

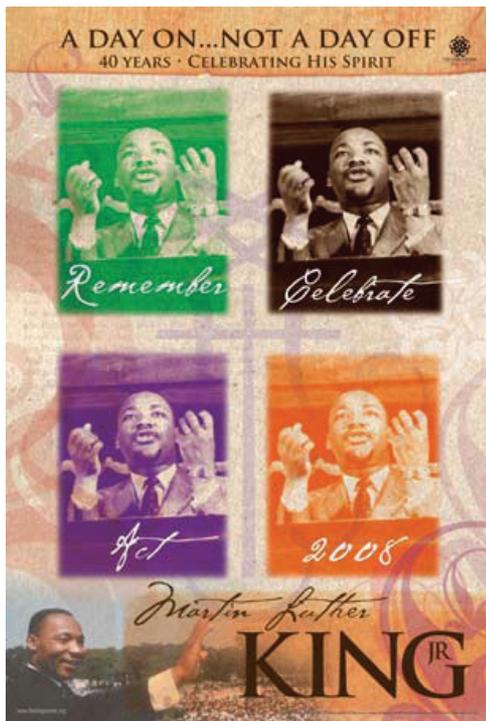
The 15th annual Hands On Atlanta Martin Luther King, Jr.

# SERVICE SUMMIT

Wednesday, January 16-Monday, January 21, 2008

Celebrate the life and teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The 15th annual Hands On Atlanta Martin Luther King, Jr. Service Summit explores civil rights history and current social issues through films, symposium, keynote speakers, a literary series and a traditional freedom rally. The Service Summit, which takes place in Atlanta's King Historic District and other locations throughout the city, concludes with a day of community-wide service. Most events are free and all are open to the public.

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# IN REMEMBRANCE



LISA BARON

If anyone was going to change the world, it was my friend Elizabeth (Lizzie) Prostic. I first met Lizzie in 1996. We were two young staffers on the campaign of Republican nominee for president of the United States Bob Dole. Basically, we were secretaries, but they called us “assistants” and we called it big fun. We answered the phone and fetched the coffee and dry cleaning for a couple of hot shots. Lizzie was the assistant to the chief pollster, and I was the assistant to the guy who oversaw all the commercials and media buying. Our desks were right around the hall from each other on the top floor of a skyscraper that stood next door to CNN’s Washington, D.C. headquarters. Every major political name and face passed through our buildings and also by our desks. On slow days, when the halls were particularly quiet, we went to find “them.” We had a system to alert each other when Elizabeth Dole was in the bathroom applying her drugstore lipstick. When Jesse Jackson was at the salad bar in the office building’s cafeteria, we ran downstairs and took our picture with him. We wrote “Hymie Town” on the Polaroid in big black Sharpie (Lizzie and I are both Jewish), and we hung it proudly above my desk.

**COMMITTED**

My friend Lizzie was beautiful. I can still see her perfectly in my mind. She had perfectly flushed rosy cheeks, soft eyes and deep brown caramel hair that fell into perfectly formed ringlets. She was stunning. Lizzie graduated from University of Pennsylvania with a double major in political science and diplomatic history. That is what I loved about Lizzie. She was unusually smart and unusually beautiful. Intellectually, she ran circles around half that building—and most men. She was the perfect candidate to advance the women’s movement. And she loved me, even though I probably set the movement back a couple decades every time I traipsed in with my micro-mini and my three-inch heels celebrating happy hour at my desk every evening. There I was, Ms. Arizona State in a sea of ivy leaguers, my desk was the only one on the top floor of a presidential campaign lined with empty red wine bottles. Empty because I drank them, usually by myself.

We worked and played through the primary, the nomination process out in San Diego, and we returned, freshly tanned, back to Washington, D.C. for the general election. You might find this hard to believe, but when you lose the general election for president of the United States, there aren’t a lot of jobs up for grabs in the White House. So we disbanded. I gallivanted around the country working as a press secretary on a variety of campaigns on behalf of an array of

candidates before finally landing in Atlanta. Lizzie stayed in Washington, D.C. She married her college sweetheart, worked on Capitol Hill and entered law school.

I always promised myself that I would look for Lizzie. But something always came up. I got married and changed jobs. I traveled and moved homes, and then I had a baby. With every move, I thought about Lizzie and what she was doing, where she was and how she was—and how she was making the world a better place. And when I finally got around to reconnecting, I learned that I will never see her again. Lizzie died of breast cancer in 2005. She died at the age of 31, leaving behind her husband and 10-month-old daughter. I found out through an e-mail, from another old friend with whom I reconnected last year.

The slug on the e-mail read: Lizzie. I thought I had found her! When I opened the e-mail, there was an article that had been cut and pasted into the body. The headline read: “Capitol Hill Mourns Recent Death of former Senate Staffer.” At 35 years old, I figured I would start hearing about friends getting divorced, not friends dying. It was intangible to me that Lizzie had been gone for two years already, because she still felt so close to my heart. Even though I hadn’t talked to Lizzie in more than 10 years, I still felt the ache in my chest that comes with losing a dear friend. I mourned knowing that I would never be able to laugh with her again. That I will never be able to tell her about Jimmy, to show her pictures of Micah and reminisce about the campaign. I was devastated that breast cancer took the life of my friend.

Lizzie was diagnosed with stage four breast cancer in October 2004. According to the American Cancer Society, the five-year survival rate for stage four is 16 percent. She died March 31, 2005. Lizzie’s physical life is over. And now we are left asking why? Why does God take young mothers? Why did he take, of all people, Lizzie Prostic? We will never know. But we do know that her blood and her soul pump through her daughter. We do know that her spirit can still thrive. But only on one condition: That our lives, the one she touched during her brief 31 years on Earth, carry her torch and incorporate her essence into our lives. Lizzie can still change the world. One of us, the lucky ones who knew her and understood her strength and her determination and her desire to empower women to maintain their femininity while pursue true equality in the work place, will pick up where she left off. We will make our lives count for Lizzie. I miss you, sweet friend. **SP**

*Lisa Baron is a communication consultant, which you’d think would be helpful in a marriage. She lives in the suburbs with her husband, Jimmy, and her son, Micah. E-mail her at [lisabaron@sundaypaper.com](mailto:lisabaron@sundaypaper.com).*



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