brother. My father was an alcoholic; back in the 60s you didn't see a whole lot of that. He left when I was young and my mother, Joyce, singlehandedly raised five kids by the scruff of the neck in the 1950s and 60s. She was, and is, an amazing woman.

My father is sober now and I'm just delighted to report that to people. He lives in the Northwest Territories and has spent a lot of years sober, helping to reclaim others with alcohol problems. We are delighted to have our father back. He just turned 84 and my mom turns 84 in July. They are both healthy, they are both well. We can hardly believe it—my dad more than any of us—that he is still in pretty good health, after the way that he just about pickled himself for many decades, and that is a testament to something.

My mom's long term goal, raising us, was to get from her little bed every morning to work and then back to that little bed at night. Those were the long term goals. You who are in university now have incredible plans, and I admire you for that. I still have plans for my life. My mom's only plan was to get out of bed and to make it to work and pay the mortgage and feed five kids. Totally amazing!

It would be easy to pity yourself, wouldn't it, if you were in her boots, if you were in mine. She wouldn't hear of it; she would have nothing to do with that. She got a job, she raised us. And she encouraged us all to do something, go somewhere, learn something, and help somebody that was worse off than we were. You can always find them, even though you think you are the very worst, you can always find somebody whom you can help.

I had a lot of pain, I missed my father dreadfully. We didn't know where he was, if he was alive. He surfaced many, many years later.

When I was 13, my cousin said, "Let's go to Camp Homewood. It's a little religious, but I think that we can manage it." Life is always full of horse-trading, is it not? If you go canoeing and waterskiing and swimming that was always a trade-off, to listen to chapel or fireside or whatever. When I think back on my days at Homewood, I loved it. I had never heard about Jesus Christ, never knew that he loved me. I knew about God, but I had never heard that he loved me, Deb Grey, mischievous, mouthy, just the way I was.

Bible camp is a very important place and important time for kids to learn about the love of

Christ. I turned over the management to Him on August 5th, 1966, the last day of camp. I thought I could escape, that I'd made it back to Vancouver. When my mother asked me at the ferry how I had done and how camp was, I said, "Well Mom, it was good, it was great, I had a wonderful time. They tried to convert me, but I got away." She said, "That's probably a good thing". She was not interested in matters of faith.

And yet, that night I knew that God had followed me, all the way from Camp Homewood to Kerrisdale. And I said, "Lord, I don't know who You are, I don't know what You are, but if what those people at camp say is true, I want You to take over the management of my life." And He did and He has, and He continues to.

That night I learned what real power is; it comes from Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." If you think about a tough thing that you're going through right now, because we all have them, whatever it is. Just know that. To be as sure as sure can be, that you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you—even write a paper about Deb Grey and the Mel Smith Lecture (audience laughs).

I wanted my faith to be practical no matter what I did with my life. I finished high school, went to Bible school at Burrard Inlet Bible Institute over in Port Moody. And then I went to university at Trinity Western—a moment's silence please (audience laughs)—and learned some amazing things here as well.

I spent a summer with Operation Mobilization and went to visit some kids that I knew up in Edmonton, so I transferred to the University of Alberta, got my first degree, a Bachelor of Arts in '77 and then my B.Ed. After Degree in 1979. Whoo, then I was ready. That was the ship that was safe in the harbour, but now I felt that I was sea-worthy and away I was going. I was ready to leave that harbour.

2. "I want to leave my paws prints in the sands of time."

We all want to do that, but what kind of paw prints are you leaving?

I taught school at Frog Lake Reserve. What an experience that was. North and east of Edmonton, up by the Saskatchewan border and I found some amazing things. Firstly, I was the minority there. I had never been that, and it was tremendous experience to learn what it was like to be in the minority.

And then I taught in Dewberry, Alberta, which was a farm town just south of there. In the school system, many of us teach, no matter what it is. You'll all teach in someday, but I'll tell you this: if you want to know how to teach, you'd better learn how to learn.

You've all had teachers that think they know everything, and even when they don't have a sweet clue what it is they are talking about they'll try and hoodwink you. They need to learn—we need to learn—how to learn before we teach.

The best example of that was when I started my career teaching grade four. I am a high school English teacher by trade, but Indian Affairs offered me a position at Frog Lake Reserve, to teach grade four.

Whoa, my! That was an experience, because many of the kids in the class did not know how to read yet, by grade four. And that put me in a bit of a pickle, because I didn't have a clue how to teach them to read—I was a high school teacher. But I remember thinking, "If I want to teach, somehow I need to connect with these kids."

So I asked, "What can you teach me, before I teach you?"

They said "Come with us, Grey Eyes (they called me Grey Eyes), come with us!" Away we went, down to the creek. I started there in late April and by the time I learned every kid's name it was early May and the crocuses were starting to come out and they said "Come with us down to the creek!"

And I said "What are we going to do?"

"We're going fishing!"

"Cool!" Except they didn't take any stuff with them. So I put a sign on our classroom door: Gone Fishing." Imagine, a brand new schoolteacher. I can't believe I was still hired. So away we go, down to the creek on the reserve.

The ice had just melted and that creek was freezing cold. We're all around the side of the creek and one little kid pulls up his pant legs and bends down into the creek. And you see a fish coming and whippee, there goes a fish and lands on the bank. Pretty cool. We didn't need worms, we didn't need a fishing pole, we didn't need hooks—we didn't need anything. That kid just hucked a fish out onto the land.

So I said, "That's good, that's really good." Another kid gets in and does it. And you know what's coming, don't you?

"Your turn, Grey Eyes."

"I'm not sure I can do that," I said.

"You told us you wanted to learn something," they said. "We're trying to teach you." What could I do?

Now this will be fun. So, I see it coming, and they said, "Okay, now!" *Whipp*- oh, totally

missed it. But they say to me, “Do it again.” Ready, here it comes, I see him, *whipp*, ohh but I felt he was slimly and cold, they said “Do it again!” so the third time, and I’m thinking I could be here all day and the superintendent’s probably coming! So this time around, the fish comes and *whippe*, it lands on the bank!

And you know what? I went crazy, and so did those kids. They all went nuts and said, “We knew you could do it!” I caught a fish with my bare hands, and guess what? They paid way more attention to their times tables and reading after that. Why? Because I wanted to teach, but I *learned how to learn*. I knew that I had left my paw prints on their hearts and they on mine, even yet. We leave those paw prints on people.

I taught there that spring, and the following year, and then spent a marvellous ten years teaching in Dewberry. After a decade there, I was restless. I knew I was ready to launch again from that harbour.

I heard about the Reform Party, that Preston Manning was the son of Ernest Manning, who had been the Alberta premier forever, and was well respected.

We were getting ready for the 1988 election and somebody said, “Deb, the Reform Party is the way to go.”

I didn’t know much about them, but I said, “Well tell me a little more,” so my friend Liz did, and I said, “That sounds really interesting. I’m going to get really politically involved, here we go now, really involved. I’m going to go to an all-candidate forum. And I’m going to listen to them all and see who makes the most sense and then vote for that person. Who’s running in this constituency?”

Liz said, “Nobody. We don’t have a candidate yet.”

Don Mazankowski had been the MP, but the new riding of Beaver River was carved off because of redistribution, so there was no MP.

I said, “I don’t know anything about it. I already take enough abuse—I’m a school teacher. And I have two months off in the summer with pay. I don’t think I need anymore put on me.”

But Liz said, “Deb, I dare you.”

Those were the words.

I talked to my family about it, my mother, sisters, aunts, uncles and friends. We bumped it all around, if I should run or not and my mom said, “Deb, what a great experience it would be. If you want to do this, I’m behind you 100 percent. The worst thing that could happen is you could lose.”

So I did, and I did. I ran in the 1988 election. There were no Reformers elected that time.

The fellow who beat me was John Dahmer of the Progressive Conservative Party. But he got very sick during the campaign and died five days after the election. It was stunning. His campaign team had no idea how sick he was. And it was just one of those quirks of fate, or God's hand and timing. Somebody said to me, "You know what Deb? Both of you got to realize your dream." And it was true. He won and then so did I. He never made it to Ottawa, and was never sworn in.

I had not met Preston Manning yet, during that whole campaign. I phoned him on the Saturday morning, after the Monday night election and I said, "Mr. Manning, my name is Deborah Grey."

"Oh, Deborah, you were our candidate out in Beaver River."

"Yes, I was, nice to speak with you," I said. "Mr. Dahmer has just died, we're into a by-election situation now. I want you to consider me your warm-up show. Over to you Mr. Manning." Which I thought was reasonable, I was back to teaching already, had taken six-weeks leave with no pay. So we set up a meeting a few days hence in downtown Smoky Lake.

What I heard at that meeting astounded me, and I realized that this man was no regular politician. He had travelled around the riding—at the end of November in northern Alberta—talking to people, gas station owners and oil well guys and farmers and you name it, all the kinds of people he could find, and asked, "What did you think about our candidate?"

And they said, well, Free Trade was the issue, so we wanted to put Brian Mulroney's conservatives in government, but we would be willing to give her a chance in the by-election.

So Preston came to that meeting and said, "I think it would be best for you to run in the by-election." I challenge you to find anyone else who would be so selfless to say, I think you should do it and not me.

There was a great scuffle amongst the Reform board because everyone thought as the leader of the party, he should go down there and get such a good name for the Reform Party. But he thought I should run and establish the beachhead in Ottawa, so he could traverse the country and still promote Reform.

The rest is history. I went into the by-election and I have very fond memories of being in Lac La Biche, northern Alberta, 40 degrees below zero, and all we could do was just run off little pamphlets. We hardly had any money and there was Preston, sitting on the seat in his van, folding up these little brochures saying, "Here's 25 more Deborah, Go hand them out." He cheered me on at all the all-candidate forums. As you can guess, I had great fun at those. He always respected me: my ideas, my communication skills and the fun stuff that I am addicted to.

We flew down to Calgary to the Bank of Canada branch there and presented a letter to John Crow, who was the governor of the Bank of Canada, with suggestions from Beaver River. The security guards said, “Man, we’re not used to getting company and having the public in here, but go, Deborah, go.” They thought it was just great.

March 13, 1989, was the date of the by-election. I made Canadian history. I had come fourth in the general election, with 13 and a half percent of the general vote, but took 50 percent of the vote in the by-election, and made Canadian history.

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, who was a professor of History at Harvard, said, “Well behaved women seldom make history.”

Preston was so excited that night he phoned his father, Ernest, who has holidaying in Phoenix like any normal person will do when it’s 40 degrees below zero. He was in Phoenix and we were stumping around the riding, freezing. And Preston phoned his dad and said “Father, Father, Deborah’s won.” He was so excited, he was just like a kid. Because this was the beachhead and Ernest was excited, too, and asked to speak to me. My former Premier congratulated me. It was just an amazing time in Canadian history.

So, Deb does Ottawa. I’m terrified to fly—sort of forgot about that part. I’d been a high school guidance counsellor for 10 years: be sure you know what the job involves. Oh yeah, I forgot I had to go to Ottawa. So away I went to Ottawa. As a caucus of one.

The house opened on the third of April. I was sworn in that day. About a week and a half later, when spring was coming to Ottawa, just glorious, there were a couple of old girls just wandering around below the Peace Tower. They had their cameras, and I was out for a walk at lunch one day because it was so beautiful. They were trying to figure out who could take their picture. So I said to them, “I could take your picture, if you like.” They didn’t have a clue who I was; I was glad about that.

“Oh would you?” they asked. So, I did and they said to me, “Thank you dear, thank you. You know, you could get a job here.”

And I said, “I just did!” I just became the practitioner of politics.

In Ottawa, I was ridiculed for a) being a woman; b) being a Westerner; and, c) being a Christian. That sort of stands you out over there. And yet I knew how each and every one of those was important and I would not ever sway from that plumb line of hanging true that I knew who I had to be, as a woman, as a Westerner, and as a Christian.

I was a Christian MP for many years; unashamedly, unabashedly. But I was not just the

Christians' MP. That's a tough one to balance. And so somehow we had to merge ideas, philosophy and voting in the House of Commons for me and the representative of the majority of my constituents.

I became a household name because I was the only Reformer. Everybody wanted to know what Reform thought about everything, so they would come stick a microphone in my face and say, "What does Reform think about this?" I just had to make up the answers as I went along, because I didn't have a sweet clue about most of the things.

I'd phone Preston and lots of times I didn't have time to ask, "What do you think I should say about such and such?" Instead, I'd phone him and say, "Guess what I just said about such and such."

Reformers went to Parliament Hill to talk about fiscal responsibility, democratic accountability, and constitutional equality. Fiscal responsibility, democratic accountability and constitutional equality, i.e. Senate reform. Mel Smith was a huge advocate of this and he was a great role model for me regarding Senate reform. He was a legend, and he still is when it comes to these issues.

I had a front row seat for Stan Waters' appointment to the Senate in 1990, for the Meech Lake debacle in 1990, the Charlottetown Accord in 1992, and the demise of the Progressive Conservative Party in 1993. On election night in 1993, I kept saying to my campaign team "You're updating everybody else on the board, guys, but why aren't you updating the PCs?"

They said, "Deb, we are."

Elsie Wayne got elected in New Brunswick and Jean Charest in Quebec. And not a single seat from there to the Pacific Ocean. It was amazing. The near-miss referendum on sovereignty in 1995. And the scandals, too many to mention. And blatant abuse of power.

My life on the Hill showed me a lot about power. How you get it, how you use it, is huge. I had thousands of constituents, voters riding on me. They took a chance on a brand new person, a brand new party. How could I let them down by just saying, "Hi, I'm Deborah Grey. Thanks for voting for me, but I don't need you anymore; I have arrived."

How sad it is to see people who claw, scratch and kick to get to Parliament Hill for instance, or become the CEO of a big company, and then forget how they got there and who it was that helped them to get there. Too many people, especially in politics forget who brought them. It can be dangerous indeed. I have seen it happen time and time again.

Beware of anyone who wants to get into power and then will do anything to stay in power.

They are dangerous. They are looking out, not for your best interests, but for their own. I learned that power is something that you can—and should—use to get something done. For me, there's no inherent joy of having power, for its sake alone; it's not worth showing it off. I'm as happy handing it off to someone else as hanging on to it for myself. I have no desire for power. I just want to get things done.

Power should be about purpose why do you want it? It should be about priorities. What are you going to do with it? And it should always be about people. How are you going to help with it? That should be the number one reason for obtaining power.

You can have power, but you also need authority.

Remember back when the principal said, "You will obey me because." Well, why because? "Because I'm the leader, or I'm the whatever." To me, a leader gets 50 percent respect right now—and they better earn the other 50.

Beware again of those who say, "You have to respect me 100 percent, because I am in control of you." They need to earn that, because people need to follow if you're going to be a leader.

Why do women generally not go for the top jobs? The fact is, there are not a lot of women aspiring to many of these top jobs, politically or corporately. And I think generally—and forgive me here because I'm making huge generalizations—it is because we are team players. We balance family and work more, that's just what we do because we, as women, are still the birth-givers and care-givers, and always will be. Generally, we are not driven to get power and hang on to it. There are exceptions of course.

The best advice came from my aunt, who went to Toastmasters and learned this: "Be brief, be bright, be gone." It's always good advice for speakers, certainly, but it also says a lot about how to handle power. Get in there, do what you need to do, and then move on. Too many people hang on and cling on, as if the place will never last without them. You know, if I got hit by a bus, Parliament would carry on. I left voluntarily, and it has carried on without me. Humourless, albeit it, but carrying on without me.

Power gives you the confidence to be able to laugh at yourself. And I want you to have a laugh at my expense now with one of my most romantic adventures: A date with Rick Mercer. (Rick Mercer Report video clip)

Did I have fun on Parliament Hill? You know, the day after that came out—many years ago now—my constituency office was flooded with calls by people who were irate, saying, "That is terrible, what I saw on TV last night. They were making such fun of you; it was dreadful and they

should never have done that, and they were mean and nasty. What did you think of it, Deborah?”

I said, “I thought it was hilarious.” Why? Because if you can laugh at yourself, it shows people that you are just everyday, normal old Deb, and that is who I have always aspired to be and will continue to be.

Over the years, Preston, his family and I have had an amazing amount of fun. His wife, Sandra, used to pick me up at the airport, pack a picnic lunch and we would sit up on a hill, above Calgary, not the Hill, a hill above Calgary, yakking and wondering about how this Reform experiment would turn out.

Preston is a visionary. Most people just look at the short term and really think they’re big thinkers. They’ll go to tomorrow’s question period, or the semester end, or something like that. But Preston could look years down the road. I used to tease him and say, “We’re still working on the first inning and you’re at the bottom of the ninth already, thinking so far ahead.” He thinks big.

The class of ’93. I was there for four and a half years, from ’89 to ’93 and then we got 52 members there when I got re-elected. There was no room big enough for us on Parliament Hill, so we rented a room at the Lord Elgin Hotel, the caucus leadership and Preston. He had more papers, and charts, and felt pens, and pictures and butterfly charts and lord knows what all around the wall, but you could see as he spoke and starting drawing things in from each one of those sheets what it was we wanted to accomplish on that Hill.

We tried to change the whole atmosphere of Parliament. It didn’t work, now that I think back on it. We made some amazing changes and had a lot of input but we were ridiculed for that. We made a lot of mistakes in Ottawa. They were done through naivety, not malice, or any lust of power. I think about turning the keys back for the limousine for Preston because he was the leader of, as Chretien used to say, of the “tird party.” He said he didn’t want to live in Stornoway. We said we would opt out of the pension and that had worked for our class there, but every future MP would be locked into the pension. We stumbled badly on that one. But we still carried on, and made a pretty good impact there. Preston knew that we needed to build that tent bigger or face successive Liberal majorities.

The Chretien Liberals got three majorities in a row with about 38 percent of the vote because we kept splitting the vote on the right, if you will. Thus the United Alternative, which he thought up to be building that small ‘c’ conservative tent bigger, led to the Canadian Alliance, which led to the Conservative Party of Canada. I served as a member of parliament in that.

One of my former legislative assistants, my first assistant, was a pretty bright fellow. He

helped me through my maiden speech and when I finished, I remember going back into my office and thinking. Whew, I didn't faint and I didn't get sick."

So we're back in the office now, we're going to have a cup of tea. When we got partway through, this assistant, who was an amazing assistant, said, "Deb, you did a really good job on your speech; it was terrific. But next time, you have to talk about this and this and this and this and that."

I said, "That's cool, but could I just finish my tea first?"

That assistant was Stephen Harper. I was his boss. I'd like to think that we taught each other a few things. He is heading now his second minority in Parliament in as many years. And mark my words, as long as the Bloc Quebecois is around, I predict many more difficult minority-led Parliaments, which could keep Canada dysfunctional for a very long time. I don't know what the answer is.

When Lucien Bouchard crossed the house after Meech Lake, he left the Conservatives, they thought they gave us both the worst fate possible because I was Reform and he was Separatist and they sat him right beside me. Being rather direct, I said, "Lucien, it's good to see you. I understand we'll be sitting side by side, but let me tell you this before you sit down. You crossed from there over to here and you don't believe in Canada, but you still collect that little cheque with the little red maple leaf up in the corner and I think that's shameful. While you walk from there to here, I think you ought to keep walking, right through the back curtain and out of Parliament. Shame on you!"

No, he didn't do that. He said, "Thank you, Deborah, for being honest."

I said, "Now that I have that off my chest, let's just settle in here." And they're still there. That was 1990. And I see no way out of it until, somehow, people in Quebec decide they want to be Federalist and the Bloc Quebecois is not around to continue splitting the vote.

After the Conservative Party was formed, or reunited, Elsie Wayne used to say to me all the time, "Deborah, I want you to just come home. Come home to the Progressive Conservatives."

I said, "Elsie, it never was my home." And those are the things that you get into on Parliament Hill, where there are egos and ideologies and this and that.

Peter McKay, a very sharp young guy and a dear friend of mine, could talk about [when he was age 34] the thin blue line that stretched between him as a PC, and Progressive Conservative and John A. MacDonald. And I thought, "That's cool, for history..."

We Reformers, on the other hand...if you needed 127,000 brochures or postcards put at the doors, we'd get it done in a weekend. So there were those for whom historical roots were so important, and those who believed in the ground army, who could just get stuff done.

This new Conservative Party of Canada is an amazing cross-cultural marriage, of the people who felt so differently about so many things, and yet decided to put all that aside to say we can still find enough common ground to form the government of this country. I felt my mission was completed when that happened.

Reform had come to Ottawa to shake it up and had a big hand in forcing government to balance their budgets. (Oops, maybe a poor week to mention that.)

Reform had come to Ottawa to rant about Senate reform. (Oops, maybe a bad week to mention that too.)

Eighteen new Senators put in, and I'll just tell you what I think about it: I don't think Harper had any choice. These people that he put in are at least committed to Senate Reform and are committed to running for a seat and I say, good on them. Bravo. So we are one tiny step down the way. Am I happy about it? No. Would Mel be happy about it? Probably not. But he'd say it's a step. And I say that too. So we keep inching along on that.

Reform had come to Ottawa to remind elected officials about truly representing their constituents. (Oops, who says that the PMO tells you what you can say and what you can't say?) Pretty tight down there, what I notice on the news anyways.

I had spent 15 and a half years down there and I felt like I was ready to launch again.

3. There are two things we can give our kids; one is roots and the other is wings.

I knew that I had built the base the best way I could. I knew I had kept myself on my plumb line, so that you hang absolutely true, with whatever you say, regardless of what happens. Sometimes, it's not pretty. Through tough times I did that, no matter what. I knew I had mentored many members of Parliament. And they could carry on without me. I knew that they had good roots. And now they—and my party—needed wings.

It is our responsibility to reproduce ourselves and leave a legacy to those who come after. Remember that song? "May all who come behind us find us faithful." Will they say that about you? Will they say that about me? What an honour for all of them to say we found her, we found him, faithful.

Would I even be missed? Yes, I would be missed, at least by one. Rick Mercer. (second Rick Mercer Report video clip)

Stephen Harper, my employee, is now my prime minister. Preston Manning, my mentor, is now running the Manning Centre for Building Democracy. And I, equipped with stories to last a life time, wander the country and tell my tale. My husband, Lew, is thrilled. He says I'm still getting paid

to talk.

Remember that no matter how old you are, no matter how little you think you might have accomplished, no matter even if you think you have not left your paw print on the sands of time, there is always someone, coming along behind you, who is watching you, trusting you and who wants you to lead the way. Mel Smith knew that there were others coming along behind him.

The Bridge Builder

An old man, going a lone highway
Came at the evening, cold and grey
To a chasm, vast and deep and wide
Through which was flowing a sullen tide.
The old man crossed in the twilight dim-
That sullen stream had no fears for him.
But he turned, when he reached the other side
And he built a bridge to span the tide.

“Old man,” said a fellow pilgrim near,
“You’re wasting your time in building here.
Your journey will end with the ending day;
You never again must pass this way.
You have crossed that chasm, deep and wide
Why build you the bridge at eventide?”

The builder lifted his old, grey head.
“Good friend, in the path I have come,” he said.
“There followeth after me today
A youth whose feet must pass this way.
This chasm that has been naught to me
To fair-haired youth may a pitfall be.
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building the bridge for him.”

- *(Miss) Will Allen Dromgoole*

Lord bless you.