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Thank You by Ed Martin

NOVEMBER 27TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

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*Submitted to
news@showmetimes.com*

Thanks for all you have done over the past year and thanks for all you will do in the future.

I meet many folks in my role as Missouri's Republican Party Chairman, who are unsung. They are too little noticed as they toil away keeping the wheels of the party rolling. I do try to say "thanks" as often as I can, though I cannot possibly say it often enough. To a person they are gracious. Their work is not for their own aggrandizement, they are all working away for the cause of liberty.

Republicans believe that our vision of America and government will better serve all Americans. We believe that orderly freedom needs a much smaller footprint than the government we have. Our beliefs, rooted in the Creator, yield our conservative principles: we love life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness BECAUSE we think these will lead to better things for ALL Americans.

Which brings me to Sharon Barnes. If you never met Sharon, you missed out. Sharon was as pretty as she was energetic. Sharon had a smile that lit up a room. She worked tirelessly for Republicans. Sharon was a leader on the St. Louis City Central Committee and the Missouri Federated Republican Women.

Sharon was a doer. The yearly Republican Picnic held in the big gazebo in Carondelet Park in the city of St. Louis was all her doing. It was at this picnic I gave one of my first stump speeches. In addition to organizing picnics, she staffed phone banks, threw parties, and worked the polls. Sharon Barnes was a civic treasure.

The love she held for her husband Geoff and their extended family was a wonderful example for all. There was no better friend than Sharon. Above all she loved the Lord which I know was the wellspring of her ebullient grace and cheer.

Two weeks ago, Sharon Barnes passed away. At her wake, I met her 83 year old mom, a sweet woman who exudes all those qualities you expect from a mother. It is clear who taught Sharon her virtues. Hundreds of people who loved Sharon gathered to pay respect. It was a bittersweet event.

A few weeks before Sharon went to be with the Lord she loved, I brought lunch to her house. Illness had taken a toll on her appearance, but her smile remained undimmed. So too was her spirit undiminished.

We prayed and laughed. (And hatched plans to beat Democrats!)

When I left, we hugged. Tightly. We both held on for a moment longer than usual. I told her we loved her and she said the same. What a privilege to know her. What a gift to have her as a friend and fellow Republican.

Don't forget to hug the ones you love this Thanksgiving. And tell them you love them. I am learning more and more how precious and too short is our time together.

God bless you all and thanks again.

Ed

Chairman, Missouri Republican Party

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