



## PROFILE OF A REGIONAL MAYOR

# Richard M. Daley

Throughout the Leadership Exchange, Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley's name was ever-present. A lover of bicycles and wrought-iron fences, he brought a muscular style and an expansive agenda to City Hall, fighting local battles over schools, parks, and zoning while keeping an eye on the global competition for jobs and development. In recent months, a stream of corruption scandals and indictments has fed speculation about the future of both his administration and his agenda, but he has faced criticism before in his 16 years in office. He remains the central figure of Chicago politics and has revived his city's image as a place where big things can happen.

**F**rom a series of press reports and comments from the Exchange, we've collected quotes by and about Mayor Richard M. Daley that offer some insight on his impact on Chicago.

"Flowers calm people down."

— *Mayor Richard M. Daley, in Newsweek, August 2003, explaining the need for median plantings and urban landscaping*

"At the risk of speaking for the mayor, he doesn't like the word planning. **He's not a planner. He likes action, he likes implementation.** He's come very slowly around to the idea of neighborhood planning. Chicago never adopted its comprehensive plan of 1957. City Hall's fine with that."

— *Scott Goldstein, Vice President for Policy and Planning, Metropolitan Planning Council, Leadership Exchange session "Regional Development and Sensible Growth," Sept. 22, 2005*

"The dominant figure since his election in 1989 has been Mayor Richard M. Daley. Like his father, he seems to know the city block by block, and has worked to beautify it — planting thousands of trees and encouraging handsome wrought-iron fences. The old political machine which his father so ably led is no more, but Daley has used the powers of office to propitiate the black politicians who at first seemed to be obdurate opponents; he has been reelected by overwhelming majorities. **He has kept on good terms with presidents of both parties.**"

— *National Journal, June 2005*

"He is without a doubt one of the benchmark trendsetter mayors in the country. **Just walking down the street with him is sort of like being with a rock star.**"

— *Julia Stasch, former Daley chief-of-staff, Chicago Sun-Times, April 2004*

“Mayor Daley cringes when you call him a boss, but that, in fact, is what he’s become.”

— *U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez, April 2001, Crain’s Chicago Business*

“In Chicago, we were lucky to have a mayor who had a vision for the Chicago Housing Authority, and was willing to go out there and put his reputation and the city’s money on the line. We had to put in a tremendous amount of infrastructure as we redevelop these communities. . . . That money’s going to come from your local taxpayers. Which means you need a mayor and a Council that are not going to rise up in righteous wrath and say, why are my people paying property taxes to service the debt on these bonds to service all of the infrastructure in neighborhoods outside of our own? **You need politicians who can stand up to that kind of questioning.**”

— *Sharon Gist Gilliam, Commissioner and Chairperson, Chicago Housing Authority, Leadership Exchange session “The Transformation of Public Housing,” Sept. 22, 2005*

“Even crusty conservatives admit that Chicago has been transformed by Richard M. Daley. . . . **[He] wins kudos from corporate titans and green advocates alike for his vision, commitment and enthusiasm for everything from planting trees to luring Boeing. . . . But as the original Daley would surely point out, passion, vision and the rest of it don’t matter a jot without power.** The current mayor, known as King Richard in some circles, has never been afraid to crack the whip. City workers scurry into their graffiti-buster vans whenever the mayor finds a defaced building. Aldermen on the city council have long been under the thumb of the Democrat-in-chief for fear of their political lives.”

— *The Economist, November 2002*

“The mayor’s taken real leadership [in the region]. He was the convener and instigator of the Metropolitan Mayor’s Caucus. **The city has taken an active role in communicating and dialoguing.**”

— *Ronald L. Thomas, AICP, Executive Director, Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, Leadership Exchange session “Regional Development and Sensible Growth,” Sept. 22, 2005*

“One event in August 1995 in particular seemed to catalyze [the] growing regional awareness: Mayor Richard Daley was invited to a meeting of the suburban Northwest Municipal Conference. Scheduled to speak for an hour, the conversation between Daley and forty suburban mayors stretched to three hours. “The environment was charged, not with disagreement but the opposite. As [Daley] talked about his problems the heads of the other mayors nodded — over and over again. We found we had much more in common than we had ever thought. **Also the mayor had come out to visit us — this might seem like a small thing but it wasn’t lost on us either;**” said one person who attended the meeting.

“A bit over a year later, Mayor Daley established a new position in the executive office with liaison responsibilities with the suburbs. . . .”

— *CEOs for Cities, “Case Study I: The Chicago Metropolitan Mayors Caucus,” Spring 2002*

“Daley’s luster has extended to his party.

**His example as the state’s leading Democrat undoubtedly helped ease the way for suburbanites to move toward Democrats over the last 15 years.** What has resulted is a turnover of state government from Republicans to Democrats. . . .”

— *National Journal, June 2005*

**“Mayor Daley’s name is on everything.**

And I adore what he’s done here in Chicago, it’s an amazing city. And they sell the city so well. But you open up the brochure and the first thing is always: ‘Mayor Daley.’ And a picture of Mayor Daley, and a message from Mayor Daley. And it’s good, because it indicates the value he puts on these things . . .

“What really brought this home to me was a few weeks ago, the firehouse across the street decided to stage a block party. They said, at 11 o’clock the moonwalk is showing up, you know, the thing that blows up and the kids go in. And at 10:45, this thing rolls up, and they blow it up and, sure enough: ‘Mayor Richard Daley.’ I’m thinking, okay, he’s got it all covered.”

— *Carol Colletta, CEO, CEOs for Cities, Leadership Exchange session “Unfinished Agendas,” Sept. 23, 2005*