

Senior Seminar-History of Chicago

Reading Guide: City of Big Shoulders, Chapter 12; Post-Daley Years

Use this guide to take notes as you read the chapter. You should be able to address the following thematic questions...

Major Themes:

1. During the Richard J. Daley years, Chicagoans had grown accustomed to stability; that stability came to an end with the death of Daley in 1976-over the next 15 years, five mayors would govern Chicago. Transition replaced continuity and uncertainty replaced stability.

Michael Bilandic succeeded Richard J. Daley as Mayor. His tenure and subsequent failure was the result of several factors.

Jane Byrne succeeded Michael Bilandic as Mayor. Her victory was important for several reasons, these were...

Harold Washington would succeed Jane Byrne as Mayor. His election signaled a significant change in Chicago politics; how so?

1. Inability to handle a paralyzing snowstorm that shut-down Chicago for several weeks.
2. Lack of control allowed the wobbling CCDP machine time to fall apart

1. Her defeat of Bilandic and the CCDP machine was the first time the machine had been defeated since its inception in 1931.
2. She capitalized on anti-machine sentiment in the city and her feistiness made her attractive to working class Chicagoans.
3. She proved an ineffective leader and in the end was forced to realign herself with the machine to get things done
4. She reversed her position of appointing blacks to the CHA board leading her to lose the support of moderate blacks.

1. Before Washington, African-Americans had not had power for themselves. While Dawson was able to get some patronage jobs during the Daley years; African Americans did not have justice, equality or first class citizenship—that changed under Washington.
2. African American activism came alive at this time bolstering participation in the broader political agenda.
3. Washington divorced himself from the CCDP transforming himself into a candidate for the city's black community—but had to be prodded to run.
4. The two leading candidates(Byrne and Daley) split the White vote and Ed Vrodolyak appealed to white voters that splitting the white vote would assure a Washington win.
5. The chance that a black would win pushed the CCDP to back the republican candidate for the mayoral election.

Two distinct groups of black political activists formed, these were

1. Coalitionists; avoided antagonizing lakefront liberals and launched biracial initiatives.
2. Nationalists; tired of cooperating with whites-disdained compromise.
3. These differences sharply divided the black vote—resulting in Bilandic's defeat of Washington in the 70's.

The Washington/Epton election became a one issue contest:

1. race-Washington won by a slim margin.
2. signaled the end of cooperation between the mayors office and city council

Washington died in office and was succeeded by Eugene Sawyer

1. The battle over who would succeed Washington between Sawyer and Tim Evans would not enable Sawyer to govern effectively. Parts of the black community, including Jesse Jackson saw Sawyer as a white man's candidate and an Uncle Tom.

Richard M. Daley would defeat Evans in a special election; beginning a new dynasty

1. seen as welcome relief by many Chicagoans of all colors.

Daley differed from his father in many ways; the differences were:

1. political manager—not a boss
2. efficient management of government was his goal
3. eliminated patronage jobs (power of his father)
4. cut city payroll and privatized several public works programs
5. pursued economic growth and job creation
6. his success was linked to careful attention to the details of governance and liberal support of the city's many communities.
7. he had no machine to guarantee reelection