

# Rep's wrap

## State House's Dolan retires with ribbing, reverence



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STAFF WRITER

**D**etermined, thoughtful, passionate, principled, volunteer extraordinary and a community treasurer.

That's how movers and shakers in the Farmington area chose to describe Jan Dolan, as the state representative was honored at a "Toast and Roast" attended by 142 people Wednesday night at Glen Oaks Country Club in Farmington Hills.

Dolan, who is ending her eighth and final year in the state House of Representatives, was treated to accolades and a few humorous jabs focusing on her years of service to the community, which has included serving as mayor and council member in Farmington Hills plus many groups and boards.

Proclamations were offered by Farmington and Farmington Hills, the state Legislature provided a resolution, and there was even a Special Congressional Recognition by U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg for "outstanding and valuable service."

State Sen. Willis Bullard, R-Highland, described Dolan as someone who could communicate with both political sides of the aisle: "When she spoke, people listened because she always had something thoughtful to say."

Dolan also worked hard to protect school funds, according to Farmington Schools Superintendent C. Robert Maxfield. "She has represented this community with passion, commitment, intelligence and love," he said.

Dolan's legislative legacy includes strong protection of home rule and other important issues, but she was probably best known for something more personal — promoting "potty parity," according to Gerson Cooper, CEO of Botsford Health Care.

Cooper also told of Dolan's determination, noting how she once rolled a wheelchair into a subcommittee meeting as part of the Botsford Board of Directors just a couple days after having hip replacement surgery in the hospital.

Dolan's son, Gary, introduced her family and treated the audience to a description of how his mother developed her management style by raising four boys

who are just 4 1/2 years apart. "She had to make sure we all cleaned up after ourselves and we all got our cookies. If that's not perfect training for the state Legislature, I don't know what is," he said.

Farmington Hills City Manager Dan Hobbs claimed he'd asked Dolan how to tell a Democrat from a Republican — one of several speakers who cited Dolan's less-than-conservative social voting record. Her "secret list" of ways to differentiate political parties included: "Democrats read most of the books banned somewhere. Republicans form censorship committees and read them in a group."

Among the gag gifts presented to Dolan was a coupon book for local items by Farmington Mayor Joanne McShane, include a free pass to serve as chauffeur for city officials in the Farmington/Farmington Hills Festival parade and a visit to a dinner meeting "so you won't forget what mystery chicken tastes like."

Jody Soronen, president of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, talked of knowing Dolan for more than 20 years, "when we both had dark hair."

Soronen told about campaigning door-to-door alongside Dolan, both under the direction of Nancy Bates, Farmington Hills councilwoman, Dolan staffer and longtime friend.

On one particularly hot day of walking the neighborhoods, Soronen said, she and Dolan stopped into a McDonald's to get a cold drink without telling Bates. Suddenly, a cell phone began to ring in a briefcase at another booth. "She looked at me and said, 'She found us, we've got to get out of here,'" Soronen said.

Dolan's future, according to Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi, includes serving as statewide director for the Democratic bingo operation.

Soronen wished Dolan "a life filled with joy and grandchildren."

And, Cathy Webb of the Farmington school board, asked Dolan to continue her leadership: "Keep on leading the charge 'cause we're ready to follow,'" Webb said.

After accepting a standing ovation, Dolan was clear to note she



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LEMICKI

**Hat trick:** Retiring state House Representative Jan Dolan receives some Minnie Pearl-style headgear from Farmington Mayor Jo Anne McShane, who suggested she wear it to judge garden shows. Many well-wishers gave the Dolan a proper send-off during Wednesday's retirement toast and at Glen Oaks Country Club.

had "never mentioned retirement."

She said she was thankful for her church, friends, co-workers, fellow volunteers and family. "It's been really great. I've really enjoyed it. I have some tremendous life experiences, and I don't care to repeat it," Dolan said.

Referring to a popular book title, Dolan said, "I'm in the springtime of my third adulthood — and I'm not done yet."

The evening was capped by a kilted bagpiper playing "Auld Lang Syne," while Dolan joined her family in singing, clapping and smiling along.



**Chat time:** Farmington Schools Trustee Cathy Webb, Dolan and Botsford Hospital President Gerson Cooper share some conversation with Jan Dolan. Webb, who was backed by Dolan, ran unsuccessfully for the Republican nomination in the 47th District state House primary.

**Kilt karma:** Dolan's family tune in to the bagful of pipe music played during the ceremony. The kilted bagpiper played "Auld Lang Syne" for the outgoing state representative.



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