

JILL MICHAELS, Candidate for Obama Delegate, South Strafford, VT

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I have been active in the Democratic Party for 40 years, first in the streets of Philadelphia, then on the byways of Vermont— highlights of those years include:

- Won once, defeated 2x for committeewoman, in the 25th district of South Philadelphia's, "bloody 5th Ward"
- Volunteer, campaigns to recall Philadelphia Mayor Rizzo and to change charter to forbid him a third term
- Staff, Ed Rendell's insurgent (winning) DA campaign
- Volunteer, Rendell's first (losing) Mayoral campaign
- VT State Delegate for Bill Clinton's Presidential bid
- Fundraiser for Matt Dunne
- Organizer for Scudder Parker
- Active Democrat in Town of Strafford; Orange and Windsor Counties

I began my working life as a community organizer in the low-income and minority neighborhoods of Philadelphia and my political activity in what was then known as the "bloody fifth ward" of that city. Even though I am a woman "of a certain age" who might be expected to support Hillary Clinton, my days as an organizer meant that I was attracted immediately to Obama's brilliant expansion of local community organizing strategies into a national movement. And when he took that vision and incorporated the web-based fundraising and 50-state strategy of our own Howard Dean, I knew immediately that Barack Obama was very, very special.

It was an added bonus that Obama comes from Saul Alinsky's own Chicago. For those too young to know or remember, Alinsky literally wrote the book on modern community organizing.

I also could almost feel, even at a distance of 300+ miles, the enormous pride that the members of the Philadelphia communities I worked in so long ago were taking in seeing this smart and engaging man take the country by storm.

It didn't take long for me to realize I had the opportunity to be a very small part of the dawn of a new era.

33 years ago, after loosing the race for precinct captain in the 25th division of Philadelphia's 5th Ward (for the second time) I promised my son I would never run for anything again (he has always hated to lose, and it was at least as bad if I lost). This is the first time I've gone back on that promise, but he understands -- he's an Obama supporter, too. He knows, as I do, that this is an historic moment.

My neighbor, long time political activist Ned Coffin, has offered the following endorsement of my candidacy:

In the opinion of this old pol, the delegates to the Democratic convention need two very special qualifications, regardless of the outcome:

- *One is lengthy experience in politics, (including the experience of losing), so as to understand how compromises must be and can be negotiated whether on the winning or losing side.*
- *The second is persuasive skill, because it is going to take every bit of that to bind the deep wounds this campaign has created, not just at the top but through all levels of the party and with other delegates.*

I believe Jill Michaels has these skills, and I hope you will support her candidacy.