

Sheila Vickers to Retire to the Great Northwest

BY JOHN GRAY



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The year 2001 seems like decades ago. Come to think of it, I guess it is. It was in 2001 that Sheila and I joined School Services of California Inc. (SSC). We were not new to public school finance but were nonetheless in awe of joining the likes of Ken Hall, Paul Goldfinger, Carol Berg, and Ron Bennett. We soon got over the awe factor and jumped head first into our new careers.

Almost right away, it was clear that Sheila and I were on different tracks in the company. Sheila began taking on company-wide responsibilities for company operations, and I would be sent out if there was an angry mob demonstrating at a school board meeting. I would ask Ron Bennett why I always had to be the one sent out to get my head lopped off. His answer was always the same, “I learned long ago at the War College that in those situations you only put out front what you are willing to lose. And I am not willing to lose Sheila.” So it went.

You always wish people a happy retirement, especially when they are as deserving as Sheila, but this is a harder one for me—not only has Sheila had an incredible impact on the company, she has had an immeasurable positive impact on me. Sheila took it upon herself to make everyone better at SSC, including me. You might remember seeing her on stage at one of our big conferences for 15 minutes, but behind the scenes, she was also in charge of everything else, including production, logistics, assignments, and all other aspects of executing our big events.

She also took it upon herself to mentor and develop our staff in all areas of operations so that when she chose to retire, we would be in highly capable hands going forward. She may be the most selfless, egoless, humble person I know. All of us at SSC are in a better place for having the fortune of having Sheila take an interest in our careers and our personal well-being. She has been a trusted confidant and advisor to me, and also to many of you.

She has agreed to keep an eye on us from her new home in the Great Northwest and to provide us guidance when we need it. We will miss her every day.