



## this issue:

Desiree Rogers,  
 Special Assistant to the  
 President and White House  
 Social Secretary

## Who is Desiree Rogers? In with the party crowd...

Desiree Rogers is a consummate insider, party girl, and fashionista. She loves to push the envelope and play by her own rules; she will do nearly anything to get ahead. She has gained notoriety lately because her office failed to prevent three uninvited guests from “crashing” a state dinner at the White House.

Rogers has a favorite saying which is the French version of “Let the good times roll.”

Fn.1. And since she and the Obamas entered the White House, the good times have rolled—for the Obamas. Meanwhile, ordinary Americans are grappling with the deepest recession in decades.

Through December 3, 2009 the White House had hosted 170 parties and social events, which means that the White House has

averaged more than one event every two days since Obama took office. This record of partying is even more impressive when one considers

the President’s extensive travels to numerous countries during that time period. Fn.2.

### Political Chameleon

Rogers is an opportunist. In 1992 she was an alternate delegate to the Republican National Convention. *Id.* In 1994 she was on the list of potential candidates to run for lieutenant governor of Illinois as a

**“The number of parties that the White House is throwing under Rogers’ watch is staggering. One is left to wonder how many millions of dollars Rogers’ office has spent partying while many in this country are in great economic distress.”**

*-Bill Wilson, President, Americans for Limited Government*

Republican. “Other potential candidates include: ... Illinois Lottery Director Desiree Rogers.” Fn.3. In 1997 the Republican gubernatorial candidate [Illinois Secretary of State George Ryan] considered Rogers for his ticket. Fn.4. Rogers then at some point switched sides becoming a prominent Obama  
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## Rogers’ Background

Special Assistant to the President and Social Secretary, The White House

President of Social Networking, Allstate Financial

President, North Shore Gas and Peoples Gas

Senior Vice President, Chief Marketing Officer, People’s Energy Corp.

Director, Illinois Department of the Lottery

### EDUCATION

B.A., Wellesley College

M.B.A., Harvard University

## Sources for further reading:

**Fn.1.** Hilary Alexander, *Michelle Obama's 'eyes' in fashion's front row at New York Fashion Week*, THE DAILY TELEGRAPH, February 17, 2009. Available online at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/fashion/new-york-fashion-week/4644471/Michelle-Obamas-eyes-in-fashion-front-row-at-New-York-Fashion-Week.html>. (Accessed January 6, 2010.)

**Fn.2.** Bob Sexter and Katherine Skiba, *Desiree Rogers: Dinner gaffe puts spotlight on Obama's social chief*, THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE, December 4, 2009. Available online at: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/chicago-desiree-rogers-04-dec04.0.7867771.story>. (Accessed January 6, 2009.)

**Fn.3.** Jim Merriner, *Didrickson Leads List of Candidates*, THE CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, June 28, 1994, at 6.

**Fn.4.** Adriana Colindres and Bernard Schoenburg, *Wood expected to be named Ryan running mate*, COPLEY NEWS SERVICE, November 3, 1997.

**Fn.5.** Amy Chozick, *Desiree Rogers' Brand Obama*, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL MAGAZINE, April 30, 2009. Available online at: <http://magazine.wsj.com/features/the-big-interview/desiree-rogers/>. (Accessed January 6, 2009.)

**Fn.6.** Alf Siewers, *Report rips Illinois Lottery*, THE CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, April 23, 1991. Available online at: <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-4050787.html>. (Accessed January 6, 2010.)

**Fn.7.** BBB ratings of these companies are available online at the following links: <http://www.bbb.org/chicago/business-reviews/insurance-companies/blue-cross-and-blue-shield-of-illinois-in-chicago-il-4247>, <http://www.bbb.org/chicago/business-reviews/real-estate-services/equity-residential-in-chicago-il-73000697>, <http://www.bbb.org/chicago/business-reviews/natural-gas-companies/peoples-gas-in-chicago-il-88010016>. (Accessed January 5, 2009.)

**Fn.8.** Report of the Auditor General on the Department of the Lottery, 1997. Available online at: <http://auditor.illinois.gov/Audit-Reports/Compliance-Agency-List/Lottery/FY97-Lottery-FIN-COMP-digest.pdf>. (Accessed January 6, 2009.)

# What you really need to know about Rogers

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supporter. "Rogers held parties at her house and called former classmates from Harvard and long-standing friends in New Orleans during the 2008 campaign to help raise as much as \$200,000 for Mr. Obama's presidential bid, according to federal records." Fn.5.

## Helping the Poor . . . Blow their Money

In 1991 shortly after Rogers took over the lottery, a report was published showing that poor people were paying the price of the lottery. Rogers dismissed the criticism.

Illinois State Lottery director Desiree Rogers disagreed with the report, saying, "We view the lottery as a form of entertainment, not gambling," and that lotteries do not prey on the poor. Fn.6.

## "F" is not for "Fine"

Rogers has ties to several poorly rated organizations. For example, she sat on the board of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois for over five years. The Better Business Bureau (BBB) has given them an F rating. The company earned the rating in part by failing to respond to dozens of customer complaints. For over five years, Rogers sat on the board of Equity Residential. That company also received an F rating from the BBB in part for failing to resolve complaints.

The company that she presided over, People's Gas, also earned an F rating from the BBB for failing to respond to complaints.

Rogers served for over a dozen years on the board--most recently as vice-chairman--of the Museum of Science and Industry. The BBB gave them a D- rating, which is the second worst rating possible. Fn.7.

## Above the Law

In 1996 Rogers was informed by the Illinois Auditor General that the lottery department had no authority to skim tens of millions of dollars off the top and pay contractors. Rogers insisted that the department did have the authority and continued to make the unauthorized payments. When the lottery department finally decided to check with the Illinois Attorney General, he agreed with the Auditor General.

On November 12, 1997, the Attorney General issued an opinion which stated "the Department does not possess the authority to make payment for the specified operating expenses from Lottery ticket sales prior to their deposit into the State Lottery Fund." Fn.8.

## NomineeAlert

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