



Letter to the Editor from Kurt Prenzler

by Kurt Prenzler

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Illinois citizens are mourning the loss of a remarkable woman and politician who I believe held one of the toughest jobs in state government. Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka died early Wednesday.

Like everyone, I was stunned to learn of her passing, more so because I called her office on Tuesday and left her a voice message complimenting the government transparency section of the comptroller's website.

Why do I say she had one of the toughest jobs? As comptroller, Judy was in charge of the state's checkbook and paid the bills. It was her job to prioritize who got paid from the backlog that reached as high as \$8.5 billion. She didn't create the mess, but her staff had to take the calls from angry vendors awaiting payment.

I had the pleasure of being around her on several occasions. She was one-of-a-kind. She had a great sense of humor and her personality lit up the room. And she was known for being frugal. She sometimes bought her clothes at thrift stores.

She will leave a legacy of fiscal conservatism. It will be hard to fill her shoes.

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