NO. 146  GOV. DAVE HEINEMAN AND SALLY GANEM
SEPTEMBER 2015

THEY CAME FROM ALL OVER THE STATE TO PAY HOMAGE TO NEBRASKA’S LONGEST REIGNING FIRST COUPLE – DAVE HEINEMAN AND SALLY GANEM.

THERE WERE POLITICIANS GALORE, INCLUDING TWO U.S. SENATORS, THE CURRENT GOVERNOR, A COUPLE OF REGENTS AND A NUMBER OF STATE SENATORS, A SELLOUT CROWD OF 250 PACKED THE OMAHA PRESS CLUB TO WATCH AS THE FORMER GOVERNOR OF NEBRASKA AND HIS SOUTH OMAHA BRIDE OF MORE THAN 40 YEARS WERE ENSHRINED AS A FACE ON THE BARROOM FLOOR.

IT WASN’T EASY, AS HEINEMAN AND GANEM HAD TO NAVIGATE THROUGH SEVEN ROASTERS AND EMCEE HAL DAUB BEFORE THEY COULD RECEIVE THEIR PLACE ON THE FLOOR. MOST OF THE ROASTERS TOOK AIM AT THE FORMER GOVERNOR WITH ONE RECURRING THEME - THIS WAS A MAN WHO KNOWS HOW TO PINCH A PENNY.

IT STARTED WITH SEN. DEB FISCHER, WHO RECOUNTED HOW THE GOVERNOR TREATED HER TO LUNCH ONCE – “WE DROVE THROUGH MCDONALD’S, AND HE USED A GIFT CARD.”


“IT’S SAD,” FISHER SAID. “HE THINKS HE’S STILL GOVERNOR AND PEOPLE CARE.”

CARLOS CASTILLO, FORMER ADVISOR TO THE GOVERNOR, SAID, “HE IS VERY, VERY CHEAP, AND I SAY THAT WITH ALL THE AFFECTION IN THE WORLD.”

DR. JOANN SCHAEFER, FORMER CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER FOR NEBRASKA, CHIDED HEINEMAN FOR HIS ATTENTION TO EVERY LITTLE DETAIL, EVEN DOWN TO THE TYPEFACE SHE USED ON POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS.

KFAB “GOOD MORNING SHOW” HOST JIM ROSE BROUGHT DOWN THE HOUSE WITH HIS SPOT-ON VOICE IMITATION OF GOVERNOR DAVE. NOTING HEINEMAN’S SMALL-TOWN NEBRASKA ROOTS, ROSE SAID, “HE WAS BORN IN A SINK WITH A SILVER SPOON IN HIS MOUTH.” ROSE ADDED, “DAVE IS SO SHORT. HIS BOXERS HAVE CUFFS ON THEM.”

THE MAN HEINEMAN SUCCEEDED AS GOVERNOR, MIKE JOHANNES, SAID THAT IT BECAME APPARENT HEINEMAN HAD DESIGNS ON BECOMING GOVERNOR WHEN HE ENTERED HIS OFFICE AND FOUND HEINEMAN SITTING IN HIS CHAIR.


WHEN THE ROASTERS WERE FINISHED, EVEN GANEM HAD HER OWN BARB FOR HER HUSBAND. NOTING THAT THE STATE QUARTER CAME OUT DURING HEINEMAN’S GOVERNORSHIP, SHE SAID, “YOU COULD SAY WE HAD A TWO-BIT GOVERNOR.”

SHE DID, HOWEVER, SALUTE THE GOVERNOR FOR HIS INCREDIBLE WORK ETHIC. “DAVE NEVER DID TAKE A VACATION DAY,” SHE SAID. “HE DIDN’T EVEN GO TO THE GREAT WALL WHEN HE WAS IN CHINA.”

INSTEAD OF SLINGING RETORTS BACK, HEINEMAN OPTED TO TAKE THE HIGH ROAD. HE CALLED IT “AN INCREDIBLE HONOR TO BE GOVERNOR OF THE BEST STATE IN THE COUNTRY. I GOT TO SEE NEBRASKA AT ITS BEST EVERY DAY.”

IT WAS EVIDENT THE GOVERNOR WHO SERVED FOR A DECADE (2005– ) WAS HELD IN HIGH ESTEEM BY ALL IN ATTENDANCE. SCHAEFER SUMMED IT UP WELL, AS SHE SAID, “HE WAS A TREMENDOUS BOSS, LEADER AND GOVERNOR.”