

Damon and Pythias Reconsidered

Their right hands gripped. . . . The warmth of the friendship that existed between them was plainly revealed.

Both were of noble proportions. . . . It would have been odd if a pair so well matched should not have been drawn by the call of like to like, into friendship.

But the years that had passed since their first meeting had steadily disclosed the fidelity, courage and honor that were at the core of each of the two friends' character, and had long since ripened their feeling of mutual respect into an enduring love.

—Albert Payson Terhune, *The Story of Damon and Pythias*

TO STUDENTS OF PHILADELPHIA'S POLITICAL HISTORY, the names Damon and Pythias mean only one pair of politicians: Joseph Sill Clark Jr. and Richardson Dilworth, the men who inaugurated the current era of Democratic rule in Philadelphia. Although they had been politically active for nearly two decades, their names were relatively unknown in the Quaker City until Dilworth splashed onto the front pages in 1947 and declared virtual war on the rapacious Republican organization that had held sway in Philadelphia since the Civil War.

Unlike the gentlemen politicians who governed antebellum Philadelphia, the GOP bosses who wielded power from midcentury on had no family fortunes or respected family businesses to sustain them. They had little use for classical liberal education or governmental theory. Politics was their livelihood, a means through which they could amass their own fortunes at the expense of their fellow citizens. They possessed exceptional organizational skills, unusual degrees of self-discipline and personal charisma, and a capacity to act with ruthless cunning and calculation. They utilized their innate skills, the power of their personalities, and the promise of financial gain to dominate the political life of the city.¹

The two most successful nineteenth-century Republican bosses were “King” James McManes and “Sweet” William Stokley, who used, respec-

¹ See Peter McCaffery, *When Bosses Ruled Philadelphia: The Emergence of the Republican Machine, 1867–1933* (University Park, PA, 1993).

tively, the Philadelphia Gas Trust and the Public Buildings Commission to rule the city. By the turn of the century, they had been supplanted by Iz Durham, “Sunny Jim” McNichol, and the Vare brothers. For a brief time following Bill Vare’s death, reform seemed possible, but ultimately the would-be Democratic reformers of the 1930s—John B. Kelly and Matthew McCloskey—lost their bid for control of city hall. Consequently, unlike many large northern cities, Philadelphia did not go Democratic during the New Deal era. By 1947, Philadelphia had been suffering under Republican machine rule—a regime once described as “the most thoroughly organized and uniformly successful incarnation of the spoils system in the entire country”—for nearly a century.² During the following two years, a scandal of epic proportions would rock the city, exposing the theft of over \$40 million and leading to the suicide of five city officials, the conviction of several others, and the dawn of the era of Democratic reform led by a new pair of gentlemen politicians—Clark and Dilworth. While reform continued only through the mayoral years of Clark and Dilworth (1951–62), Democratic rule continued and eventually became as entrenched as the Republican rule it replaced.³

It is not clear who first compared the heroes of an ancient Greek fable to the leaders of Philadelphia’s mid-twentieth-century reform movement, but by the late 1950s the reference had become part of the city’s political lore. “Clark and Dilworth,” wrote Stewart Alsop in 1957, “are called, inevitably, the Damon and Pythias of politics and it is widely assumed, even in Philadelphia, that their relationship has been one long, mutual lovefest.”⁴ Journalist Paul Beers perpetuated the comparison twenty years later in his popular work on Pennsylvania politics:

Clark and Dilworth were the Damon and Pythias of midcentury Pennsylvania politics. There was never such a pair for controversy, flam-

² Clinton Rogers Woodruff, “Philadelphia’s Revolution,” *Yale Review*, o.s., 15 (May 1906): 8–23.

³ See Special Committee on City Finance, *Philadelphia’s Management: An Appraisal by the Committee of Fifteen* (Philadelphia, 1948), 16, 46; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Mar. 10, 1948, June 10, 1948, Sept. 7, 1948, Oct. 28, 1948, Nov. 23, 1948, Jan. 11, 1949; *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, May 26, 1948, Sept. 28, 1948; G. Terry Madonna and John Morrison McLarnon III, “Reform in Philadelphia: Joseph S. Clark, Richardson Dilworth, and the Women Who Made Reform Possible, 1947–1949,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 127 (2003): 57–88. For a succinct summary of the charges against the city Republicans, see ADA Research Committee, “File of the Facts No. 12: The Bill of Indictment, A Summary of the Charges against the Republican Organization,” Nov. 1949, Joseph Sill Clark Papers (Collection 1958), Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁴ Stewart Alsop, “The Paradox of Gentleman Joe,” *Saturday Evening Post*, Apr. 27, 1957.

boyance, and verbiage. They were rich men who hungered for votes and civic achievement. For the 34 years they were active in the political arena, they were either lavishly admired or fulsomely despised, but never ignored.⁵

It was a convenient phrase—a short but memorable remark, a slogan useful in political marketing. It defined Clark and Dilworth as blood brothers totally devoted to each other and united in the battle against corruption and tyranny. Few people, however, actually know the details of the ancient Greek fable. If they did, they would also know that describing the Clark-Dilworth team as Damon and Pythias was almost total fiction. That is the reason Alsop followed up his reference to the comparison by stating categorically, “Nothing could be further from the truth.”⁶

And yet that assertion too is not totally accurate. The two possessed a number of similarities. Just as Terhune describes both his heroes as being “of noble proportions,” Clark and Dilworth shared similar social proportions. Both—to make another Hellenic reference—were “gentlemen of rank and breeding.”⁷ Both were born into wealthy, upper-class families that spent summers on the beaches of Southampton, Long Island. Both attended New England prep schools only twenty miles from each other. Both attended Ivy League universities where they competed in multiple intercollegiate sports, and both graduated from Ivy League law schools. But the assumption that the two enjoyed a lifelong friendship dating from those idyllic summers on the Long Island beaches is a mischaracterization—something Clark corrected in his March 1975 interview with Walter Phillips Jr. As Clark described it, both he and Dilworth had learned “the American way of life on the beaches of Southampton.” But “Dick was several years older than I and was always a glamorous figure. . . . We didn’t know each other terribly well at the time because the difference between being fourteen and being seventeen is a very great one at those ages.” It was not until Dilworth moved to Philadelphia that the relationship between the two developed.⁸

⁵ Paul B. Beers, *Pennsylvania Politics Today and Yesterday: The Tolerable Accommodation* (University Park, PA, 1980), 193.

⁶ Alsop, “Paradox of Gentleman Joe.”

⁷ Werner Jaeger and Gilbert Highet, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, vol. 1, *Archaic Greece: The Mind of Athens* (New York, 1986), 20.

⁸ Joseph S. Clark, interview by Walter Phillips Jr., Mar. 18, 1975, Walter Phillips Jr. Oral History Project, Urban Archives, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia.

On balance, there were more differences than similarities between the two. Clark was aloof, pompous, arrogant, and openly contemptuous of professional politicians. Natalie Saxe, a Dilworth assistant, described Clark as a “wasp snob—anti-political organization, anti-ethnic, and a loner.”⁹ He was keenly aware of his social standing and virtually incapable of laughing at himself. As Dilworth described him, “Joe didn’t like company. He never felt easy with political leaders and ward heelers.”¹⁰ “Joe could be a terrible snob,” recounted Franklin & Marshall College professor Sidney Wise, who served as an aide to Clark in 1965. “I suspect the only reason he took me into that office was because I graduated from Harvard.”¹¹

Another F&M professor, Richard Schier, who also worked in Clark’s Washington Senate office, similarly found Clark “aloof, distant, snobbish, introverted, and a loner.” Schier described Clark and Dilworth as studies in contrast, with Clark “leaving one with the impression that you were bothering him, while Dilworth made you feel that he had been waiting all his life to meet you.”¹² According to protégé and campaign operative Joe Stratos, Dilworth had charm and a “certain degree of integrity about himself; we became friends from the first day we met.”¹³ The difference between Dilworth and Clark became particularly obvious when they appeared together:

If we had a political grouping in some room prior to a dinner or a speech, and if Clark would walk into the room he wouldn’t shake anyone’s hands. He would go up to somebody he knew and that was it. Dilworth came in and everyone flocked around him and he was shaking everyone’s [hand].¹⁴

Dilworth was far more personable and appeared not nearly as impressed with his family background or his Ivy League pedigree. But as Natalie Saxe, his assistant who knew him best, remembered, he was “in no small measure a perfectly hideous snob. It never showed through the

⁹ Natalie Saxe, interview by Walter Phillips Jr., Aug. 1989, Phillips Oral History Project.

¹⁰ Richardson Dilworth, interview by Steven G. Neal, in “Reflections of a Crusty Reformer,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Jan. 7, 1973.

¹¹ Sidney Wise, interview by G. Terry Madonna, Jan. 17, 1990.

¹² Richard Schier, interview by G. Terry Madonna, June 8, 1989.

¹³ Joseph Stratos, interview by Walter Phillips Jr., Jan. 24, 1979, Phillips Oral History Project.

¹⁴ William Rafsky, interview by Walter Phillips Jr., Oct. 25, 1989, Phillips Oral History Project.

way it did with Joe Clark” because “Dick essentially liked and understood other human beings while Joe did not. He [Dilworth] disguised it beautifully.”¹⁵

Both men were labeled “silver spoon liberals,” but only Clark behaved like one. Dilworth possessed a genuine empathy for people from all walks of life. “He was the type of person who really cared,” and it was in that concern that his progressive reform instincts were rooted.¹⁶ Clark seemed to pursue a career in politics out of a sense of noblesse oblige. He once said that, like his father, he did not need to work for a living. But while his father was “completely devoid of a social conscience,” he could not, like the elder Clark, spend his time in self-indulgent pursuits.¹⁷ He felt it was his responsibility to help the less fortunate, but he did not have the slightest desire to have any personal interaction with the underclass whose lot he felt obligated to improve. An incident from his senatorial years was particularly revealing. As Wise recalls:

Joe was deeply into housing and that sort of stuff. Bernie [Norwich] took him through this slum housing and there were people living there; you can imagine what they looked like, and there’s the senator—he was terribly, terribly upset by this exposure and he said to Bernie: “Don’t you ever do that to me again.” It’s part of that description heard many times about Joe. He loved humanity but he wasn’t too sure about people.¹⁸

Clark’s sense of superiority extended to the treatment of his staff. He could, occasionally, show remarkable warmth to those who worked for him. On one occasion he took the time to call assistant William Rafsky’s wife the day she came home from the hospital with the couple’s second child. But Rafsky said later, “I’ll admit I’m more the exception than the rule.”¹⁹ More typical was the experience of Natalie Saxe: “I was made to feel very much like a paid flunky by Joe Clark and rather more like a human being by Dick Dilworth, so it’s easy to see more and more that I worked on the Dilworth meetings.”²⁰ To be fair, Clark’s apparent superior attitude extended to the mighty and powerful as well. According to Wise, he expressed his disdain for Senate majority leader and later president

¹⁵ Natalie Saxe, interview by Walter Phillips Jr., Jan. 15, 1975, Phillips Oral History Project.

¹⁶ Stratos interview.

¹⁷ Alsop, “Paradox of Gentleman Joe.”

¹⁸ Wise interview.

¹⁹ Rafsky interview.

²⁰ Natalie Saxe, interview by Walter Phillips Jr., July 30, 1974, Phillips Oral History Project.

Lyndon Johnson on numerous occasions. As Wise recalled, “He hated Lyndon with an irrational passion. I think a lot of it was sociological. Joe could be a terrible snob.”²¹

Dilworth, nonetheless, was far from perfect. As a young lawyer, he liked to drink; in fact, he met John O’Hara—the great American novelist who would become his best friend—in a New York speakeasy. By the early 1930s, Dilworth had developed a serious drinking problem. He credited his wife Anne with picking him “up out of the gutter” and “straightening him out.”²² He was never able, however, to shake his reputation as a heavy drinker. During the 1955 mayoral campaign, Nancy Claghorn Longstreth, the wife of his opponent, claimed Anne never left Dilworth’s side because he was an “uncontrollable alcoholic.”²³ Two years later when Stewart Alsop wrote that Dilworth had not taken a drink in seven years, Anne responded derisively, “Who the hell told him that?”²⁴

Dilworth had a well-developed sense of humor, but it could have a remarkably caustic edge, especially when talking about Philadelphia WASP society; Saxe characterized him as “mean-little-kid enough to enjoy thumbing his nose at the very establishment he wanted to be part of.”²⁵ His description of Main Line Protestants’ anxiety over the prospect of a Catholic in the White House was typical:

Many [are] talking of resettling in Canada or returning to their native lands of England, Scotland or Wales. Since most of their forebears had to get out of those countries in a hurry to avoid debt proceedings or criminal proceedings, I do not believe their reentry would be as smooth as they may think. . . . Having been one of the original Kennedy backers, I am not in any immediate danger of being subjected to the inquisition which the citizens of our Main Line appear to believe will be inflicted upon white Protestants in the next four years.²⁶

Dilworth’s sarcastic wit contributed to his reputation as one of the great bare-knuckled political fighters that Philadelphia has produced in

²¹ Wise interview.

²² Natalie Saxe, interview by Walter Phillips Jr., Jan. 23, 1975, Phillips Oral History Project.

²³ Richardson Dilworth to Harold Sterling Vanderbilt, Oct. 20, 1955, Richardson Dilworth Papers (Collection 3112), Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

²⁴ Richardson Dilworth to Stewart Alsop, Apr. 22, 1957, Dilworth Papers.

²⁵ Saxe interview, Jan. 15, 1975.

²⁶ Richardson Dilworth to Harold Sterling Vanderbilt, Nov. 16, 1960, Dilworth Papers.

the twentieth century. For Clark, this was one of Dilworth's least attractive personality traits. According to Rafsky, "Clark thought Dilworth was too political; he thought he was kind of an abrupt person who shot from the hip."²⁷ Dilworth's public remarks, his "off-the-cuff nastiness in the form of vicious remarks against the opposition," became almost legendary; few colleagues and even fewer opponents were immune.²⁸ Of James Tate, his successor in the mayor's office, he opined, "As a mayor he absolutely stinks, he is primarily a ward leader with the mentality of a ward leader."²⁹ Another fellow Democrat (later turned Republican), Arlen Specter, was "extremely able and would make a very good mayor but his trouble is that he is a sort of Jewish Tom Dewey—tremendously efficient but unlovable."³⁰ Harry Luce, publisher of *Time* magazine, "combine[d] the worst features of the boy scout and the Chicago gangster";³¹ Charles J. Hepburn, chairman of the reform-minded Committee of Seventy, was "a dilettante self-styled reformer who cannot believe anybody is honest but himself";³² and Frank Rizzo, yet another Democratic mayor, was just plain stupid. According to Dilworth:

Rizzo announced that Nixon is the greatest president this country has ever had. When asked if he had overlooked Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and the two Roosevelts, it was apparent the mayor was not quite sure who these gentlemen were or whether any of them had, in fact, ever been president.³³

Dilworth seemed to save his most colorful remarks for 1955 mayoral opponent Thatcher Longstreth. Longstreth was, variously, "a big, good-natured clown who wears argyle socks," a "sanctimonious Quaker" who "would undoubtedly slit his own Mother's throat to get what he wants," and a "big, good-natured, not-too-bright human replica of a St. Bernard puppy. The only drawback being that he does not have a keg of brandy

²⁷ Rafsky interview.

²⁸ Natalie Saxe to Jo W. Saxe, no date, Natalie Saxe Randall Papers (Collection 3466), Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

²⁹ Richardson Dilworth to Stewart Alsop, Nov. 27, 1967, Dilworth Papers.

³⁰ Ibid. Specter was subsequently elected to five terms in the US Senate as a Republican before returning to the Democratic Party in 2009 for an unsuccessful bid for a sixth term.

³¹ Richardson Dilworth to John O'Hara, June 29, 1961, Dilworth Papers.

³² Richardson Dilworth to Charles J. Hepburn, Jan. 6, 1954, Dilworth Papers.

³³ Richardson Dilworth to Stewart Alsop, Apr. 26, 1962, Dilworth Papers.

hanging from his neck.”³⁴ Dilworth was equally unkind to Mrs. Longstreth, calling her a “hatchet-faced young lady, a typical product of Chestnut Hill.” “If I should win,” he confided to longtime friend Harold “Mike” Vanderbilt, “I hope to have the opportunity of kicking Mrs. Longstreth in a very prominent part of her anatomy.”³⁵

Such venom might have seemed shocking coming from the normally suave, impeccably tailored Dilworth—the man Clark labeled “D’Artagnan in long pants and a double-breasted suit.”³⁶ But as Dilworth once admitted to independent Republican Arthur Binns, “to lick them you literally have to wade through rivers of mud.”³⁷ Dilworth’s willingness to get down in the mud may have been the reason why, in the estimation of one Clark intimate, Clark “didn’t think that Dilworth was the kind of person he would normally want to associate with,” even when the two men shared such similar backgrounds.³⁸

Clark was the scion of an old Chestnut Hill family. His grandfather Enoch founded E. W. Clark & Company and oversaw its growth into one of the most successful financial firms in the city. An amateur Egyptologist, he endowed the chair in Babylonian research at the University of Pennsylvania. Enoch’s second son, Joseph Sill Clark Sr., matriculated at Harvard, where he won the first intercollegiate singles and doubles tennis championships. After college and law school he went into the family business. He also continued his tennis career and was eventually elected president of the US Lawn Tennis Association. He married Kate Richardson Avery of Avery Island, Louisiana. Her father, Daniel, owned a sugar plantation on the island, and her brother-in-law Edmund was the founder of the McIlhenny Company, producers of Tabasco hot pepper sauce. Joe Sr. lost much of his fortune in the 1929 stock market crash, but in 1945 oil was discovered on the island property Kate had inherited and the family’s financial well-being was restored.

The Clarks resided at “Kate’s Hall,” a fifteen-acre estate in Chestnut Hill built by Joseph Sr. for his wife at the turn of the century. Joseph Jr. was born into this life of privilege in 1901. He attended Chestnut Hill

³⁴ Richardson Dilworth to Walter Annenberg, Aug. 6, 1971; Dilworth to John O’Hara, Oct. 6, 1955; and Dilworth to Harold Sterling Vanderbilt, Oct. 20, 1955.

³⁵ Richardson Dilworth to Harold Sterling Vanderbilt, Oct. 20, 1955.

³⁶ Roger Butterfield, “Revolt in Philadelphia,” *Saturday Evening Post*, Nov. 9, 1952.

³⁷ Richardson Dilworth to Arthur Binns, July 18, 1949, Dilworth Papers.

³⁸ Rafsky interview.

Academy and Middlesex Preparatory School in Concord, Massachusetts, where his classmates included Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. He matriculated at Harvard University, where he “played centerfield on the baseball team and was a sprinter on the track team.”³⁹ He graduated from Harvard in 1923 and from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1926. After finishing at Penn, he joined the firm Clark, Clark, McCarthy & Wagner, where his father was senior partner. Within months he would take the first tentative steps into the political career that would follow.

Richardson Dilworth was born in Pittsburgh on August 29, 1898. The Dilworths’ Pittsburgh roots stretched back to 1795, when great-great-grandfather Samuel arrived from Dilworthtown, Chester County—the village that still bears the family name. His grandfather Joseph Dilworth founded several businesses in the mid-nineteenth century, including Dilworth, Harper & Company (later Dilworth Brothers), the largest wholesale grocery operation in Pittsburgh; Dilworth and Bidwell, a powder-making concern affiliated with the DuPont Company; and Dilworth, Porter & Company, iron products manufacturers that held patents for high-quality railroad flange ties and spikes. It was on those patents that the family fortune was built. Joseph’s son, Joseph R. Dilworth (Richardson Dilworth’s father), graduated from Yale and joined the family business. By the time he retired in 1901, he held directorships on the Great Northern Railroad and the Citizens’ Bank of Pittsburgh and was president of the National Iron and Steel Publishing Company, trustee of the Pittsburgh YMCA, and cofounder of the Pennsylvania College for Women. Two years later, Joseph R. and his wife, Annie Wood Dilworth, moved to New York City; within another year, they were listed on the Social Register. Both were dedicated conservatives. Joseph R. “believed that Theodore Roosevelt was a ‘dangerous radical.’” Annie, who “helped to found Southampton as a summer playground for the robber-baron class,” once observed that only good presidents ever got assassinated, opining that it was now about time someone assassinated “a bum president like FDR.”⁴⁰

³⁹ *Philadelphia Record*, Apr. 8, 1934.

⁴⁰ John Newton Boucher and John Woolf Jordan, *A Century and a Half of Pittsburgh and Her People*, vol. 3 (Pittsburgh, 1908), 49–50; Norman F. Rehm, ed., *Track Standards* (Chicago, 1910), 180–82; *Goldie et al. v. Diamond State Iron Co. et al.*, 81 F. 173 (Circuit Court, D, Delaware, June 16, 1897), <http://openjurist.org/81/f1d/173>; *New York Times*, Sept. 22, 1928; Richardson Dilworth biographical sketch, Saxe Randall Papers; Jason Fagone, “Searching for Richardson Dilworth,” *Philadelphia Magazine*, Dec. 2008; Beers, *Pennsylvania Politics*, 198.

Dilworth attended St. Mark's School in Southborough, Massachusetts, from 1911 to 1917 and then entered Yale University. World War I interrupted his studies when, at age nineteen, he enlisted as a private in the Sixth Regiment, Marine Corps Brigade. He saw action in the Belleau Wood and Soissons campaigns. At Belleau Wood, "on a foray into No Man's Land to rescue two wounded Americans, enemy machine gun fire left him with a shattered left arm and a Purple Heart." After the war he returned to Yale and, despite his war injuries, played football and rowed on the four-man crew. Following graduation, Dilworth worked for US Steel, the M. W. Kellogg Company, and in the Oklahoma oil fields before entering Yale Law School. He graduated from Yale cum laude and as an editor of the law review in 1926—the same year Clark graduated from Penn—and came to Philadelphia to begin his legal career. His goal was to become a trial lawyer, and he became associated with Ralph B. Evans, considered the best trial lawyer of his generation by many contemporary lawyers.⁴¹

Clark became active in politics in 1926 when he ran unsuccessfully for Republican committeeman in the Twenty-second Ward. Two years later, motivated by the Prohibition issue, he switched parties and campaigned for Al Smith. Dilworth, a lifelong Democrat, also campaigned for Smith. But despite having known each other from family vacations in Southampton, Clark and Dilworth were not well acquainted, and it would be several years before their political alliance would begin to take shape. Like Smith, Clark was an avowed opponent of Prohibition and worked for its repeal. He was appointed state commander of the Crusaders, a national organization "formed for the primary purpose of aiding in the solution of the liquor problem." The Crusaders used their legal expertise to protect against illegal enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment and lobbied for its repeal. He also organized a local group—the Vigilantes Committee—to "render free legal service to any citizens" who believed they had been subjected to illegal police searches. At thirty-two years of age he became the youngest delegate to the 1933 state convention that voted to ratify the Twenty-first Amendment.⁴²

⁴¹ Richardson Dilworth press release, no date, and Richardson Dilworth biographical sketch, Saxe Randall Papers.

⁴² Joseph S. Clark, interview by Walter Phillips Jr., Mar. 18, 1975, Phillips Oral History Project; Joseph S. Clark, "Richardson Dilworth," *Shingle*, Nov. 1948, Clark Papers; Joseph S. Clark, speech delivered at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, July 18, 1951, Dilworth Papers; Joseph S. Clark to Wilbur Morse, Nov. 21, 1933, Clark Papers; *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Mar. 19, 1931, and Dec. 5, 1933.

In the early 1930s, Philadelphia's most prominent Democrats were millionaire contractor Matthew McCloskey and fellow millionaire bricklayer and sportsman John B. Kelly, the man who urged Dilworth and Clark to seek elective office. According to Dilworth,

Jack Kelly and Matt McCloskey organized the first genuine Democratic Party in Philadelphia. One year after they got started, they won all four row offices in the 1933 election. In 1936 and again in 1940 they carried the city by such large majorities that the State went Democratic for the first time since the Civil War.⁴³

Dilworth overstated the case. It is true that in November 1933 the Democrats shocked the city by winning four row offices—controller, registrar of wills, coroner, and treasurer. But at that point Kelly and Democratic City Committee chairman John O'Donnell were still locked in a struggle for control of the party. Moreover, a series of events significantly contributed to the Democrats' success in the mid-1930s. Republican boss Bill Vare suffered a stroke in August 1928 and spent most of the remainder of his life either in Florida or at the Jersey shore. From that point on, Vare henchmen engaged in a long, internecine war for control of the organization. At the same time, despite Vare's well-known opposition to the Eighteenth Amendment and the fact that Prohibition had always been unpopular in Philadelphia, Republican ward bosses insisted the rank and file cast their votes for Hoover—a dedicated “dry”—in the 1928 presidential election and thus reinforced the idea that the Democratic Party was the party of repeal. The popular referendum on the Twenty-first Amendment was on that same November 1933 ballot. Philadelphia voted to ratify by a ratio of twelve to one. Finally, Franklin Roosevelt had not carried the city in 1932, but he did extremely well, and by the following November his popularity had grown even greater.⁴⁴

Nonetheless, in April 1934, it was Kelly who pushed Clark to run in a special election to succeed deceased councilman William Roper. The following month, Kelly was among those who supported Dilworth's bid for the Democratic nomination for state senate. However, the 1934 elections were not, as Alsop and others have asserted, the genesis of the Clark-

⁴³ Richardson Dilworth, speech delivered at the Jefferson-Jackson Dinner, Apr. 8, 1954, Dilworth Papers.

⁴⁴ *Philadelphia Record*, Apr. 3, 1934; *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Apr. 4, 1934; *New York Times*, Nov. 8, 1933; J. T. Salter, “The End of Vare,” *Political Science Quarterly* 50 (1935): 214–35.

Dilworth alliance. No “remarkable game of political leapfrog” began in 1934. Dilworth and Clark had certainly become acquainted, largely through their work in support of the Twenty-first Amendment. But, as Clark told interviewer Walter Phillips Jr. years later, even as late as 1934 when both sought election, “neither of us had any particular impact on the other’s campaign.” Perhaps more important in the long run, Clark conceded that the two “really didn’t take turns managing each other’s campaigns.”⁴⁵ Contrary to Philadelphia mythology, Clark never functioned as Dilworth’s campaign manager. He served as an assistant—the “Director of Independent Activities”—in one Dilworth campaign: the mayoral race in 1947. Dilworth returned the favor once, in 1956, when he served as state chairman of the Clark for Senator Committee.⁴⁶

With the coming of World War II, both men volunteered for the military—another similarity but with a significant, almost predictable, difference. Dilworth participated in one of the bloodiest operations in the Pacific Theater. By contrast, Clark “never heard a gun fired in anger and spent a lot of time on grass tennis courts in New Delhi and Hastings Air Force Base.” He received a commission in the US Army Air Force, where his assignments were “entirely administrative and organizational.” He worked as director of organizational planning for General Henry “Hap” Arnold and as executive officer for General George Stratemeyer.⁴⁷ Dilworth returned to the Marine Corps, this time as a captain. He saw action with the First Marine Division in the Guadalcanal and Russell Islands campaigns. At Guadalcanal he won the Silver Star for conspicuous gallantry and finished his active duty with the rank of major.⁴⁸

At the end of the war, on the eve of the reform movement that Clark and Dilworth would lead, Philadelphia remained the only big city in the country still governed by Republicans. And it was in 1947, when the Democrats nominated Dilworth to run for mayor, that the two men forged the alliance that would begin the Quaker City’s conversion to Democratic control. Dilworth’s nominal opponent was incumbent Republican Barney Samuel, but his real opponents were the three men who ruled the GOP organization and, thus, the city—Sheriff Austin

⁴⁵ Alsop, “Paradox of Gentleman Joe”; Joseph S. Clark interview.

⁴⁶ Undated 1947 campaign memo from Dilworth to all Democratic ward leaders, Dilworth Papers; Joseph S. Clark to Steven G. Neal, Jan. 17, 1973, and press release, Clark for Senator Committee, Clark Papers.

⁴⁷ Clark interview; Joseph S. Clark, Ritz-Carlton Hotel speech, July 18, 1951, Dilworth Papers.

⁴⁸ Biography of Richardson Dilworth, Clark Papers; Dilworth biography, Saxe Randall Papers.

Meehan, chairman of the Board of Tax Revision William Meade, and ward leader Mort Witkin. Dilworth was not a member of the regular Democratic organization; in fact, so few Democratic leaders knew him that he thought it necessary to set up daily meetings at Democratic headquarters in the Bellevue Stratford Hotel between eleven o'clock and noon so the ward leaders could "stop in and get acquainted." Dilworth also announced he was bringing Joe Clark on as his assistant campaign manager. "I am sure," he wrote, "that his coming into the campaign in an active way is going to be a tremendous help."⁴⁹

The sentiment in much of the city and in the press was that Dilworth was little more than "this year's sacrificial lamb," because, as the *Philadelphia Dispatch* opined, no other Democrat would "touch the mayoralty spot with a 40-foot pole."⁵⁰ Democrats may have agreed with the *Dispatch*. After all, the Democrats had not won a mayoral election since 1881. Nevertheless, it took a tie-breaking vote of Democratic committee chairman Mike Bradley to insure Dilworth's nomination.⁵¹ To bolster his candidacy, he tried to find a strong running mate for the district attorney's office. One potential candidate after another declined—including Clark, who claimed he did not have the criminal law experience to be a competent district attorney. Both Dick and Anne Dilworth were angry at Clark's refusal. They believed that Clark, like the rest of those who had turned Dick down, "would have managed to say yes to the top spot."⁵²

Few in the city expected what followed the announcement of the Democratic slate. Dilworth campaigned as no Democrat had done in the twentieth century. He was out virtually every night, making speeches on street corners all over the city, attacking the total lack of vision, gross mismanagement, massive waste, and ubiquitous corruption in city government. In a series of radio addresses broadcast on WFIL, he laid out the principal shortcomings of the current administration. The airport had no hangars or repair shops, no provision baggage handling, and no places to sit down. The "policy of apathy and indifference" was so pervasive that Trans World Airlines had stopped flying into the Quaker City. "When the TWA vice-president asked what kind of equipment the city would

⁴⁹ Richardson Dilworth, memo to all Democratic ward leaders, Aug. 15, 1947, and Dilworth, undated form letter to all ward leaders, Dilworth Papers.

⁵⁰ *Philadelphia Dispatch*, July 13, 1947.

⁵¹ Joseph S. Clark, "Working within the System," unpublished chapter draft, Clark Papers.

⁵² Clark interview.

furnish the 1,000 workers the company expected to bring in," he accused, "the mayor lost all interest for fear these workers might be Democratic."⁵³

Philadelphia's port had also been "shamefully neglected." The river channel, he charged, was filled with so much mud and silt that ocean-going vessels had to remain downstream until high tide. And when a ship finally docked, passengers were greeted by a "mass of sunken barges and old sailing ships which clutter the channel" along with the "filth, refuse and garbage covering the surface of the water. The resulting stench makes it almost unbearable to remain on deck."⁵⁴

The state of affairs in housing, especially for returning veterans, was an even greater failing of the Republican regime. Republicans had done nothing to make the vast inventory of empty residential buildings available to veterans. "No one" Dilworth charged, "can become a tenant in our 9,000 public housing units without first obtaining the written approval of his Republican Ward Leader," and the ward leaders did not want veterans and their families moving into their wards because "young veterans might have ideas about decent government. They won't stand being pushed around." Equally scandalous was the pervasive rent gouging that Mayor Samuel claimed was beyond his power to curb. Landlords regularly forced tenants to sign "voluntary rent increase agreements" in the middle of a lease. If the tenant protested, the landlord found a "friendly magistrate," and the tenant was evicted. "It is actually just as voluntary as an election in Moscow."⁵⁵

Lastly was the issue of the politicization of the police department and the large-scale corruption that resulted. Unlike any previous administration, division inspectors and precinct captains were assigned to precincts where they resided, which "put them directly under the thumbs of their own ward leaders." Patrolmen were instructed to turn a blind eye to prostitution, betting parlors, numbers banks, speakeasies, and gambling establishments operated by organized crime under the protection of the political leaders. A patrolman was "permitted to collect \$2 a week from each gambling headquarters, speakeasy or house of prostitution on his beat." At the other end of the scale, inspectors could make \$30,000 to \$75,000 a year in pay-offs, captains from \$10,000 to \$30,000. In the

⁵³ Richardson Dilworth, radio address, Oct. 6, 1947, Dilworth Papers.

⁵⁴ Richardson Dilworth, radio address, Oct. 13, 1947, Dilworth Papers.

⁵⁵ Richardson Dilworth, radio address, Sept. 29, 1947, and July 22, 1947, Dilworth Papers.

mayor's home ward, the rackets were controlled by his son. "So it hardly seems likely," Dilworth concluded, "that Mayor Samuel has either the will, the freedom, or the capacity to reestablish an effective police force." Dilworth lodged similar charges of police corruption in Sheriff Meehan's home ward. The sheriff offered to donate \$5,000 to charity if Dilworth could prove his charges and challenged Dilworth to a public debate to "compare personal reputations." Dilworth accepted immediately.⁵⁶

Clark, in addition to his "manager" status, took to the stump, calling the GOP leaders "a pathetic group of little men squabbling with each other over their petty cuts from slot machines, numbers, and vice." "The dull rot of cynicism and senility," he told the women of the Society for Ethical Culture, "is weighing the city down." Like Dilworth, Clark also scheduled a public debate. His was against Republican City Committee chairman David W. Harris. The Clark-Harris debate did indeed occur, but Dilworth's opponent failed to make an appearance.⁵⁷

Despite Dilworth's and Clark's efforts, voters gave Samuel the "biggest majority in a municipal contest since 1931." Republicans also won all twenty-two council seats and all the row offices that were contested that fall. Yet Dilworth won 321,319 votes—the largest number ever for a Democrat in a Philadelphia mayoral election—as nearly 75 percent of the city's registered voters cast ballots.⁵⁸

The loss notwithstanding, the results augured well for Clark and Dilworth. Two years later, Clark was the Democratic nominee for city controller. Dilworth was not a candidate for office, but he scheduled fifty street-corner rallies to stump for Clark.⁵⁹ Those plans changed the night he debated Sheriff Meehan at the Academy of Music. He had challenged Meehan to a debate during the 1947 campaign—a challenge Meehan seemed eager to meet. "All I want to do," Meehan had told a Union Republican Club meeting, "is get Dilworth on a platform alone and match my reputation against his. I'll even pay for the hall."⁶⁰ But his advisors bitterly opposed the idea, and rumors began to circulate that Meehan

⁵⁶ Richardson Dilworth, radio address, Sept. 22, 1947, Dilworth Papers; Joseph S. Clark, "No Mean City," chap. 5, Clark Papers.

⁵⁷ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Oct. 11, 1947, and Oct. 12, 1947.

⁵⁸ *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Nov. 5, 1947; Joseph Clark, "No Mean City," chap. 5.

⁵⁹ *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, June 26, 1949.

⁶⁰ Austin Meehan, speech delivered at Republican Club meeting, Oct. 14, 1947, Dilworth Papers.

would back out. "If Sheriff Meehan does not show up," Dilworth declared in an effort to bully him into debating, "the people of Philadelphia will know him for what he is." The people would recognize "his complete ignorance of and indifference to the issues of the campaign; his complete ignorance of the obligations of a public servant; his corrupt conduct of his office . . . his corruption as a political boss and his corruption as a city contractor."⁶¹ The sheriff, nevertheless, concluded that discretion was the better part of valor and failed to show up.

Two years later, Meehan's people were again fearful that Dilworth, one of the most accomplished libel lawyers in the city, would "cut the Sheriff up into small pieces, artistically and with a very sharp knife." But this time Meehan met the challenge. He spoke first, using thirty minutes to attack Dilworth's character and drag his and his wife's names through the mud. "I have no interest in your personal life or morals," Meehan disclaimed, "but people of Philadelphia are entitled to know you are . . . a chronic dishonest liar," a "faking hypocrite," and an adulterer who "ran off to Cuba" less than twenty-four hours after obtaining a Reno divorce. Meehan also went after Clark, calling him Dilworth's "Charlie McCarthy" and attacking Clark's support for birth control: "What does he know about housing? He and his wife can live in a telephone booth." "Now," the sheriff wrapped up, "don't give us any Yale or Harvard lawyer tricks in your answer to me. Mr. Dilworth, you take over."⁶²

The street-corner Dilworth might have responded with the formidable vitriol and venom he was capable of mustering. But Dilworth had come prepared for Meehan's personal assault. Municipal Court judge Nochem Winnet had tried to talk Meehan out of debating. When the sheriff rejected his advice, Winnet strongly advised against a personal attack. Again Meehan ignored his advice. Frustrated with his boss's intransigence, Winnet had told Natalie Saxe exactly what the sheriff planned to say, and Dilworth had taken the weekend prior to the debate to prepare a detailed, dispassionate response that destroyed whatever credibility the sheriff had left. Near the end of his dissertation, Dilworth pointed to the family dog. "I thought Prudence should be here to speak for herself," he mocked, "in case the sheriff attacked her."⁶³

⁶¹ *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Oct. 20, 1947.

⁶² *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 13, 1949; *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, July 13, 1949.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

Meehan had been embarrassingly outclassed. Dilworth finished with an announcement that he was a candidate for city treasurer. The news might have surprised Republicans, but it shocked Democrats. Not only had Dilworth made no mention of his plan to run to anyone, including Clark, but it was common knowledge that he planned to run for the governor's office in 1950. Saxe later said the decision was made in the heat of the debate. "At no point [prior to the debate] did he remotely consider running for city treasurer. . . . He made it up as he was going along" on the Academy stage.⁶⁴

Republicans and Democrats were also surprised by Meehan's performance and impressed with Dilworth's. "Mr. Meehan," observed one member of the audience, "showed to all intelligent people the low, uneducated type of person he is." Another thought the sheriff came across as a "big fat slob such as one would expect." Still another wrote that she was "nauseated with his [Meehan's] ignorance and cheap political scheming." And yet another commented on Meehan's "ghost written speech of vilification." The president of Provident Trust Bank, a Republican, praised Dilworth's "courageous and able handling of the personal attack." The son of former governor George Earle wrote, "My father's unwarranted intercession on behalf of Meehan does not represent my brother's or my own convictions. We are with you 100 percent."⁶⁵

One of the Republicans most impressed with Dilworth's performance was Arthur Binns, former chairman of the Committee of Fifteen—the group that had uncovered massive fraud and graft in city hall. The day after the debate he sent a short letter to Dilworth:

I have the utmost sympathy for your position and great admiration for your courage . . . to stand up and take the sort of beating you have been taking. It is the courage which is the stuff of which progress is made. . . . Every decent citizen must have a great sense of gratitude for your willingness to take it on the chin and slug it out in the hope of stimulating public interest and eventually achieving some measure of improvement in our

⁶⁴ Butterfield, "Revolt in Philadelphia"; Saxe interview, July 30, 1974.

⁶⁵ Mrs. Edwin G. Ruerswald to Richardson Dilworth, July 13, 1949; Samuel A. Crozer to Richardson Dilworth, July 13, 1949; Mrs. Mattie T. Robinson to Richardson Dilworth, July 16, 1949; James G. Krause, director of the Department of Parks and Public Property, Lebanon, PA, to Richardson Dilworth, July 14, 1949; William R. K. Mitchell, president, Provident Trust of Philadelphia, to Richardson Dilworth, July 13, 1949; Lawrence W. Earle to Richardson Dilworth, July 13, 1949, Dilworth Papers.

sad civic state. The picture is so confused I scarcely know where to turn but I certainly can say with all the sincerity within me that I appreciate your courage and your staying power under punishment and I am extremely grateful, as one citizen, to you.⁶⁶

Dilworth responded almost immediately, saying that he was “reminded of the smearing they tried to give you when your committee was hitting pay dirt and beginning to seriously worry the boys in City Hall . . . [and] the courage with which you stood up to those attacks.”⁶⁷ Less than three months later, Binns announced the formation of the Independent Republicans for the 1949 Democratic Ticket. “The Republican Organization of Philadelphia,” his press release announced, “has fallen into the hands of men who have brought our party and the government of the city into disrepute.”

Efforts to reform the party from within have failed. Nothing short of a stinging rebuke from the voters can remedy this situation. The present Republican leaders must be replaced by men and women of vision and integrity.⁶⁸

There have been several analyses of the 1949 Philadelphia municipal elections; a score of reasons have been offered for the outcome. Clearly, the factors that contributed to the Democratic victory included the reorganization of the Democratic Party, with Jim Finnegan taking over as city chairman; the series of scandals that came to light between 1948 and 1949 and led to five suicides and the revelation that \$40 million in city funds was unaccounted for; the political maturation of the Americans for Democratic Action and its active support for Clark and Dilworth; the collapse of the *Philadelphia Record*, which opened the door for the *Inquirer* to support Democrats for the first time in its history; the inclusion on the 1949 ballot of a nonbinding referendum on the question of awarding bonuses to World War II veterans; and the campaign, independent of the regular Democratic organization, organized by Clark and Dilworth and run by six remarkably politically savvy women. But added to these must be the effect of a group of highly respected Republicans—

⁶⁶ Arthur Binns to Richardson Dilworth, July 14, 1949, Dilworth Papers.

⁶⁷ Richardson Dilworth to Arthur Binns, July 18, 1949, Dilworth Papers.

⁶⁸ Press release, Independent Republicans for the 1949 Democratic Ticket, Clark Papers.

in open revolt against what they called the Republican “Frankenstein Monster”—who urged one hundred thousand of their party colleagues to support the Clark-Dilworth ticket. In addition to the corruption uncovered by the Committee of Fifteen, Dilworth’s performance on the stage of the Academy of Music helped push Binns to lead that revolt.⁶⁹ Only seven days after the debate, Binns sent another short note to Dilworth:

At considerable mental distress I am arriving at some such solution as follows. There will never be any improvement in the Philadelphia situation until there is change. Whether a new ticket would be better or worse is not primarily the issue. Our situation appears to me to much resemble a man seriously ill who is informed that, with an operation he may live, and that, without it—he certainly will die. In any case, I do want to perhaps have a serious talk with you to see whether there is anything I can do, consistent with my conscience, which would be useful.⁷⁰

The election surprised nearly everyone. Almost 80 percent of the city’s registered voters came out to the polls; the total number of votes cast was the third highest in the city’s history as virtually the entire GOP slate was beaten “by a tidal wave of protest.” Clark won by 109,000 of the 831,000 votes cast. Dilworth’s plurality was 111,000. Democrats won the other two row offices being contested, both city council seats, and the only superior court race. The only victorious Republicans were three candidates for magistrate. November 8, 1949, marked the beginning of a political renaissance in Philadelphia that would continue for twelve years. It may also have marked the high point of the Clark-Dilworth alliance.⁷¹

Two years later, Clark ran for mayor and Dilworth for district attorney. Once again the pair presented a united front to the public. Certainly both were still dedicated to continuing the reform movement they began two years before. But the lead-up to the 1951 campaign was not without some internal dissention. Dilworth had been told that he, not Clark, would be a better choice for the mayoral slot. It seemed logical, since he had run such a good campaign four years earlier. And besides, party elders were not convinced Clark would be a cooperative party man should he be elected. Dilworth was noncommittal. Ultimately, his sights were still

⁶⁹ See *ibid.*; Madonna and McLarnon, “Reform in Philadelphia.”

⁷⁰ Arthur Binns to Richardson Dilworth, July 20, 1949, Dilworth Papers.

⁷¹ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Nov. 9, 1949; *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Nov. 9, 1949.

set on Harrisburg. He had lost the 1950 race for the governor's mansion, but that had in no way dampened his gubernatorial aspirations. Nevertheless, he had made no public statements about his place on the 1951 ticket. Late in the summer, the party leadership met at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel to slot the top positions on the Democratic slate. Those invited included Jack Kelly, Matt McCloskey, millionaire developer Albert Greenfield, Senator Frank Myers, City Chairman Jim Finnegan, Dilworth, and Clark. They had a statement from a group of 1949 Clark-Dilworth volunteers urging them to slot Clark for mayor and Dilworth for district attorney, but they planned to do just the opposite.⁷² Clark arrived late to the meeting and, before any decisions could be formalized, preempted all of them by announcing that less than an hour before, he had released a press statement of his "irrevocable intention to run for mayor . . . whether or not I have your backing."⁷³ Clark had outmaneuvered them all. They could accept Clark's candidacy or engage in a bitter primary fight that might ruin the party's chances in the fall.⁷⁴

Dilworth remained silent throughout the meeting and, at the end, agreed to accept the district attorney nomination. Years later, Clark insisted that episode was the "last time Dick and I were in any apparent conflict."⁷⁵ Perhaps their subsequent conflicts were not apparent to the public, but they nevertheless occurred. Clark's virtual seizure of the nomination left a smoldering resentment among Dilworth's senior staffers, earned him the permanent hatred of Dilworth's wife Anne, and began to change the nature of the relationship between the two reformers.⁷⁶

Clark and Dilworth both won in 1951. Philadelphia had its first Democratic mayor in nearly ninety years.⁷⁷ In the euphoria of their victories, the two exchanged congratulatory letters that took on the aspect of a mutual admiration society and reflected a degree of closeness the two would never again share. "It has been a wonderful four years," Dilworth reflected, "and I think we have been as good a political team as could be

⁷² Walter Phillips Jr., David Berger, Ada Lewis, et al. to James A. Finnegan, May 8, 1951, Clark Papers.

⁷³ Alsop, "Paradox of Gentleman Joe."

⁷⁴ Clark interview.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Stratos interview; Saxe interview, July 30, 1974.

⁷⁷ Rudolph Blankenberg, an independent Republican, was elected in 1911 on the Keystone-Democratic ticket.

found anywhere. I honestly feel that each of us has been essential to the other, and we have not let anyone, or anything divide us.” Dilworth went on to reassure Clark that he would be a “splendid” mayor and pledged he would “run the DA’s office so that it will be a helpful and component part of your administration.”⁷⁸

“Thanks a lot for your two swell letters,” Clark replied. “It has been a wonderful four years and I agree with everything you say about the team. We have needed each other and will again in the future. I think in many ways our greatest achievement has been in refusing to let anyone or anything break up the team.” “Incidentally,” Clark added, “I have no further political ambitions; but I do want to do the best job that is humanly possible for the next four years [and] I want to see you governor. There is nothing inconsistent in these ambitions but there may be times when the ice seems thin.”⁷⁹

Dilworth followed up his congratulations with a second letter—this one much longer than the first. It had a distinctly pedantic tone and clearly reflected Dilworth’s concerns about Clark’s political savvy. Dilworth did not trust Clark to pay attention to those things Dilworth considered politically essential to Clark’s success in office. Dilworth knew Clark adamantly opposed patronage, so he reminded him that “in politics even more than any other field, you have to look out for those who have been loyal and helpful and take care of them as far as their capabilities will permit.” He went on to advise that Clark’s appointments show the proper deference to the various minority interests within the party. Luther Cunningham could help gain the confidence of the African American community. Sam Regalbuto would do the same with the Italians. “And,” he wrote, “you should also be on the constant lookout for a good young Pole who can be made into a real leader in that community.” Finally, Dilworth advised, Clark should get rid of current office holders, even if they had performed well in their jobs. “We should not leave in power men who are against us—always have been and always will be.” It was essential that Clark “set about destroying the [GOP] city hall organization,” even if the new city charter had to be amended to do so.⁸⁰

As Clark began assembling his staff, Dilworth requested that he hire two deserving aides: Bill Hennegan and David Berger. Hennegan had

⁷⁸ Richardson Dilworth to Joseph S. Clark, Nov. 10, 1951, Clark Papers.

⁷⁹ Joseph S. Clark to Richardson Dilworth, Nov. 1951, Dilworth Papers.

⁸⁰ Richardson Dilworth to Joseph S. Clark, Nov. 18, 1951, Clark Papers.

served as Dilworth's assistant city treasurer. "I have an enormous obligation to him," Dilworth wrote Clark. "He is loyal, conscientious to a degree, and a really hard worker."⁸¹ Berger, a lawyer "who had been terribly helpful" to Dilworth, had met Dilworth when both were in a military hospital in the South Pacific. He was also one of the volunteers who had urged party leaders to slot Clark for the mayoral nomination. Clark took no action on the request, and Dilworth went on vacation "very angry at Joe because he felt Joe dragged his feet on what Dilworth felt were very minimal requests." While Dilworth was gone, Clark contacted Natalie Saxe, who by this time had become Dilworth's most trusted assistant, and offered her the position of executive secretary. Clark had not checked with Dilworth before proffering the offer. Dilworth told Saxe that while he wanted her to continue to be his "eyes and ears in Harrisburg," he would not stand in the way of her advancing her career. As in the Ritz-Carlton meeting, Dilworth gave no indication of any displeasure with Clark. But Saxe was certain he resented Clark's attempt to steal his aide-de-camp. Moreover, she was sure that Anne Dilworth "said to him [Dilworth] something to the effect of 'Look what that son of a bitch did to you when your back was turned.'" Saxe refused Clark's offer; Clark never did give Hennegan a job.⁸²

During their first four years in power, Clark and Dilworth worked well together, but not without their share of disputes. In 1954, for example, the operating procedures on the Committee for Philadelphia—a volunteer organization put together by the reformers—led to a heated disagreement. Clark insisted that bills had to be approved by all members of the committee before being paid. He also complained that he had been listed as a cochair without his knowledge or consent. Dilworth's angry response was immediate:

The thing which really disturbs me is what appears to be a combination of indifference and suspicion on your part. I have no desire to be associated with anyone who does not have confidence in me, and I am perfectly happy to dissolve the Committee for Philadelphia, if that is your desire.⁸³

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Saxe interview, July 30, 1974, and Sept. 18, 1975; Walter Phillips Jr., David Berger, Ada Lewis, et al. to James A. Finnegan, May 8, 1951.

⁸³ Richardson Dilworth to Joseph S. Clark, Apr. 21, 1954, Dilworth Papers.

Of much greater significance was the disagreement over patronage. In 1951 the city adopted a new charter—something both Clark and Dilworth had advocated for years. It went into effect the same day Clark was inaugurated. The new charter was meant to prevent the rot of the corruption that had pervaded city hall during the Republican years, but, ironically, it also became a source of friction between the mayor, the Democratic City Committee, and the district attorney. The charter placed many patronage jobs under the purview of civil service laws. This meant that thousands of city employees—loyal Republicans who owed their jobs to Clark's predecessors—could not be fired and replaced with Democratic loyalists. The new charter also prohibited city employees from engaging in political activities. While that prohibition would prevent those Republicans from working for the party now out of power, it also prevented many new employees from working in the interests of the Democrats who had hired them.

Clark broke an almost sacrosanct law of politics by announcing he would not seek a second term as mayor. That freed him to pursue relentlessly his long-stated objective—the end of patronage in city hall. Clark believed patronage was one of the worst evils in the American political system, and he refused to appoint anyone based solely on party loyalty. Not a single member of his cabinet was the man recommended by party leaders for the job. Party regulars came to view many of Clark's appointees as "carpetbaggers."⁸⁴

The mayor's position on patronage immediately put him at odds with the leaders of his own party and created a tension point between himself and Dilworth, who disagreed with Clark's dogmatic opposition to a time-honored political tradition. Dilworth believed the art of compromise was necessary for a successful career in politics. "Make sure," he advised Clark two days after the election, "the backbone of our own organization is taken care of, provided they can and will do a decent job in any position to which they are appointed."⁸⁵ He agreed that patronage had run amok under the Republicans, but he also understood that he could not simply turn his back on "party leaders without whose exertions we would not be here today." "The mere fact," he insisted, "that a ward leader wants jobs

⁸⁴ Dilworth, speech delivered at the Jefferson-Jackson Dinner, Apr. 8, 1954.

⁸⁵ Richardson Dilworth to Joseph S. Clark, Nov. 10, 1951, Clark Papers.

for his good committeemen and women certainly does not make him a scoundrel.” On the other hand, he also believed that “the fact the mayor insists that the heads of departments be the best persons available does not make him a sworn enemy of political organization.”⁸⁶

Clark was equally unbending in his opposition to any changes in the new city charter. His position put him at odds not only with the Philadelphia Democratic organization but with Democratic leaders across the state. State senator and future governor George Leader even threatened to travel to Philadelphia to “persuade that ‘son-of-a-bitch’ Mayor Clark to retreat from his position on the charter.”⁸⁷

Dilworth found himself in the middle—trying to keep the Democratic reform movement intact while the city committee and the mayor battled over patronage and charter change. The infighting cost the Democrats the 1953 municipal elections as Dilworth was unable to find a compromise—a failure that added to his frustration, especially with the mayor:

He is absolutely inflexible politically, with the result he is at complete loggerheads with the Democratic organization in a running battle, which grows more serious every week. I personally do not believe any administration can be a success and perpetuate itself unless it has a reasonable amount of political know-how and tact.⁸⁸

That inflexibility strained the relationship between Clark and Dilworth and might have cost Dilworth at least one statewide election. By 1954 it was clear to Dilworth that Clark’s battle with the city committee over patronage and the charter had damaged Dilworth’s electoral aspirations. “We have very stupidly failed even to work out a decent arrangement with the political organization,” he complained to political confidant Roger Kent. “The result is that the regular organization here is dead set against me [running for governor].” Eventually, Dilworth came to believe that Clark was purposely trying to ruin his chance for the governor’s mansion. It was the closest Clark and Dilworth ever came to an open break.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Dilworth, speech delivered at the Jefferson-Jackson Dinner, Apr. 8, 1954.

⁸⁷ Saxe interview, Aug. 14, 1974.

⁸⁸ Richardson Dilworth to Roger Kent, May 11, 1954, Dilworth Papers.

⁸⁹ Richardson Dilworth to Roger Kent, Jan. 5, 1954, Dilworth Papers; Saxe interview, Sept. 18, 1974.

As Clark's first term came to a close in 1955, the question in the public's mind was whether he would seek a second term and, if not, who would succeed him. Democratic insiders thought they knew the answer. Clark had often indicated that he intended to be a one-term mayor. Saxe recalls, "His intention was to not run but rather wait until 1956 and take a crack at the senate seat then occupied for former Governor Duff."⁹⁰ Dilworth intended to run for mayor. Clark had told Dilworth directly of his plans, but there was now a note of ambivalence on a second term in the mayor's office. "Joe told me," Dilworth wrote Walter Annenberg, "he does not intend to be a candidate for reelection unless the city committee insists upon slating someone repugnant to him."⁹¹ But as the time for filing approached, Clark maintained a curious silence. Public speculation grew. According to Joe Stratos, everyone wondered, "was Joe Clark going to resign . . . or run again, or was he going to run for the Senate?" Finally, Dilworth called Clark in frustration: "Joe, if you're going to run, run! Then I will run for Senate."⁹² Still, Clark seemed unable to make a decision.

Saxe knew better. As the filing deadline approached, she learned that Clark had his filing papers for a second term filled out and notarized. She told Dilworth of Clark's preparations and then directed one of his office secretaries to prepare the paperwork, "get from Dilworth a check for the filing fee, and [go] downstairs to file" before Clark filed. A short time later, Clark assistant Michael Byrne visited the district attorney's office to assure him that "Joe at no time had any intention of filing."⁹³

Dilworth won the 1955 contest against W. Thatcher Longstreth. Clark left city hall and prepared for his 1956 senatorial run. By the time of Dilworth's inauguration, enthusiasm among party leaders statewide for Clark's candidacy had waned considerably. Congressman Bill Green, the leader of the Philadelphia organization, "hated" Joe Clark and had secured the support of forty-seven of fifty-two ward leaders for a run against him. Green also had the backing of every big money raiser in the city except Matt McCloskey.⁹⁴ Pittsburgh's David Lawrence called Dilworth to see if he would consider resigning and announce for the sen-

⁹⁰ Saxe interview, Sept. 18, 1974.

⁹¹ Richardson Dilworth to Walter Annenberg, Nov. 30, 1954, Dilworth Papers.

⁹² Stratos interview.

⁹³ Saxe interview, Sept. 18, 1974.

⁹⁴ Richardson Dilworth to Roger Kent, Dec. 27, 1955, Dilworth Papers.

ate. Dilworth advised him that he had committed his support to Clark and would not renege. Clark, seeing the chances for his nomination crumbling, called Dilworth and asked for a private meeting to determine Dilworth's intentions; "he had some doubts about Dilworth's wholehearted support." When they met, Clark told Dilworth that, "with or without Dilworth's support, he was going for it." Dilworth, who insisted on having a witness at the meeting, assured his old colleague that he would keep his commitments, but the job of putting together a new administration would make it impossible for him to devote his full energies to Clark's campaign; he certainly could not consider managing it. Clark left, still not convinced of Dilworth's loyalty. Nevertheless, Dilworth did indeed support Clark, and Clark went on to win the Democratic nomination and the general election, defeating incumbent James H. Duff by a slim 2 percentage points.⁹⁵ Dilworth called Clark's victory "amazing" and believed it was due to three things: "First the fact that he was a splendid candidate and second, the regular old-line Republican organization really hates Duff and were ready to stick the knife into him. On top of that, Duff has actually been a miserable failure as a Senator."⁹⁶

Clark spent twelve years in the US Senate—from 1957 until 1969. Dilworth served as mayor from January 1956 until he resigned to run for governor in 1962. He was pleased that 75 percent of Clark's senior staff agreed to stay on, but it did make the selection of the remaining 25 percent more difficult. "I have already been called an ingrate so many times," he complained, "that I am beginning to consider it a term of endearment." In testament to Dilworth's people skills, when he left the mayor's office six years later, all but one of those original appointments were still on the job. By contrast, there was significant turnover during Clark's four years in city hall.⁹⁷

During Dilworth's mayoral years, and later as president of the Philadelphia School Board, he and Clark corresponded occasionally and met infrequently for lunch. Dilworth continued the reform agenda initiated by Clark and tried to repair the relationship between the mayor's office and the Democratic City Committee. Clark established himself as a harsh critic of prevailing Senate rules. He detested the majority rules

⁹⁵ Saxe interview, Sept. 18, 1974.

⁹⁶ Richardson Dilworth to Harold Sterling Vanderbilt, Nov. 12, 1956, Dilworth Papers.

⁹⁷ Richardson Dilworth to Harold Sterling Vanderbilt, Dec. 30, 1955, Dilworth Papers; Saxe interview, Sept. 18, 1974.

that led to southern domination of the Congress and the filibuster rule that allowed one man to block legislation. Occasionally the two would trade drafts of speeches, send reports of specific issues, or offer seemingly unsolicited advice. On one occasion Clark sent Dilworth a copy of a speech he made on the floor of the Senate in favor of government-sponsored population control. He suggested that the United Fund (of which Dilworth was a trustee in Philadelphia) “give serious thought to taking into the Fund agencies interested in the solution of this problem” of “uncontrolled fertility” and the “tragic consequences of overpopulation.”⁹⁸ Dilworth’s terse reply emphasized, in his own cynical way, how absurdly impolitic and ill-timed Clark’s speech was:

Thanks very much for your letter and a copy of your speech. I was delighted to read that you were the first man to ever discuss birth control on the floor of the Senate. I agree that it is much needed, but the United Fund is making a renewed effort to persuade the Catholic Charities to come in with it, and so it is probably not the time to also start a drive for birth control.⁹⁹

By the time Dilworth agreed to serve as school board president, his contact with Clark was sporadic at best. In late 1967, he wrote to Clark in the wake of a disastrous confrontation between black students, school board officials, and the Philadelphia police. That year, civil rights activist and mayoral candidate Cecil B. Moore received permission to visit schools with large numbers of black students, whom he called the forgotten victims of a system run by “the white power structure not really interested in the black kids.” Promising to make school officials especially nervous, Moore barnstormed through the schools, repeatedly criticizing the curriculum, denigrating police commissioner Frank Rizzo as a “South Philadelphia high school dropout,” and urging black students to demand a meeting with school officials. School superintendent Mark Shedd agreed, expecting to meet with a small group of student leaders. Instead, 3,500 students arrived at the school board’s headquarters on JFK Parkway. While Shedd and Dilworth met with student leaders, Rizzo arrived with two hundred policemen. Students began throwing bottles and bricks; Rizzo ordered his men to “get their black asses” and “set loose a couple

⁹⁸ Joseph S. Clark to Richardson Dilworth, Aug. 27, 1963, Dilworth Papers.

⁹⁹ Richardson Dilworth to Joseph S. Clark, Aug. 28, 1963, Dilworth Papers.

hundred men swinging clubs and beating children.” The students scattered in all directions. Some ran through the city hall, knocking over newsstands and yelling “Black Power.” Others disrupted operations on bus and trolley lines; still others simply assaulted pedestrians on the street and shattered store windows.¹⁰⁰

The incident sparked student unrest throughout the city. By December, 5,600 black students were boycotting school and threatening to stay out until Rizzo was fired. Dilworth blamed the situation on Shedd—who had allowed Moore to campaign in the schools, “foment[ing] unrest”—but more so on Rizzo’s police, who had “indiscriminately” beaten the students. He joined Deputy Mayor Charles Bowser in demanding Rizzo’s removal. Meanwhile, the Fraternal Order of Police and the Catholic War Veterans demanded Dilworth’s firing. The NAACP called Rizzo a “carbon copy of Bull Connor,” while the Neighborhood School Association called him the “most outstanding and dedicated police commissioner” the city ever had while accusing the school board of “coddling, encouraging, aiding and abetting extremist groups.” The Philadelphia assistant district attorney condemned Rizzo for being “hostile to civil rights and civil liberties,” while the Crime Commission praised him, claiming the student rally was “engineered by militant racists.” Most letters to the editor of the *Evening Bulletin* supported the police. A few deplored police “gestapo tactics,” but far more praised Rizzo and his men for their “restraint” and success in preventing “a full-sized riot.”¹⁰¹

In the wake of the incident, Dilworth wrote to Clark, expressing his disgust with “the distinguished commissioner” who “seems to want to stir up trouble in the predominantly Negro high schools just so he can then put it down with a club.”¹⁰² But this was his only communication with Clark, the former mayor, regarding a serious situation in the city they both called home. Instead, he chose to share his thoughts on the school situation with his closest friend, John O’Hara. A year before the school riot, he had written to O’Hara, saying, “I have found being President of

¹⁰⁰ *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Nov. 5, 1967; Sal A. Paolantonio, *Frank Rizzo: The Last Big Man in Big City America* (Philadelphia, 1993); this account of the November 1967 student riot is based on the following sources: *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Nov. 17–21, 1967; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Nov. 17–20, 1967; Paolantonio, *Frank Rizzo*.

¹⁰¹ *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Nov. 17–21, 1967.

¹⁰² Richardson Dilworth to Joseph S. Clark, Nov. 24, 1967, Dilworth Papers.

the School Board calls for a degree of tact which I simply do not possess.” The Teachers’ Union, he complained, had publicly attacked him as “a snob, a private-school boy, an Ivy Leaguer, and one who would not even deign to let his children or grandchildren go to public schools.”¹⁰³

After the riot, his letters grew more typically Dilworth in their cynicism. “The low-income whites and the militant blacks are determined on a confrontation,” he wrote in October 1968.

[The] various PTA groups in the Northeast . . . refuse to discuss the matter beyond saying that their children are not going to be bused to any “nigger” school for anything. . . . I do not think I have ever seen such undisguised hatred in the 20 years I have been in politics in this city. When I left the hearing room, a number of sweet young mothers followed me down the hall shouting, “You bum; you lousy dirty stinking bum We know where you live and we’ll get you there.” It was infuriating and had I been younger, and the ladies less numerous, I think I would have slugged them all.¹⁰⁴

A few days later he penned another letter to O’Hara that evinced a profound pessimism about his or anyone’s ability to solve the racial problems in the schools. “I really do not know precisely what caused me to accept the presidency of the School Board,” he confided. “It has been a 10-times harder job than I ever anticipated. The depth of the hatred between the low-income whites and the black community in a big northern multi-racial city is incredible.”¹⁰⁵ None of these thoughts were shared with Joe Clark.

Naturally, both Clark and Dilworth continued to take an interest in statewide political campaigns. This was especially true for Dilworth, since, through 1962, he still aspired to the governor’s mansion. He had lost a close election to John Fine in 1950, when he attempted to take his attack-style campaigning statewide. A typical Dilworth handout called Fine the “the admitted leader of the corrupt Luzerne County Machine” who is now the “prisoner” of the “leaders of corrupt machines in other parts of the state.”¹⁰⁶ Former Democratic governor George Earle and Charles Margiotti, Earle’s attorney general, worked for Dilworth’s defeat,

¹⁰³ Richardson Dilworth to John O’Hara, May 24, 1966, Dilworth Papers.

¹⁰⁴ Richardson Dilworth to John O’Hara, Oct. 3, 1968, Dilworth Papers.

¹⁰⁵ Richardson Dilworth to John O’Hara, Oct. 24, 1968, Dilworth Papers.

¹⁰⁶ 1950 Democratic campaign advertisement, Saxe Randall Papers.

and he lost by a mere 86,000 votes.¹⁰⁷ Dilworth had considered seeking the gubernatorial nomination again in 1954 but changed his mind, believing that the Democrats had virtually no chance for success. “It is my opinion,” he wrote Roger Kent, “that nothing short of the Russians dropping an atomic bomb on Mr. Eisenhower and leaving us to the tender mercies of your fellow Californian, little Dickie Nixon, could possibly bring about a Democratic victory in the state of Pennsylvania.”¹⁰⁸ Four years later, party leaders convinced him that he had enough support to win the nomination; there was even vague talk of a presidential bid in 1960.¹⁰⁹ But this time he was denied in favor of Pittsburgh’s David Lawrence. Dilworth came to realize that he had never been seriously considered for the 1958 nomination. He had been used as a pawn in a game of power politics: “Once Bill Green and Jim Clark, the Philadelphia leaders, let it be known they would drop Furman and McClelland if Lawrence would drop me, the ballgame was over, and now these gentlemen will sit down and agree on some character they can pretty well handle.”¹¹⁰

Finally, in 1962, he won the nomination. He resigned the mayor’s office—as required by the city charter he and Clark had fought for—and staged what would be his final political campaign. Clark ran for reelection the same year, but the two did very little campaigning together. “Naturally,” Saxe wrote later, “Clark flew solo all the way.”¹¹¹ His behavior added to Anne Dilworth’s contempt for Clark. Ever since 1951, when, in her estimation, Clark had stolen the mayoral nomination, she had resented Clark’s treatment of her husband. As Saxe puts it, “She felt Joe went out of his way to upstage Dick, and Dick, as the father of the reform movement in Philadelphia, should have been mayor in 1951.” On several occasions thereafter, Clark seemed to have gone out of his way to “block” Dilworth’s political aspirations.¹¹² Consequently, Anne was extremely cool toward Clark and his wife Noel, who had little time for politics. “On the few occasions when Noel and Joe would campaign on behalf of Dick, Dick would be very, very warm . . . but Anne was very, very cold.”¹¹³ The public got a glimpse of a problem when Adlai Stevenson came to town

¹⁰⁷ Saxe interview, July 30, 1974.

¹⁰⁸ Richardson Dilworth to Roger Kent, May 11, 1954.

¹⁰⁹ Saxe interview, July 30, 1974; Theodore Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York, 1966).

¹¹⁰ Richardson Dilworth to Roger Kent, Feb. 18, 1958, Dilworth Papers.

¹¹¹ Natalie Saxe to Jo W. Saxe, no date.

¹¹² Saxe interview, Jan. 23, 1975.

¹¹³ Stratos interview.

during the 1952 presidential campaign. Both Clark and Dilworth were seated on the dais; Anne and Noel were seated at a table directly in front of it. “When they introduced Clark, everyone stood up but Mrs. Dilworth. When they introduced Dilworth, everyone stood up except Noel,” Rafsky remembers.¹¹⁴ Finally, in 1962, Anne could no longer stifle the frustration that had been building over the past eleven years. She announced, according to Saxe, that she “was not going to vote for Joe.”¹¹⁵

Apparently Clark never understood the reason for Anne’s behavior. He assumed it was a problem between her and Noel. Years later, Clark and Dilworth were eating lunch at the Midtown Club. Both men ate lunch there daily, but almost never at the same table. Clark had divorced Noel and was now married to his third wife, Iris. In Saxe’s words, Clark approached Dilworth and suggested “both Anne and Dick would enjoy Iris [and] the two couples ought to get together. Whereupon Dick, I’m sure with great pleasure, told Joe that he was quite mistaken—that it wasn’t Noel that Anne disliked, that it was he, Joe.”¹¹⁶

By that time it seems that Dilworth did not like Clark much either. In April 1957, the *Saturday Evening Post* published a feature article on Clark, who had only been in the Senate for four months. Written by Stewart Alsop, the article was almost glowing, hinting that Clark had the White House in his future. Eleanor Roosevelt, Alsop said, had Clark on her short list of five possible presidential candidates for 1960. He was an articulate, unassuming, tough, shrewd, hard-working, proven vote-getter who had “broken the seven-decade hold of the Republican machine on the nation’s fourth largest city.” He was also willing to make the small concessions all politicians must make from time to time. “The trick,” according to Clark, “is to know how to roll with the punches. A man who never rolls, breaks. A man who rolls too easily, destroys himself.”¹¹⁷ The article did not impress John O’Hara. “I don’t know what Stewart Alsop’s intent was,” O’Hara wrote to Dilworth, “but he succeeded in giving me the impression that Joe Clark must be a conniving little prick. At the same time he inadvertently or deliberately made you out to be a hell of a guy.”¹¹⁸ Dilworth had no comment on his friend’s observations.

¹¹⁴ Rafsky interview.

¹¹⁵ Saxe interview, Jan. 23, 1975.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Alsop, “Paradox of Gentleman Joe.”

¹¹⁸ John O’Hara to Richardson Dilworth, Apr. 23, 1957, Dilworth Papers.

Five years later, after Dilworth had announced for the governorship, O'Hara volunteered his view of the upcoming campaign and, again, his estimation of Clark:

The unknown factor to me is Clark. You want to know something? I don't trust Clark. You want to know something else? I think you don't trust him. I have a feeling, based on no fact, that Joe Clark convinced himself that you owe everything to him and that you should be obedient and subservient to his wishes. My analysis and advice would be worth a lot more if I knew the precise relationship existing between Clark and Green as regards you. But you know what that is, so I don't need to know.¹¹⁹

This time Dilworth did respond. "I agree with you," he wrote, "that Joe Clark, just like all of us politicians, is an extraordinarily self-centered individual who would cut his own father's throat if necessary to get ahead."¹²⁰

In June 1963, after Dilworth had lost the governor's race and Clark had won reelection, O'Hara wrote of Clark a third time: "I don't know why I think he is an arrogant little prick, but I do. Maybe because he has none of those qualities that you and I have that make us lovable and send us down to defeat."¹²¹ Dilworth's response: "Your description of our senior senator, Joseph S. Clark, is very accurate. I know of no one who is a better judge of character than yourself or who can sum up what a person is really like more succinctly or accurately."¹²²

The years of helping Clark to get virtually everything he sought in public life had finally gotten to Dilworth as he came around to Anne's and O'Hara's way of thinking. Or perhaps there never had existed the "Damon and Pythias" relationship of which everyone wrote. Dilworth and Clark had enjoyed a political alliance of serendipitous convenience that had benefited both men, albeit Clark more than Dilworth, and had benefited the city of Philadelphia as well. William Rafsky may have indeed been correct: "He [Clark] didn't think much of Dilworth, and Dilworth didn't think much of him either."¹²³

Assessing the impact of Dilworth on the Philadelphia reform movement at the end of his own political career, Clark, in a column in the

¹¹⁹ John O'Hara to Richardson Dilworth, Feb. 26, 1962, Dilworth Papers.

¹²⁰ Richardson Dilworth to John O'Hara, Mar. 6, 1962, Dilworth Papers.

¹²¹ John O'Hara to Richardson Dilworth, June 1, 1963, Dilworth Papers.

¹²² Richardson Dilworth to John O'Hara, June 3, 1963, Dilworth Papers.

¹²³ Rafsky interview.

Evening Bulletin, concluded that reform in Philadelphia ended when Dilworth resigned as mayor in February 1962 to run for governor. Clark went on to refer to Dilworth as the “unsung hero of Philadelphia.” Somewhat ironically, however, both Clark and Dilworth always had larger political objectives of their own—Dilworth to attain the governorship and Clark to be a US senator.¹²⁴

Dilworth was certainly the early leader of the reform movement, cemented by his campaign for mayor in 1947. During that campaign, Clark had organized the various independent reform groups, heading an amalgam of these entities oddly named the Independent Activities Committee. Publicly, Clark’s more detached style and intellectual approach never allowed him to compete with the fiery, passionate Dilworth, whose stump speeches became the hallmark of his campaigns. But in 1949, when Clark was elected city controller, he emerged out of Dilworth’s shadow. With a political base of his own and Dilworth increasingly focused on the governorship, Clark began to raise his public profile and moved into the leadership of the reform movement. Clark’s allies in his effort were the independent groups he had helped organize and the local chapter, of which he was the leader, of the Americans for Democratic Action. Additionally, Clark did make an effort to work with the regular Democratic organization, building alliances with them as well as with organized labor. It was also important that as controller, Clark was in a position to attack the corruption and incompetence in the city administration. Consequently, by 1951 Clark and not Dilworth seemed better positioned to run for mayor. Dilworth had run for office in three of the last four years and still had visions of the governorship.

Certainly the personal relationship between Clark and Dilworth mattered. The two had been political friends and leaders of the movement that for two decades had tried to clean up the politics and government of the city. By 1951, Dilworth fully understood how resolute Clark had become to run for mayor and did not stand in his way. But Clark and Dilworth parted ways on the necessity of compromising with the regular Democratic organization. Following the failure of the reformers to broaden the base of the movement, they lost control of city council and the district attorney’s office in 1955. Dilworth, according to Clark, made a deal with Democratic boss Bill Green to amend the city charter to allow for addi-

¹²⁴ “Clark Calls Dilworth Unsung Hero of Phila,” *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, Sept. 25, 1971.

tional patronage and permit him to run for governor without resigning as mayor. Reformers were furious with Dilworth for making the deal; Clark condemned the proposed charter changes, which were rejected by the city electorate in the 1956 primary.

Despite his attempts at conciliation, Dilworth feuded with Democratic Party leaders throughout his first term as mayor. Most notably, “he refused to endorse the renomination of [party favorite] Victor H. Blanc for district attorney in 1957; and after Blanc was renominated over his opposition, Dilworth publicly declared that Blanc was unqualified to continue as district attorney and refused to support him in the general election.”¹²⁵ Nevertheless, Dilworth easily won election to a second term in 1959. In 1971, Clark assessed Dilworth’s years as mayor, writing that they “were marked by great administrative successes, coupled with fierce and frequently losing political battles.”¹²⁶ Dilworth’s ultimate goal, however, remained the governor’s mansion. In February 1962, he announced his gubernatorial candidacy. Due in large measure to Clark’s single-minded opposition to charter change, Dilworth was forced to resign the mayoralty. The following November he was soundly defeated by William Scranton.¹²⁷ He never again ran for public office.

Clark lost his bid for a third term in 1968 to Richard Schweiker. That would be his final campaign. Dilworth sent the expected note of condolence. Back in 1951, Dilworth had penned a personal letter to Clark. It was handwritten, not dictated and typed by a member of the secretarial staff. In it he reflected on their “wonderful four years” together and closed with his anticipation of their political futures:

I want things to continue as they always have in the past. When either of us need[s] the other we can count on him. But when we don’t need one another, we don’t have to do anything for show or for appearance sake.¹²⁸

Exactly seventeen years later, in the wake of his loss to Schweiker, Clark wrote a similarly personal note to Dilworth:

¹²⁵ Joseph Fink, “Reform in Philadelphia: 1946–1951” (PhD diss., Rutgers University, 1971), 223.

¹²⁶ “Clark Calls Dilworth Hero of Phila.”

¹²⁷ See Fink, “Reform in Philadelphia,” 177–79. In the 1962 election, Dilworth won only five of sixty-seven counties. He polled 44.3 percent to Scranton’s 55.3 percent and lost by a half million votes. He carried Philadelphia, but due to his feuding with the city Democratic organization, his margin of victory was far less than anticipated.

¹²⁸ Richardson Dilworth to Joseph S. Clark, Nov. 10, 1951, Clark Papers.

We've had some times together, you and I, since 1947 which I shall always treasure in my memory. And I think we can both say, without that arrogance with which I am charged, that the community is the better for the efforts we put into it these last twenty years. Iris and I are off for three weeks at Cosumel and Mexico. I'll call you for lunch when I get back early in December. In the meantime my best to Anne and thanks again.
[signed] Affectionately, Joe¹²⁹

There is no record of a response from Dilworth.

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¹²⁹ Joseph S. Clark to Richardson Dilworth, Nov. 10, 1968, Dilworth Papers.

