

**Statement of Mayor Noam Bramson
In Memory of Dorothy Allen**

I regret that I cannot join you in person to celebrate the life of a great public servant and exceptional human being. Here in California with Catie and the children, my thoughts are very much with the family, friends, and colleagues gathered in New Rochelle to pay tribute to Dorothy Allen.

Others will no doubt speak of the myriad accomplishments and the vivid personality that endeared Dorothy to so many, and it is not my place to attempt a full catalog of a life so rich. Instead, let me linger over just a few of the qualities that, for me, shine most brightly in memory.

First, Dorothy was devoted to politics, heart and soul. She was moved by its great principles and amused by its absurdities. She traded with zeal in the latest news about this or that public figure, and there was no one better with whom to swap stories. She was sharply and rightly impatient with those who violated her sense of justice and decency. She was a Democrat through and through, and our party here in New Rochelle will never be the same, losing in a single stroke both its fiercest advocate and its wriest critic.

Second, Dorothy did not suffer foolishness gladly . . . and she had a terrible poker face. To watch Dorothy's expressions at City Council meetings was to observe a running commentary on its proceedings. And, of course, we Council Members all did our part by providing Dorothy with strange and misguided statements to which she could react with scowling grimace, shaking head, or wide-eyed disbelief. On a few occasions, I had to warn Dorothy that her reactions were quite noticeable on cable television and that she should restrain herself. But, in truth, I was jealous (as perhaps a few of us were) that Dorothy could in her silent, but eloquent, way express thoughts that I felt obliged to suppress.

Third, Dorothy adored the City of New Rochelle, by which I mean our community as a whole and its government, and she was unfailingly loyal to both. She loved to post and circulate news items that highlighted our city's virtues . . . just as she would dismiss less flattering portrayals with a few choice and salty words. She understood what New Rochelle represented, in all its glorious diversity, and she personified the inclusive spirit upon which our city's strength and future depend. And, of course, in her professional duties, as our City Clerk, Dorothy was simply outstanding. She felt and acted upon a keen sense of responsibility, with the knowledge that the daily work of her office would define our city for the countless residents who called at its doors . . . and define us also for history.

Above all, Dorothy was courageous. I refer not only to her capacity to express views forthrightly in any setting and to any person – itself an admirable quality and one she possessed in abundance – I refer also to courage of a deeper and richer nature. Some

people, if they are strong, can persevere in the face of adversity. Dorothy could do more . . . she was joyful. In all the difficult years of battling medical hardship, in my presence at least, she never once complained, she never once gave in to despair, she never once demonstrated anything less than a full love of life on the terms it had been given.

Perhaps this is why for many of us, her succumbing in these last days came as something of a shock. How could a person so tough in her fiber and so light in her spirit truly be gravely ill?

I am comforted by the knowledge, as we all are, that she passed in peace, surrounded by the daughters whom she loved so much. I am comforted, as we all are, by the outpouring of good feeling and affection from so many neighbors whose lives Dorothy touched. I am comforted, as we all are, by the certainty that Dorothy has an even better vantage point now on high from which to observe and judge our conduct here on Earth. And let's hope that heaven carries channel 75, so that she will be well-entertained.

New Rochelle is today a diminished place, having lost one of its best and most admired citizens, but it is also a better place because of all that Dorothy Allen did and all that Dorothy Allen represented.

I will miss her very much.