

TRIBUNE EDITORIAL

Stand proud, Chicago

We know many Chicagoans feel shock and disappointment that the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games won't be coming here, a feeling magnified by the city's sudden departure in the first vote by the International Olympic Committee.

For our part, we feel profound gratitude to the people who worked so hard for so long on this bid. They gave generously of their time and talent and money.

They raised Chicago's visibility on the world stage, introducing this most American of American cities to foreign audiences. There was nothing ambivalent about the Olympic bid once Mayor Richard Daley put his heart into it.

Chicago 2016 folded a smart, solid bid because of the extraordinary leadership of businessman Patrick Ryan. His efforts reflected a great Chicago tradition of civic leaders stepping up for their city.

Chicago citizens and businesses pledged more than \$31 million to this campaign. Companies allowed their employees time to volunteer and provided goods, services and facilities.

The focus in the final days of the campaign fell on Barack and Michelle Obama and Oprah Winfrey. Give them credit, too. But long before Air Force One touched down in Denmark, hundreds of people had labored in the trenches for years on behalf of Chicago 2016. Former Olympians, Paralympians and regular citizens enthusiastically boosted the bid. They were worthy ambassadors. Chicago would have staged great games and thrown a worthy party for the world. It was not to be. Clear to see, as they say in Paris, a world-class city that was favored four years ago to win an Olympic Games, but didn't. Paris, by the way, is still a world-class city.

The soul of a city is revealed not only in its shining moments of victory but in how it handles adversity.

Chicago doesn't have an Olympic Games. It does have plenty of heart.

Dream dashed

Mayor Daley sought the Olympics to solve myriad problems. Now what?



Mayor Richard Daley faces reporters Friday in Copenhagen after Chicago was voted out of the running to be the host city for the 2016 Olympic Games. "This was never about Rich Daley," he said. [AP/WIDEWORLD](#)

By Dan Mihaleopoulos
TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

Mayor Richard Daley and his supporters kept the 2016 Olympic bid as Chicago's last hope for a sorely needed economic boost, a once-in-a-lifetime chance to raise the city's global profile and open a way to help keep more kids from dropping out of school.

"The next five years, six years, tell me one thing that is going to have economic opportunities for any city," Daley had said in July when asked about criticism of his Olympic dream. "If you know something better, I'd love to see it."

But Daley headed home from Denmark on Saturday without a ring card. He faces an increasingly dire budget crunch, concerns about crime and school violence — and an approval rating at the lowest

point since he was first elected two decades ago.

The 2016 Games were to be the capstone of Daley's tenure, an era in which he has reshaped Chicago as few mayors have.

A few decades of effort, the city established itself as a player in the global economy. While other parts of the Midwest atrophied, Chicago's economy became more diverse. When that economy was booming and real estate values were skyrocketing, Daley used a government checkbook and unparalleled political power to deliver on his vision. He helped turn the City that Works into a town where you are just as likely to play — Millennium Park, Navy Pier and the lakefront museum complex.

He enjoyed turned public support across

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Stand proud, Chicago

Chicago Tribune – October 4, 2009 at 12:00 am

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2009-10-04-0910030173-story.html>

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For our part, we feel profound gratitude to the people who worked so hard for so long on this bid. They gave generously of their time and talent and money.

They raised Chicago's visibility on the world stage, introducing this most American of American cities to foreign audiences. There was nothing ambivalent about the Olympic bid once Mayor Richard Daley put his heart into it.

Chicago 2016 fielded a smart, solid bid because of the extraordinary leadership of businessman Patrick Ryan. His efforts reflected a great Chicago tradition of civic leaders stepping up for their city.

Chicago citizens and businesses pledged more than \$75 million to this campaign. Companies allowed their employees time to volunteer and provided goods, services and facilities.

The focus in the final days of the campaign fell on Barack and Michelle Obama and Oprah Winfrey. Give them credit, too. But long before Air Force One touched down in Denmark, hundreds of people had labored in the trenches for years on behalf of Chicago 2016. Former Olympians, Paralympians and regular citizens enthusiastically boosted the bid. They were worthy ambassadors. Chicago would have staged great games and thrown a terrific party for the world. It was not to be. C'est la vie, as they say in Paris, a world-class city that was favored four years ago to win an Olympic Games, but didn't. Paris, by the way, is still a world-class city.

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Daley's dream dashed

Dan Mihalopoulos - Tribune staff reporter – October 4, 2009

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/chi-091004daley-olympics-story.html>

[Mayor Richard Daley](#) and his supporters hyped the 2016 Olympic bid as Chicago's best hope for a sorely needed economic boost, a once-in-a-lifetime chance to raise the city's global profile and even a way to help keep more kids from dropping out of school.

"The next five years, six years, tell me one thing that is going to have economic opportunities for any city," Daley had said in July, when asked about criticism of his Olympic dream. "If you have something better, I'd love to see it." But Daley headed home from Denmark on Saturday without a trump card. He faces an increasingly dire budget crunch, concerns about crime and school violence -- and an approval rating at the lowest point since he was first elected two decades ago.

The 2016 Games were to be the capstone of Daley's tenure, an era in which he has reshaped Chicago as few mayors have.

After decades of effort, the city established itself as a player in the global economy. While other parts of the Midwest atrophied, Chicago's economy became more diverse. When that economy was humming and real estate values were skyrocketing, Daley used a government checkbook and unparalleled political power to deliver on his vision. He helped turn the City that Works into a town where you are just as likely to play -- [Millennium Park](#), [Navy Pier](#) and the lakefront museum campus.

He enjoyed broad public support across the city's racial spectrum, and Chicago's population even grew slightly after decades of decline.

Chicagoans -- many of them Daley allies or acolytes -- are running the [White House](#), and the city is still basking in the afterglow of a November election night when the world saw the best of its skyline and its people. It was an image hometown [President Barack Obama](#) cited in pitching Chicago to the [International Olympic Committee](#).

But the good feelings didn't translate to victory in Denmark, and back home in Chicago the goodwill and money that Daley long enjoyed have dwindled in recent months.

Daley's approval rating sank to an all-time low of 35 percent in a recent Tribune poll amid a botched parking-meter lease deal and questions about Olympic financial risks. Normally pliant aldermen began to question the mayor more aggressively.

Allies and critics saw the Olympic bid as Daley's political and economic Hail Mary pass.

"People at City Hall were talking about this like it was the only option," said Ald. Howard Brookins, 21st. "It's like there is no plan to fix these things without all of the new buildings and infrastructure and the billions of dollars of spending that the Olympics would bring to the city. Now people are going to start nitpicking over everything that is wrong in the city."

The loss of the Olympics as both a revenue generator and political rallying point leaves the 67-year-old Daley at a crossroads. Daley is set to eclipse his father's record tenure of 21 years in office next year, and he has been repeatedly asked whether the outcome of the Olympic vote would affect his decision on whether to seek re-election to a seventh term in February 2011.

As he has said in recent months, Daley on Friday insisted the vote would not influence his political future. "This was never about Rich Daley," he told reporters Friday in Denmark. "This ... was not a political gamble. This was not a political adventure."

Daley remains the undisputed heavyweight of Chicago politics, although the rejection of the city's bid created the rare spectacle of the mayor not getting his way. The loss furthers the ability of critics to complain that Daley's long-term, laserlike focus on the Olympics came at the expense of dealing with more immediate city problems.

Even as Daley was futilely lobbying IOC members last week, stark reminders of the challenges at home interrupted his narrative. There was the videotaped beating of a 16-year-old high school student, the third student slain in the young school year. Then a fugitive City Hall contractor who allegedly bribed Daley administration officials to get city business reappeared in the federal courthouse in Chicago.

The Olympics would have been a handy way for Daley to shift the discussion from such problems, and some supporters had even gone so far as to suggest the Olympics legacy would keep more children in school and help stem street violence.

Whether the impact of the games on average Chicagoans would have lived up to the mayor's promises will never be known. What's clear is that the failed Olympic bid robs Daley of an opportunity to act as the de facto head of a seven-year, \$4.8 billion public works project. Gone are the jobs and contracts he could have used to maintain unquestioned authority.

Ald. Joe Moore, 49th, said he did not think Daley relished coming home to a \$500 million deficit and "an angry and cynical electorate. "I've always admired the mayor's ability to think big and do big things, but I do take issue with the mayor's penchant for secrecy, and I think that harmed him locally in terms of the bid," Moore said.

Daley historically has been eager and able to make decisions before asking aldermen and the public for their assent, which he almost always received anyway. That didn't seem to work as smoothly for him in the Olympic effort. The turning point in the bid, in the public's view, may have come in June when Daley reversed course and promised IOC officials Chicago would cover any cost overruns if it were chosen to host the games.

Bid team officials and Daley aides scurried to placate aldermen, ultimately winning their unanimous blessing. But public support for the 2016 effort waned since the mayor's about-face on the financial guarantee, with a recent Tribune poll showing Chicagoans were almost equally divided over supporting the games. Moore said the Olympic loss showed that the mayor is not invincible: "The contention that this mayor can never be defeated has often been cited, and I think this shows that is not true."

Beating Daley for the right to host the Olympics and seriously challenging his re-election remain two very different things. While more council members disagree with the mayor than did a few years ago, there still is no organized opposition bloc.

"I don't think there is going to be much political cost for Daley because of this -- it's not like there is anybody waiting to pounce on the chance," said Larry Bennett, a political science professor at [DePaul University](#). Still, Bennett said, "It's not going to be good for his sense of self-esteem."

The mayor seemed content to take at least a quick breather before delving back into post-Olympic Chicago. Daley has planned no public appearances during the weekend or Monday.