

CYNTHIA LUMMIS: WYOMING'S RISING STAR?

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PINE BLUFFS – Well, it may not be completely accurate to say that Cynthia Lummis is a rising star: after all, she's been a strong presence in Wyoming's public life for many years. But, watching her on the campaign trail this past few months preparing for the State's August 19th Primary, where she neatly dispatched several strong Republican candidates; Buffalo area rancher-businessman Mark Gordon, impeccably-credentialed former nuclear sub commander Bill Winney, and Green River Physician, Michael Holland, I couldn't help but be impressed.

These were not fluff candidates. All demonstrated a substantive grasp of the issues, both national and local. Gordon, whose campaign managed some very impressive commercials, which quickly developed his statewide name recognition, raised \$828,000; \$650,000 of it his personal resources, in the Primary. Winney, according to an unattributed *Wyoming Tribune-Eagle* article appearing on *Wyoming News.com*, brought in \$124,000, while Holland hadn't reported raising any money for his campaign as of the writing of that article. Lummis? She raised \$370,000 through June 30, including \$67,000 she donated to her own campaign.

In a campaign fundraising letter dated June 14, 2008, Lummis said "we believe strongly that our campaign best represents Wyoming's center-right political philosophy . . ." She went on to list these items:

"Freedom from oppressive taxation,
Responsibility for the moral integrity of our nation,
Economic security built through a renewed culture of savings and fiscal discipline,
Energy independence achieved through a portfolio of innovation, conservation, efficiency, and production,
Immigration controls that secure our borders and encourage legal immigration while cracking down on illegal workers in America,
Security, because a strong national defenses is the cornerstone of what keeps America safe and allows us to be great."

Cynthia Marie Lummis Wiederspahn was raised in Laramie County, Wyoming, on a ranch just outside Cheyenne's city limits. It's alleged that she is still active in the operation of her family homestead, Lummis Livestock, although, with her many other duties and responsibilities, I can't imagine that she is *totally* immersed in its daily activities. The Ranch was begun in 1919, when her great-grandfather, a hardware store owner, bought the property from a business

partner. The land lies next door to a refinery and has a stone barn built in the latter 19th Century. It is a prime commercial and/or industrial site, and will bring millions on the market should the family ever decide to sell it.

Lummis was educated at Trinity Lutheran School and public schools in Cheyenne. As a child, she was active in the 4-H Club and raised Hereford calves for showing at the annual county fair.

Bright and tenacious, after finishing high school Lummis attended the University of Wyoming, where she earned not one but two bachelor of science degrees; the first in animal husbandry in 1976, the second in biology in 1978. Elected to the Wyoming Legislature in 1979, she also attended law school, receiving her Juris Doctor degree in 1985. She served a total of fourteen years in the Wyoming House and Senate, and also clerked for the Wyoming Supreme Court. That's a position available only to the best and brightest of law students aspiring to become lawyers.

Though she is still known by her maiden name, she has been married since 1983, to Cheyenne attorney Alvin Wiederspahn. Born in 1949, a former Democrat member of both houses of the Wyoming legislature, he served with Cynthia in the House from 1979-1983, when they married. Lummis and Wiederspahn also own ranches in Wheatland and in Lincoln County, Wyoming. Wiederspan plies his trade on Central Avenue in Cheyenne. He's listed in the Yellow Pages under Attorneys – Corporation, Banking Partnership & Business Law.

The couple has one daughter, Annaliese, who, in 2007, graduated from Haverford College, a small private coed liberal arts college in Haverford, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Philadelphia, and worked a bit in New York City before returning to Wyoming to help with her mother's Congressional campaign.

Lummis was honored by the Small Business Administration as the "Women in Business Advocate of the Year 2005", an award given to a public official who promotes women's business ownership. That same year she was named by the UW College of Agriculture as one of two "Outstanding Alumni". In 2003, Lummis did fundraising for the construction of Johnson Lummis Hunkins Plaza in downtown Laramie, Wyoming.

In 2007, Lummis was among thirty-one Wyoming Republicans to file their names with the Republican State Central Committee for consideration as the successor to U.S. Senator Craig Thomas, who died in office. She was one of the three finalists whose names were submitted by the Committee to the governor, but Democrat Governor David Freudenthal, under Wyoming law, made the final selection, and in June 2007, he appointed Republican State Senator John

Barrasso, from Casper, to the post. Rumors had it that there was "bad blood" between Freudenthal and Lummis.

Cynthia has received endorsements from many in the State Legislature, among them Representative Colin Simpson, son of former U.S. Senator Alan Simpson. Representative Simpson thinks so much of her that he called KODI's Speak Your Piece talk show on the day it featured Republican Congressional candidate Lummis - the day after fellow candidate Mark Gordon appeared - identified himself and noted that the purpose of his call was to express his support for Cynthia Lummis. In making his endorsement, he cited Cynthia's service to the state in the legislature and as State Treasurer.

Simpson is not the only Wyoming Legislator to endorse Lummis. Thirty-one Republican legislators from across the state have officially endorsed her for Wyoming's lone seat in the United States Congress. The list includes legislators from both the State House and State Senate, who represent 22 of Wyoming's 23 counties. Each legislator points to her extensive experience and solid conservative record during her 14 years in the Wyoming State Legislature and 8 years as State Treasurer.

Hank Coe, who represents Senate District 18 - Park County - explained his endorsement of Lummis: "What a great choice for Wyoming's lone congressional seat. Cynthia brings unparalleled experience legislatively and administratively with her 8 years of experience as State Treasurer. She's perfect for Wyoming."

Representative Sue Wallis of House District 52, representing Campbell County echoed those sentiments, stating, "Wyoming cannot afford to send an inexperienced novice to Washington DC to be our only voice in the US House of Representatives. Cynthia Lummis has demonstrated her expertise and skill in negotiating the complex, and intricate relationships so necessary for statesmanship over decades of elected service to the citizens of Wyoming, both as a State Legislator, and as our State's Treasurer."

And in August 2008, Keith Gingery, who represents House District 23, Jackson and Dubois, had this to say: "There is quite a long list of Republican candidates for the lone Congressional seat. . . I believe that Cynthia Lummis is the right choice for Wyoming. I hope you would take a look at [her] record and issue statements on her website, and consider her for your choice as the Republican Candidate in the Primary."

Many of the State Legislators who endorsed her before the Primary Election cited her years as the State Treasurer where, they said, she was instrumental in changing how the State invests its funds, and worked to improve its fund balance performance.

But not everyone is willing to give her credit for that achievement. In fact during the primary campaign, Republican candidate Bill Winney challenged that assertion head on. At the Republican candidates debate and in his campaign literature, Winney questioned whether Lummis could take credit for growth in the state's investment funds during her term as state treasurer in the late 1990s and early part of this decade. He suggested credit should lie with the Legislature and executive branch. But Lummis responded that she worked with the Legislature and governor to grow the funds, but that it was she who guided the process.

"I am very proud and very comfortable taking credit for the fact that between mineral revenues and sound investment policies, our investment went from 3.5 to over 8 billion dollars while I was state treasurer," She said.

Many believe that's true. Keith Gingery again: "She was not just a treasurer who safeguarded the money, but she also found ways to make those investments grow. She also has such a strong understanding of how our State operates and was present when many of the major policy decisions were made in this State for the past 3 decades. I am somewhat biased in that I believe that a former State Legislator is usually the strongest candidate, mostly because they don't have to spend valuable time being educated on the issues. Former Legislators (and in Cynthia's case, also former Treasurer) know the facts already and have discussed the policy implications at length. Former Legislators have represented constituents and know the issues that are important to Wyoming people."

Lummis' endorsements come from a broad spectrum of Wyoming society. A week prior to the August Primary, *Wyoming Right to Life* President Steven Ertelt sent out the following: "Recently, there has been some question concerning the pro-life views of Republican Congressional candidate Cynthia Lummis. I can say with confidence that we can count on her to have a strong pro-life voting record if she represents us in Washington. Today's pro-life movement is filled with millions of people who formerly supported legalized abortion but, after education or personal experiences now support the pro-life position. Like Senator John Barrasso, who ran many years ago as a candidate who backed legal abortions but who has proven his pro-life credentials time and time again since then, Cynthia Lummis has come around on pro-life issues. . . . Cynthia Lummis has told pro-life advocates that she believes abortion violates her Christian views and constitutes a "sin against God." . . . She strongly supports the partial-birth abortion ban, opposes federal funding for abortions, and opposes the bill Barack Obama wants that would overturn every abortion limit our state legislature has enacted. And on every pro-life issue that Congress will vote on, I'm confident she will vote pro-life. Moreover, Cynthia Lummis opposes making taxpayers fund embryonic stem cell research that involves the

purposeful destruction of human life for research that has never cured a single patient.”

And regarding her Second amendment views, “Gun Owners of America Political Victory Fund” endorsed Lummis in the Republican primary for U.S. Congress in Wyoming:

“With Nancy Pelosi as Speaker of the House, the Second Amendment is under constant attack,” said Tim Macy, Vice-Chairman of GOAPVF. “Although the U.S. Supreme Court finally recognized that the Second Amendment protects an individual right, many leaders in Washington, D.C. are still attempting to regulate the right to keep and bear arms out of existence. Just last year, Congress passed a law that has contributed to the disarmament of hundreds of thousands of honorably discharged veterans. We need people in Washington who will fight to defend the Second Amendment against the radical anti-gun leadership in the House of Representatives. Cynthia Lummis will be a welcome addition to Congress.”

Macy also said that GOAPVF planned to inform its Wyoming members of its endorsement of Lummis.

The Primary over, Cynthia Lummis journeyed to Sr. Paul, where she attended the Republican National Convention. Upon her return she will square off against Democrat Gary Trauner for the House seat vacated by Barbara Cubin. The campaign will be short – just a bit under two months - but promises to be expensive. At the end of June, the Federal Election Commission’s filing by the candidates revealed that Trauner, who supports abortion rights, had raised \$990,000 in donations, about three times more than Lummis. However, *The Evans-Novak Political Report* recently claimed that Lummis is the favorite over Trauner in the House election because of Republican tradition in Wyoming congressional races.

“When the Republican Party became the minority party in both houses of Congress after the 2006 elections, contributions to Republican organizations in Washington virtually dried up,” Lummis said in a campaign letter. “At the same time, the Democrat National Committee and Democrat National Congressional Committee became flush with cash. . . . When Mr. Trauner came very close to winning in Wyoming’s House race in 2006, [they] decided to spend tens of thousands of dollars in Wyoming to improve his chances of success in 2008. Democrat operatives from the East are already in Wyoming to coordinate the Democrat’s efforts.”

This may be true, but Cynthia Lummis believes that the people of Wyoming want its next Congressional member to take their conservative values

to Washington and, along with its delegation of Senator Mike Enzi and Senator John Barrasso, exert strong leadership and an intense personal commitment to working tirelessly every day to be Wyoming's voice of reason in Washington.

She's right. Conservative, informed, common sense, values are what's needed in our nation's capital today, and Cynthia Lummis has demonstrated these qualities throughout her public service career.

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