My Family & Consumer Sciences Story

When managing Dick Nichols’ congressional campaign, we worked with a consultant, Susan. It was Dick’s first time running for public office and I had never even imagined working in the political field. Susan was our go-to and provided so much guidance and advice. We had a very crowded primary field with seven persons running for the seat.

Mid-summer, Susan was at lunch with a colleague and was asked, “What background makes the best campaign manager?” Susan’s response was, “Well, right now, I am working with a couple of campaigns and for one, the campaign manager has a background in development for a hospital and he brings certain skills to the position. Another of mine has a campaign manager with a background in family and consumer sciences education and she brings different skills to the position. The only real difference is that the one with the background in family and consumer sciences serves bran muffins to her volunteers instead of donuts!” Susan shared the conversation with her husband, Jay, who had done some of the media work for our campaign so knew us pretty well. He laughed.

As the primary election date approached, polling results had told us that the race was really close, especially among the top contenders of which, Dick was one. A debate was called in one of the more populated counties right before the primary election and I knew that how well Dick did in the debate could “make or break” the election results. I wondered, “What could I/we do to help Dick perform well?” We could do dry runs on the most logical questions that would be asked. We could make sure he had compelling language for opening and closing remarks, etc. But then every campaign would be doing that for their candidate. What Dick needed was extra confidence. So, we secretly organized a bus trip for supporters to go to the site of the debate. I headed out early with Dick to make a few campaign stops ahead of time. We were in the parking lot of where the debate was being held rehearsing answers when I saw Dick catch a glimpse of a bus pulling up in the driveway.

As he looked closer, the faces of those in the bus became clearer and suddenly he knew, a whole busload of his supporters wearing “Dick’s My Pick” buttons had come to cheer for him during the debate. Dick straightened his tie and jumped out of the car to go greet each one and thank them for being there. I didn’t breathe for the first 10 minutes of the debate but then finally settled down enough to watch Dick handle it beautifully. The next day when I told our campaign consultant how well the debate had gone and she relayed the positive impact of the busload of supporters on Dick’s performance to her husband, Jay, his reply was, “You know, Susan, I think it’s the person with the family and consumer sciences education background that makes the BEST campaign manager!”

What we as FCS professionals know about human behavior and the interrelatedness of physical and emotional well-being, is an asset in any career position or personal scenario. Hence, we are using the theme of “I am a success because of FCS” as the cornerstone in a new public awareness campaign. It will be a multi-faceted and strategic approach to telling our FCS stories.

Join us for the campaign!

Carolyn W. Jackson, CFCS
AAFCS Chief Executive Officer and
Alliance for Family and Consumer Sciences Managing Director

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