

## Lynn Rose Roast

Richard Hull, with the assistance of Dale Riepe

You have heard Rollo Handy's explanation of his inference to Lynn Rose's potential talent as an administrator. So, with that high praise from such a master politician as Rollo Handy, one of the great mysteries of Lynn's career at UB has been his lack of political achievement. I have always thought Lynn Rose decided not to pursue the political life as a matter of principle, and after reading Plato's CRITO. For there Socrates acknowledges that

...if you transgress and err, what good will you do either to yourself or to your friends? That your friends will be driven into exile and deprived of citizenship, or will lose their property, is tolerably certain; and you yourself, if you fly to one of the neighboring cities, as, for example, Thebes or San Diego, both of which are well governed, will come to them as an enemy,... and their government will be against you, and all patriotic citizens will cast an evil eye upon you as a subverter of the laws.... For he who is a corrupter of the laws is more than likely to be a corrupter of the young and foolish portion of mankind.

It is my belief that Lynn's intention to retire to San Diego first occurred to him in 1967, his last year as Associate Chairman, and this stern warning of Plato's made it evident to him that, both for his own sake and the sake of his friends, he better not ever place himself under the laws. So it is that he has not registered to vote and has not participated in any elections since he last moved. He thus may claim no responsibility either for elected officials or the laws they pass, and (so he reasons) he thereby protects himself from any harsh judgments of his peers just in case one of them thinks he has subverted the laws, because he can truthfully say, Hey! I never voted for those guys! Truly a position of principle.

Well, that is a philosopher's explanation. I am married to a psychologist, however, and she is never interested in philosophical explanations but always wants neurophysiological ones, or, since she has worked out most of the translations from other parts of her discipline to her own field, psychological ones that she can reduce to neurophysiological ones. I thus set out to see if I could construct a psychological explanation of why Lynn Rose never rose to the high positions of departmental and university governance.

It is by now evident in this country at least that political success hangs upon three crucial abilities: the ability to delegate responsibility, the ability to get controversial legislation passed, and the ability to attain and hold the symbols of power.

It is my sad conclusion that Lynn Rose lacks all three of these abilities, and that those ineptitudes account for his failure to rise to the pinnacles of departmental power.

Let me illustrate. Lynn himself is on record, at the time last year of Rollo Handy's dinner, as admitting that, compared to Peter Hare, he had no ability to delegate. I can add further testimony to that in my small way with a story.

Lynn was Associate Chair under Rollo Handy when I was hired. Rollo once told Lynn that he could have a course reduction, but only if he could get someone to take the section. As I had not finished my dissertation before coming to Buffalo, Lynn wrote me in his capacity as department course scheduling officer to inform me that I would have to teach a third course in the fall. Now, fortunately for me, Lynn is a reasonable man and a sucker for special pleading. So, when I wrote back to him saying that I thought that was terribly unfair and unproductive, that

the department certainly had an interest in my finishing my Ph.D. so that I could be promoted to Assistant Professor and take up all sorts of responsibilities, and that his loading of another course on my would make it even more difficult for me to finish, Lynn accepted my argument and reversed his decision. This was but a typical example of Lynn's inability to advance his own interests by shifting his responsibilities onto others: he ended up himself teaching a full load of courses, doing the work of the associate chair, and also doing much of the work of the Chairman, who had mastered the art of delegating responsibility and delegated much of it to Lynn.

Participants in the retirement dinner for Dale Riepe some years ago will remember with delight the discovery that Lynn Rose not only has a sense of humor, but can tell a story on a colleague awfully well. Her spoke of overhearing an exchange between Riepe and their secretary Donna, one afternoon when Riepe had been dictating his endless stream of letters to Donna. After a couple hours of his, Riepe said, "Well, Donna, let's stop this for a while and have a sex break." (You will realize from the ensuing that the secretaries in this department have long had the policy that, to quote Judy's posted sign, "Sexual harassment in this department will not be reported. It will, however, be graded.") There was a pause after the proposal by Riepe, and then Donna said, "Well, Dr. Riepe, there IS that lounge chair in your office...." Rose reported another, shorter pause, then Riepe rather hastily said, "The next letter goes to David DeGroot. 'Dear David,..."

We have expected a letter from Riepe since Rose announced his retirement. This past week it came. I will not read all of it, as it rambles on quite a bit about the department in the 60s and 70s. But the following passage puts an entirely different light on Rose's report, and establishes the second of my psychological reasons why Lynn Rose never was successful in department politics. (Here I read from pages 3 and 1 of Dale's letter.)

So, you see, Lynn Rose was unable to acquire the symbols of power: John Anton's lounge chair, and the close, bantering association with a loyal secretary—surely, both essential to rising in the power structure of the department.

Finally, we come to Lynn Rose's inability to get legislation passed. In the late 60s and early 70s, there was an influx of young faculty into the department. The year I was hired, the department also hired Jesse Kalin, Mary Varney, Jim Brady, Neil Gallagher; it had just hired Chuck Pailthorp and Ken Barber and Bob Martin the years before, and would soon hire John Corcoran, Jorge Gracia, Carolyn Korsmeyer, etc. Many of us had had our graduate education in traditional departments, with the traditional requirements of reading knowledge in two languages, a week of comprehensive examinations at the end of the third year, and so forth. A number of us had not finished our dissertations before going onto the job market, and openings were so plentiful that we each had several offers despite being ABD.

We joined with a number of the senior faculty who were more reform minded to bring about some radical changes in the graduate program. The foreign language requirements were eliminated, except for cause. Comes were made optional, to be imposed or set aside for other forms of evaluation by Advisory Committees. A bicameral form of department governance was created.

The more conservative faculty grew increasingly alarmed at what they regarded as the radicalization of the department, the loss of standards, etc., and decided something would have to be done to curb our youthful excesses. Lynn Rose was approached by John Anton and others and asked if he wouldn't draft and marshal through passage an amendment to the

Department by-laws that would disenfranchise junior faculty from voting on major changes in the program and by-laws. Lynn carefully drafted such a measure, but then realized that, as it was presently the case that the junior faculty did vote on departmental by-laws changes, and as there was a 2/3rds majority required for passage, mathematically some of the junior faculty would have to vote to disenfranchise themselves. Lynn started quietly approaching those junior faculty he thought might be persuaded to go along.

Jesse Kalin and I got wind of this scheme, and we quickly drafted an amendment to Lynn's amendment. When it came up in departmental meeting for explicit consideration, we succeeded in getting our amendment to his amendment passed. The effect of our amendment was to make the new by-laws retroactive to the day before the vote would be taken. Thus, if the amended by-laws amendment passed, the votes of the junior faculty could not be counted, and the amendment would fail for lack of a 2/3rds majority. The result of this poison pill was that the matter was tabled for further study, and finally dropped.

I am afraid we were pretty insufferable then. Jesse and I were sitting in my office chortling at our victor when Ed Madden came down the hall, stern-faced, to tell us that we were not allowed to have a sense of humor in serious departmental business.

So, Lynn Rose never rose to the apex of departmental political power. There will be those of us, and I count myself among them, who will favor the principled, philosophical explanation that I gave earlier. It is interesting, however, to speculate on what would have happened if Lynn had not been a decent chap, and had made me teach three courses a semester. I probably never would have finished my dissertation; in that case I would certainly have been let go, Jesse and I would not have cooked up our poisoned pill, and who knows: John Anton might have been so impressed with Lynn's political victories that he would have willed him the lounge chair, and Donna with it.

Lynn, you were just too decent a fellow to be a politician!

Richard T. Hull  
Date to be recalled