



A Return to Civility **Jennifer Turner**

The last several years in our nation and communities have been fraught with anxiety, division, polarization, and incivility. One could point to identity politics, social media, the pandemic, or any other number of reasons for why friends, neighbors, and even family members have seemingly turned against one another. Maybe it's a reaction to a perceived loss of control or an attempt to have one's voice be heard in a world and society that seems increasingly fractured and uncertain. But regardless of what is going on around us, the one thing we can always control is our own behavior and how we treat others—even those with whom we strongly disagree.

In response to the scathing personal letter written to Prue Beidler by a former Lake Forest alderman and widely disseminated to the community on February 15, I am calling upon folks in our community to do better. Whether one supports Prue's candidacy for mayor or not, there is no denying that she has been a positive contributor to Lake Forest for the five decades she has lived here, with thousands of hours of volunteerism across various organizations and City positions. Her contributions are many, and we all benefit from them.

Prue has not responded in kind to the negativity directed at her because she understands that more divisive messaging does not serve any of us. Prue is owed both a private and public apology for the numerous communications that have been sent out questioning her character, her motives, and her ability to lead. Smear campaigns are almost always a sign of weakness and desperation.

We are extremely fortunate to have two candidates for mayor who are both very capable and accomplished with a robust record of serving Lake Forest. It is my hope that we can rise above the overwrought, toxic messaging that has characterized the national conversation for too long. The collateral damage it does to a community is not worth any perceived benefit to a person's cause or campaign. Lake Forest has always been a beacon of civility and basic respect. Let's not lose that.