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Chicago Natives: Interviews with Edward A Brennan and Carole Simpson

Timothy Gilfoyle

Loyola University Chicago, tgilfoy@luc.edu

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Gilfoyle, Timothy. Chicago Natives: Interviews with Edward A Brennan and Carole Simpson. Chicago History, , : 58-72, 2004. Retrieved from Loyola eCommons, History: Faculty Publications and Other Works,

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Chicago Natives: Interviews with Edward A. Brennan and Carole Simpson

TIMOTHY J. GILFOYLE

Born in Chicago and reared in modest, middle-class families, Edward A. Brennan and Carole Simpson both rose to the pinnacles of their professions. Simpson is regarded as the first African American woman television reporter in Chicago and the first woman of color to perform anchor duties on a major television network. Behind the television screen, she has proven to be equally influential by challenging national media outlets to make policy changes regarding employee relations, hiring, and pay equity. Brennan, now the chairman of AMR Corporation (the holding company of American Airlines), personified Sears, Roebuck & Company, the American retail giant for most of the twentieth century. Beginning in 1956, selling furniture at a Sears store in Wisconsin, Brennan moved almost a dozen times to other Sears positions and stores before ascending to the chairmanship of the firm from 1986 to 1997. He is, in the words of former Sears president A. Dean Swift, “the last of a kind.”

Edward A. Brennan was born in Chicago on January 16, 1934, at Lewis Memorial Maternity Hospital on South Michigan Avenue, the son of native Chicagoans Edward J. and Margaret (Bourget) Brennan. Growing up in suburban Oak Park, Brennan initially resided at 503 South Lyman Avenue and then 732 South Elmwood Avenue. The house on Lyman was just two blocks west of Austin Boulevard. “We were right on the streetcar line,” remembers Brennan, “so that you could get on the Chicago streetcar and come downtown.” Like many middle-class, Catholic children, Brennan attended the local parochial schools, St. Catherine of Siena for elementary school and then Fenwick High School.



Edward A. Brennan received the Marshall Field History Maker Award for Distinction in Corporate Leadership and Innovation in 2003.

Carole Simpson received the Joseph Medill History Maker Award for Distinction in Journalism and Communications in 2003.



Brennan describes a childhood with a high level of physical freedom. “We were very mobile. We spent a lot of time wandering around the city. In those days, it was common.” His mobility eventually extended far beyond Chicago. After his parents divorced, his mother moved to Mexico. “My brother and I did go to Mexico a number of times for a month or so in the summer,” recounts Brennan. “The first time, we went we took the train from Chicago. The next four times, we took the Greyhound Bus, so we learned a lot about the world. Mexico is a long way away, but in those days, it looked like the other side of the moon.”

Carole Simpson was born in St. Luke’s Hospital on December 7, 1940, to Lytle Ray and Doretha Viola (Wilbon) Simpson. “I was born on the South Side of Chicago,” recounts Simpson. “My mother was from a small town—Washington, Georgia—and my father was from Terre Haute, Indiana.” The Simpson family resided at Sixty-fourth Street and Maryland Avenue in the city’s Woodlawn neighborhood. Simpson attended local public schools Wadsworth Elementary School and Hyde Park High School. Simpson remem-



Simpson grew up in the Woodlawn neighborhood on Chicago’s South Side. Above: South Maryland Avenue, c. 1985.

bers how both her neighborhood and schools were integrated. “I had Chinese friends. I had Jewish friends. Growing up in an integrated environment in those times—in the forties and fifties—gave me a whole different perspective than that of my relatives in the South, who were frightened of white people,” she explains. “They couldn’t—and I couldn’t—understand it.”

Simpson credits her parents with providing the foundation for her success. “I came from working-class parents, informally educated, but with a strong sense of education for their two daughters.” Simpson’s father worked for the postal service and her mother took in sewing. “I can remember sitting at her feet—she had an old Singer sewing machine—pumping that pedal,” Simpson remembers. “I would sit at her feet, and she had me write my ABCs. Before I went to school, I knew how to spell my name and knew my ABCs and could write them.” Simpson’s parents impressed upon her the importance of education early on. “We were going to have the chance they never had. There was never any question of going to college. I’m very grateful to have had parents that saw the value of education and how it could change circumstances in life.”

When it came time for college, Brennan chose Marquette University in Milwaukee. “I wanted to leave Chicago,” Brennan admits. “I wanted to get away from home. My father was a buyer for Sears, and we didn’t have a lot of money.” Marquette also allowed him to work part-time while attending college. In high school, Brennan had worked for Benson & Rixon, a local department store in Oak Park. “They bought a store in Milwaukee just at the time I went to Marquette, so I ended up going to work there.” Brennan says that he probably spent more time in the store than the classroom, working throughout the summer and at Christmas.

Brennan’s work experience proved instrumental for his future. “The six-and-one-half years I spent with Benson & Rixon was the best education that I had,” he bluntly states. “That was far more important than going to college.” Brennan carried the lessons he learned at Benson & Rixon with him for the rest of his career. “I learned from the grassroots,” he explains, “watching professional salesmen, clothing salesmen sell; interacting with customers; seeing problems that had to be solved.”

Brennan also realized retail was his vocation: “The essence of retailing is personal interaction, and I saw that and I liked it. They say that some people have fingertips for the business and I believe that. I think a lot of people in retailing are there because it’s a job. It’s long hours. It’s nights. It’s Saturdays and Sundays. It’s a fairly consuming profession, and, frankly, there are a lot of other businesses that are a lot easier in terms of the time demands on people. But there’s also an incredible sense of satisfaction in retailing because you see the results immediately. You see them every day. At Christmastime, you see them every hour.”

Similar to Brennan, Simpson’s introduction to her future profession came in high school. At the encouragement of one of her teachers, she joined the school newspaper. “I enjoyed the process of asking questions, and then trying to put it in a fashion that people would want to read,” remembers Simpson. “At that time, I decided I wanted to be a journalist.”

Simpson was also involved with drama, an activity that later proved instrumental in her broadcasting career. “I acted all through high school,” she explains, “And thank God I did, because it’s where I learned how to use my voice, how to project it, how to get in front of a lot of people and not be afraid to get in front of them. It helped me in a way I didn’t appreciate until much later.”

By her senior year, Simpson had compiled a 3.5 grade point average and was determined to go into journalism. “I applied to Northwestern,” she

remembers. "I knew the Medill School of Journalism was one of the best in the country at that time." But when she went to Northwestern for her admission interview, she received a less-than-welcoming response. "The admissions counselor said, 'You're wasting your time. You're not going to get into Medill.'" When Simpson inquired why, the admissions counselor bluntly told her, "You're a Negro, and you're a woman. You're not going to be able to get a job anywhere but *Ebony* magazine or *Jet*." When Simpson told him that her goal was to work for the *Chicago Tribune*, he simply replied, "I think you ought to go to the Chicago Teachers' College and become a nice English teacher."

Shortly after graduating from Marquette in 1955, Brennan took a job at the Sears store in Madison, Wisconsin. This was hardly surprising, for it was hard to separate company and family when it came to Sears and the Brennans. Brennan's grandfather Luke J. Brennan worked with founder Richard Sears at the company's headquarters on Chicago's West Side in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Brennan's father, mother, and four uncles also worked for Sears.

Brennan quickly advanced up the Sears corporate ladder. In 1958, he became an assistant manager in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Two years later, he returned to Chicago as an assistant buyer at the Sears headquarters on the West Side. Over the next seven years, he held several positions in buying and marketing. In 1967, he was named manager of the Baltimore store. A year later, he was promoted to assistant manager in the New York region and moved to New Jersey.

Brennan works the cash register in the men's department at the Sears Store in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1957.



In 1972, he was charged with reviving the western New York district headquartered in Buffalo; he turned it around by the end of the year. A few years later, Brennan moved to Philadelphia. By 1977, he was doing the same in Boston. Shortly thereafter, he was elected executive vice president of Sears's southern territory in Atlanta and a company director. In 1980, the Sears board of directors elected Brennan president, primarily responsible for the day-to-day operations of Sears's merchandising operations.

Simpson's rejection from Northwestern University only hardened her resolve. She enrolled in the University of Illinois at Chicago (then located at Navy Pier) from 1958 to 1960, before transferring to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1962. At Michigan, she continued acting and worked on the *Michigan Daily*, then edited by Tom Hayden. But after graduation, she was the only one of her sixty classmates unable to find a job. Journalism dean Wesley Maurer intervened and arranged a job for her in the university relations office at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Simpson swallowed her disappointment, telling herself, "Well, that's all I got. I got to go. I got to start somewhere."

Tuskegee proved to be a blessing in disguise. In the early 1960s, Alabama was one of the hotbeds of the Civil Rights movement. Governor George Wallace had confronted federal authorities at the University of Alabama over integrating that institution, and Martin Luther King Jr. and his supporters were organizing demonstrations in Birmingham and elsewhere. "It was an incredible experience," Simpson remembers. "I had to go to Montgomery, Alabama, to buy clothes, and black people were not allowed to try them on. You had to guess if clothes fit you." Looking back, she remains incredulous of the patterns of segregation. "There was one little theater, and black people were not allowed on the first floor of the theater," recalls Simpson, "and you couldn't buy things at the concession stand. You had to sit up in the balcony and bring your own popcorn and candy. I tell people this now, and my children just can't fathom it. And it wasn't that long ago."

Simpson attended the University of Illinois-Chicago from 1958 to 1960, when it was located on Navy Pier. Below: The college campus in 1958.





Simpson's career began in Alabama in the early 1960s, when the state became a focus for Civil Rights involvement. This photograph depicts a gathering after the Sixteenth Street Church bombing in Birmingham, 1963. Photograph by Declan Haun.



After two years in Alabama, Simpson received a graduate fellowship in journalism from the University of Iowa. "I still wanted to be a newspaper reporter," remembers Simpson. A course on radio broadcasting, however, proved revelatory. "I could go out with my tape recorder, interview people, and come back, write around it, and deliver my own story," Simpson realized. In retrospect, she admits, "That's what I kind of miss about radio today. It's just an intimate medium. In TV, you're relying on cameramen, sound men, lighting men, directors, and producers." Simpson decided to audition for the radio station. "There had never been a woman who had done broadcast news on WSUI in Iowa City, and they took me. I started doing a ten-minute newscast two nights a week that I would put together and write, and I really liked that."

Throughout most of Edward Brennan's ascendancy at Sears, the store was one of the largest corporations in the United States. Sears furnished the goods that adorned many middle-class homes: electric refrigerators, washers and driers, freezers, color televisions, and wall-to-wall carpeting. Sears workers repeated an old company mantra: "All we want is our 80," a reference to the belief that the middle 80 percent of Americans shopped at Sears, while the richest 10 percent went to expensive department stores and the poorest 10 percent went to discount merchants. In fact, by the 1970s, nearly all Americans shopped at Sears every three months, and more than 50 percent of all United States households had a Sears credit card. As the nation's largest retailer, Sears was more than just one of the ten largest corporations in the world. Many identified the company as the "central warehouse" for American culture.

Brennan displays a sweater from the Arnold Palmer Collection at a Sears store opening in Dallas, 1963.

In the 1980s, Sears chief executive officer Ed Telling embarked on transforming Sears into a giant supermarket of both goods and services. In addition to owning Allstate Insurance (which Sears established in 1950s), Sears acquired the Dean Witter Reynolds Organization and the Coldwell Banker Real Estate Group in 1981; four years later, Sears launched the Discover credit card. Telling even entertained forming a partnership with Chevron and creating a global enterprise called Sears World Trade. With this “stocks and socks” strategy, Sears’ executives envisioned customers who would be able to buy a house, finance it, insure it, and fill it with furniture—all with services and products provided by Sears. When Brennan ascended to the chairmanship of the newly formed Sears Merchandising Group in 1981, Telling ordered him to create a new retail-based Sears.

By 1965, Simpson’s job prospects were transformed. In wake of the Civil Rights movement and the Watts riot in Los Angeles, she became an attractive journalist to the media outlets. “Now I was getting job offers from all over,” she explains. “Newspapers wanted to hire me in a minute. I was just turning down offers because they were looking for reporters that could get that story.” When WCFL Radio in Chicago offered her a job as a reporter, she jumped at the chance to return to her native city. She remained at WCFL until 1968 when she moved to WBBM Radio as a special correspondent and weekend anchor.

By this time, Simpson notes, the Civil Rights movement was affecting Chicago. “It was the black organizations who ended up telling news organizations, ‘You can’t cover our news conferences unless you have black reporters and black cameramen and black soundmen,’” explains Simpson.

Union resistance to racial integration was strong, she remembers. “No black people could join the unions to shoot T.V. film in those days.” At the same time, news directors realized media outlets needed to change. “They knew to get that story, they were going to have to get some black people that could go to these news conferences and find out what’s going on.”

While working part-time at WBBM, Simpson began appearing as a commentator on *Our People*, a minority affairs television program on WTTW, Chicago’s public television station. This led to a news correspondent position at WMAQ-TV from 1970 to 1974, making Simpson Chicago’s first African American woman television newscaster.

Simpson soon realized television reporting was her calling. “I liked that intimacy that I could develop with the audience by coming into their homes,” she explains, “and tell them in a compelling fashion what they needed to know about that happened that day.” Simpson also enjoyed the freedom associated with television journalism. “I liked the fact that I could go do the stories as well.” To date, television has allowed Simpson to travel to forty-eight states, twenty-seven countries, and five continents. “The job has just been amazing in terms of the things I’ve learned, the things I’ve seen, how much I feel I know about this country and about the people in this country,” she proclaims.

This WBBM Newsradio 78 flyer from the late 1960s promotes Simpson as special correspondent and Saturday anchorman.



Sears, Roebuck and Co. 1985 Annual Report

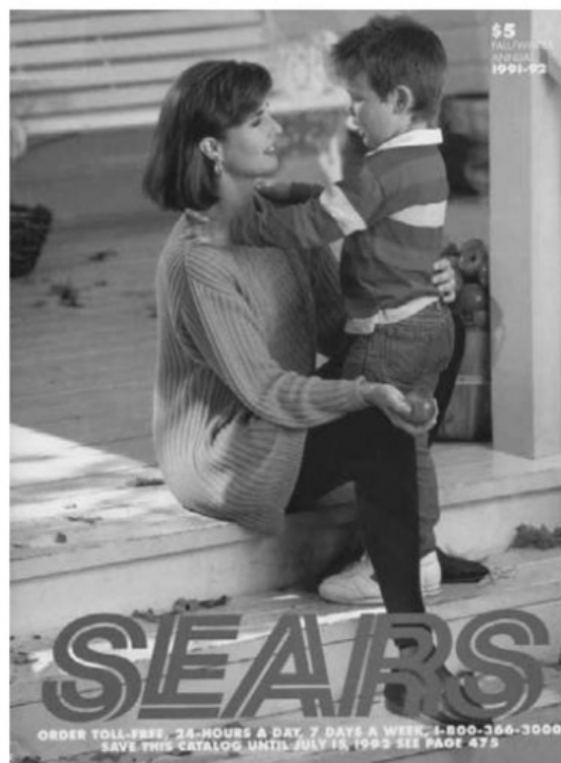
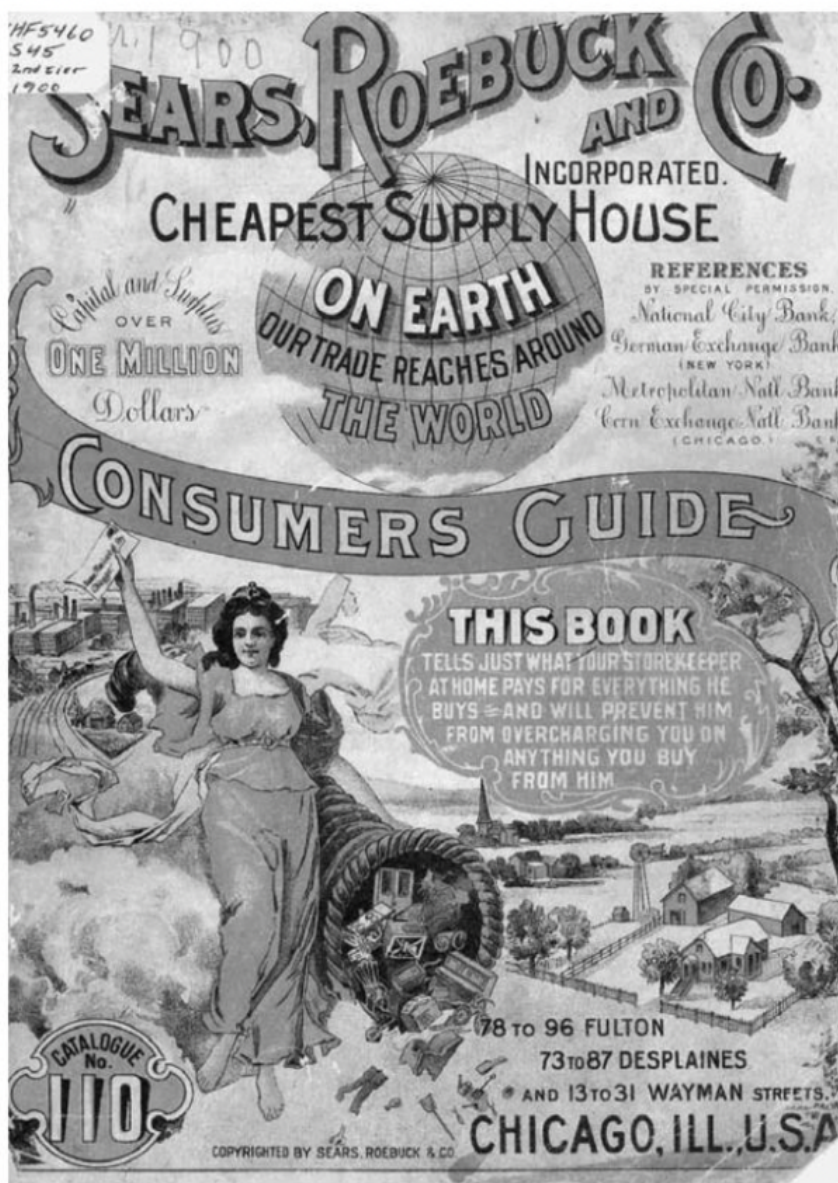


The Dawn of a New Century

The 1985 Sears Annual Report announced Brennan's promotion to chief executive.

Brennan's retail acumen finally led to his election as the eleventh CEO of Sears in 1986, which he held until 1997. Unfortunately, he assumed the position during Sears's rockiest days, suffering from poor earnings, a weak economy, and shareholder unrest. Sears financial services performed well from 1984 to 1990, improving the company's earnings by 55 percent. But the retail department failed badly, with income declining at an annual rate of 7.7 percent. From 1984 to 1990, Sears had a total annual return, including dividends, of a mere 0.7 percent. In 1990, earnings and stock prices fell to 1983 levels and in the first nine months, the company lost \$119 million. One Dean Witter executive described Sears as "an organization in chaos." By then, Wal-Mart had passed Sears as the nation's leading retailer. Brennan announced in 1988 that the corporation was selling the iconic Sears Tower, then the world's tallest building. The next year, he announced that the firm was leaving Chicago for a new corporate campus in suburban Hoffman Estates.

Sears's economic turbulence was not unique. The final two decades of the twentieth century witnessed a vast transformation in the American retail landscape. Nationally known stores such as B. Altman, Kmart, W. T. Grant, and Korvette's went out of business. Local chains such as Goldblatt's and Wieboldt's disappeared. Even beleaguered survivors such as Bloomingdale's and Marshall Field's were sold to large international conglomerates. Appropriately, some refer to the period as the "chain store massacre."



To help balance the company's budget, Brennan eliminated the Sears catalog (left, in 1901; above, in 1991), a staple for decades.

Anchor eyes an inside job in D.C.

NEW ORLEANS—When you start out covering City Hall for a Chicago radio station and wind up with your own weekend anchor shift for your basic large American television network, that ought to be enough excitement for one career.

Not for Carole Simpson, however. Named anchor of ABC's "World News Saturday" last summer, the 46-year-old Chicago native harbors one more ambition.

"I'd like to go back to Chicago and run for Congress," Simpson said Tuesday, taking a break from her shift as "perimeter reporter" at the Republican National Convention here.

"It's always been an ambition of mine," she said. "After all these years of covering Washington, reporting on problems and issues, it would be satisfying to get involved in the process on the other side."

Simpson, who is black, even has a particular Congressional seat in mind. It's in the 2d District and is currently held by Rep. Gus Savage.

Asked when she might attempt such a transformation, Simpson smiled. "I just got a new job at ABC," she allowed.

A graduate of Hyde Park High School and the University of Michigan, Simpson started out at WCFL Radio in the mid-1960s.

She worked at WBBM Radio and was a commentator on a 1969 public-affairs program on WTTW-TV before signing on with WMAQ-TV, eventually becoming a weekend anchor at the NBC-owned station.

"My career moves on the weekends," Simpson said, laughing.

"I think the experience of chasing news around Chicago in the '60s and '70s prepares you for just about anything.

"Local TV was a little different. I took a job as a network correspondent for NBC in 1972, when the management at WMAQ had some Ted Baxter-type anchorman dropped on them out of New York."

Simpson spent seven years at NBC, working Capitol Hill and a variety of beats, including health care and the environment. She also covered the 1980 presidential campaign of George Bush.

In 1982 she joined ABC as a general

In 1988, in Steve Daley's Chicago Tribune column, Simpson announced her new ABC News job in Washington.

Critics labeled Sears as an ungainly, bureaucratic giant. Brennan agreed in part, admitting that Sears's retail business maintained such a high profile that it buried the values of other units. So from 1990 to 1993, Brennan slashed fifty thousand jobs, eliminated the famed Sears catalogue, and closed 113 unprofitable stores. Brennan also abandoned the "stocks and socks" approach because, he believed, investors and financial markets failed to accurately assess the worth of Sears's multiple assets. Consequently, Sears sold parts of subsidiaries Allstate, Dean Witter, and Coldwell Banker.

"We never got credit for what we had done in financial services," notes Brennan in retrospect. "The stock was Sears, so you had to buy a retailer in order to get an insurance company, an investment banker, a real estate company, a development company." Historically, Brennan believes that such strategies worked for only a few companies. "What the investor, especially the institutional investor, really wants is a pure play," he explains. "They don't want to have to own a retailer in order to get an investment banker, or they don't want to have to own an investment banker to get into a real estate company." By the early 1990s, the problem was clear to Brennan: "We were undervalued."

Brennan's strategy of selling subsidiaries worked. In 1993, Sears achieved record earnings of \$2.37 billion net profits on sales of \$50 billion. The spin-offs unlocked the value of each business and made the individual companies easier to understand. From 1990 to 1995, the common stock value of Sears more than tripled, rising from \$22 to about \$80 per share, while the market capitalization (the total value of its outstanding shares) grew from \$7.5 billion to more than \$30 billion. When Brennan announced his retirement as CEO and president of Sears in 1995, the combined value of all current and former Sears assets was approximately \$80 billion. For the first time since 1931, the firm was primarily a retailer.

In 1974, Carole Simpson received an invitation to join the Washington bureau of NBC-TV, first working on a public affairs show and then serving as a substitute anchor for *NBC Nightly News* and weekend anchor for *Newsbreak* (1974–82). Over the next seven years, Simpson covered Capitol Hill, health care, the environment, and the 1980 presidential campaign. "What I had wanted to do was do Washington news," she remembers. "That's where the laws were being changed; that's where they were being written; that's where the action was. I wanted to be there."

In 1982, ABC News president Roone Arledge called Simpson. He was trying to build ABC into a leading network. "When I was at NBC, we used to call [ABC] the Almost Broadcasting Company, because it was small and pitiful," jokes Simpson. The joke didn't last long. "Arledge came in and changed everything," claims Simpson. "He started hiring people from all the networks to build up a strong bench of people. I now think we have the strongest bench of any of the networks."

Simpson moved to ABC as a general assignment correspondent in 1982, covering Vice President George Bush in the 1988 presidential campaign. Her talent quickly impressed ABC executives. In 1988, she was named anchorperson for ABC's *World News Saturday*. A year later, when she substituted for Peter Jennings on August 9, 1989, she became the first African American woman to anchor a major network newscast during the week.

Simpson's new visibility made her a national figure. In 1992, she was invited to serve as the moderator of the presidential debate held in Richmond, Virginia, with President George Bush and his challengers Bill Clinton and Ross Perot. This was the first debate with a town-meeting format, allowing 209 uncommitted voters to ask questions while Simpson moderated.



Even though Simpson was professionally indebted to Arledge, she was willing to raise sensitive issues. In 1985, she publicly confronted Arledge and demanded changes. “ABC had no women covering a major beat, no women heading up bureaus, no women at the level of the network vice president.” Arledge listened and instituted progressive changes at ABC. In 1991, at the Radio-Television News Directors Association’s annual convention, Simpson again she spoke out: “There’s a growing concern among many black Americans that there is racial bias and racial insensitivity in our news coverage.”

Brennan is grateful for the wide range of experiences his career has brought him. “One of the great satisfactions of my career is that I ended up running not Sears the merchandise company,” claims Brennan, “but Sears the corporation, which was Allstate, Dean Witter, Coldwell Banker, and Sears. I ended up in the financial services business, in the investment banking business, in the credit card business, in the insurance business—both property casualty and life insurance, in the real estate business, in the shopping center development business, in the residential real estate business. We took Coldwell Banker, then a California company, and made it a national company. We merged Dean Witter with Morgan Stanley. Today, I am blessed with having the opportunity to oversee very diversified businesses.”

Simpson’s journalism has resulted in numerous awards: a Dupont Award for stories on children at risk, the Outstanding Woman in Communication award from the YWCA of Metro Chicago (1974) for her documentaries on sickle cell anemia and SIDS, the Award of Courage from the Los Angeles chapter of NOW Education Fund (1987), the Milestone Award in Broadcast Journalism from the National Commission on Working Women (1988), and Journalist of the Year from the National Association of Black Journalists (1992). Her most memorable journalistic accomplishment, however, remains covering the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in South Africa for *Nightline*. “That was just incredible,” exclaims Simpson. “South Africa had become this huge thing with the sanctions and the demonstrations and the arrests. So I was sent down to cover the black side of the story.”

Brennan and his wife Lois pose with President Ronald Reagan in 1986.

In the course of events, Simpson became part of the story. “I was injured in a melee,” she remembers. “We had gone to a church in Johannesburg to celebrate the fact that Mandela was going to be released. We didn’t know that the police had surrounded the square outside the church and had declared [it] an unauthorized event. So as people are leaving the church, [the police] start beating with clubs. I was just caught up with the rest of the people and was beaten. I can remember seeing people all around me—their heads split open. I was hit on the back and had a bruised kidney, but nothing like I saw with [other] people. I saw an old woman about seventy being dragged by her ear by the police. It was so horrifying.” At some point, Simpson reached a nearby bus bench. “I was sitting down and trying to get myself together, and I noticed everybody got up,” she remembers. “They had put me at a white bus stop instead of the black one. I was sitting on the bench with white people, and they all had gotten up with disgust.” Simpson later received an Emmy Award (1990) for her coverage of Mandela’s release.

For Simpson and Brennan, Chicago will always remain a place of nostalgia and pride. “The experience that I had as a news reporter here, I wouldn’t trade for anything in the world,” exclaims Simpson. “Everybody talks about Chicago as still the best news town. I mean, there isn’t anything you won’t be covering.” Similarly, Brennan expounds upon Chicago’s virtues. “I’ve lived in ten different cities—from New York to Oshkosh,” Brennan points out. “Of the medium to large cities, Chicago has the best infrastructure of community leaders and business people that work together and really devote their time.” Simply put, “It’s a terrific community.”

Applauding successes, facing challenge

It was an opportunity to salute and savor achievement, but it was also a time to recognize the continuing struggle for many.

“It’s worse than 10 years ago,” lamented Carole Simpson, the award-winning broadcaster, about the shrinking numbers of minority women in her profession. Simpson, who began her career in Chicago radio and now is a correspondent for ABC News, had come to the 5th annual Midwest Women’s Center’s Tribute to Chicago Women on the heels of talks with ABC’s “World News Tonight” executives, where she pushed for improved opportunities and representation of minorities and women. The network ranked last in a recent university study underscoring the low visibility of women and minorities among on-air correspondents.

“We should be reflecting through our newscasts the diversity of our nation,” Simpson, as the keynote speaker, told the crowd of 850 corporate and community leaders, including Mayor Richard M. Daley.

Earlier, Simpson and honoree Renee Ferguson, a former CBS network correspondent now at Channel 5, agreed that inside lobbying may improve the situation, but viewers—of which women and minorities are a growing force—may have the ultimate impact by turning off broadcasts which do not reflect themselves. Until then, Simpson and others continue



Tribune photos by Michael Fyler

Carole Simpson (left) and Renee Ferguson

the quest for change.

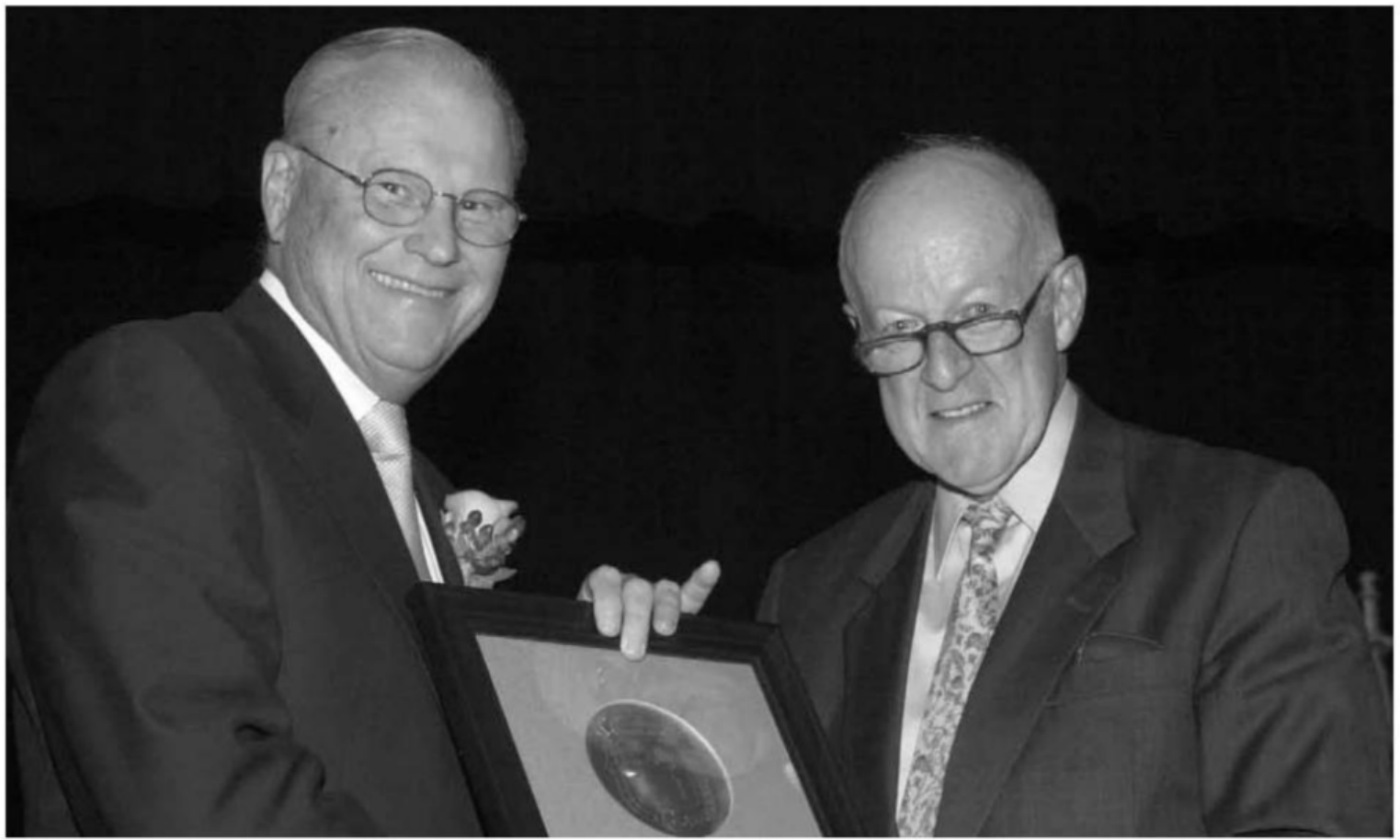
Camilla Moore, a regional manager for AT&T, approached Simpson: “You are such a wonderful role model—a real source of inspiration to me.” “That’s why I stay,” Simpson told a reporter. “That’s the payoff.”

Meanwhile, other role models also were mingling with admirers and colleagues during the fundraiser at the Chicago Hilton and Towers. The evening’s aim was to showcase extraordinary and unique achievers, and fuel the resource, advocacy and job skills training efforts of the center. The honorees were 10 women whose accomplishments and commitment to enhancing the quality of life in the Chicago area community had been—in

Simpson was the keynote speaker at the Fifth Annual Midwest Women’s Center’s Tribute to Chicago Women in 1990.



Carole Simpson (right) with her award presenter Carol Marin and CHS president Lonnie G. Bunch at the 2003 Making History Awards.



Richard Thomas (right) presents Edward A. Brennan (left) with his award at the 2003 Making History Awards.

Timothy J. Gilfoyle teaches American history at Loyola University Chicago and is the author of *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790–1920*.

ILLUSTRATIONS | 58–59, CHS; 61, courtesy of Edward A. Brennan; 62, CHS; 63, CHS, photograph by Declan Haun, ICHI-36732; 64, courtesy of Edward A. Brennan; 65, courtesy of WBBM Newsradio 780; 66, reprinted by arrangement with Sears, Roebuck and Co.; 67 left, CHS, ICHI-29623; 67 right, reprinted by arrangement with Sears, Roebuck and Co.; 68, “Anchor eyes an inside job in D.C.,” by Steve Daley, copyrighted August 18, 1988, Chicago Tribune Company. All rights reserved. Used with permission.; 70, courtesy of Edward A. Brennan; 71 top, “Applauding successes, facing challenge,” “Womanews,” copyrighted June 24, 1990, Chicago Tribune Company. All rights reserved. Used with permission.; 71 bottom, CHS; 72, CHS.

FOR FURTHER READING | The lives and careers of both Edward Brennan and Carole Simpson await more detailed study. The history of Sears and Brennan’s early career are described in vivid detail in *The Big Store: Inside the Crisis and Revolution at Sears* by Donald R. Katz (New York: Viking, 1987), especially chapter 9, entitled “The Kid.” Brief biographies of Simpson appear in Darlene Clark Hine, ed., *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia* (Brooklyn: Carlson, 1993), 1037; *Contemporary Black Biography*, vol. 30 (Detroit: Group, 2001); and *Who’s Who Among African Americans* (Detroit: Gale, 2002), 1,170.

THE 2003 MAKING HISTORY AWARDS were underwritten through a generous grant from The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust. The Trust honors the memory of Elizabeth Morse Genius (right), daughter of Charles Hosmer Morse, a nineteenth-century Chicago industrialist and land developer. The Trust supports programs that encourage self-reliance, foster self-esteem, and promote the arts, with an emphasis on helping children, youth, and the elderly of Chicago’s disadvantaged communities.

