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Contact: Linda S. Anderson
217-206-6094
lande3@uis.edu

SCOUNDRELS OR VISIONARY LEADERS?

Two Top State Political Writers Add Perspective to Governor Ryan's and Governor Blagojevich's Terms in The Illinois Governors: Mostly Good and Competent, the Third Edition of the 1988 Classic Book

The Illinois Governors: Mostly Good and Competent, a classic collection of biographies of the state's 40 governors, has been updated in this third edition to include analysis of former Governor George Ryan's and current Governor Rod Blagojevich's terms of office. The authors pose the question, "Were Illinois' governors good men who effected good policy?" They suggest to readers that the governors represented a cross section of the political ideas and social attitudes of their times. Mostly Good and Competent tells the stories of these powerful men's lives in the context of the state's rich and colorful political history. Both the good and the bad are recounted, as the introduction notes that the state's top office has occasionally been filled by honorable statesmen as well as "chairwarmers and crooks."

New chapters by well-known political writer Taylor Pensoneau chronicle Ryan as "the ultimate insider" with "the political savvy to accomplish much during his one term as governor" and Blagojevich as having an "earthy, even glib" style that "resonated with voters, but aroused resentment among legislators and other officials."

The original book, published in 1988 and written by the late newspaper reporter and historian Robert Howard, was titled The Illinois Governors: Mostly Good and Competent Men. The title was revised in anticipation that one day Illinois might have a female governor, Peggy Boyer Long, the third edition's book editor, said. "Howard designed his book to explain who the governors were and how they responded to the challenges of leadership," Boyer Long added. "Our aim in the third edition was to accomplish that as well, but in addition, we provide greater context and highlight a few of the people and events that fill out the portrait of each governor's era." Many photos and images were added to this edition to illustrate historic events.

Much has changed in Illinois since the second edition of the book in 1999. Illinoisans elected, then re-elected, the first Democratic governor in a quarter century. The locus of administrative power moved from Springfield to Chicago. A former governor was convicted of public corruption. And the state's fiscal fortunes declined. All of these changes are reflected in the current edition.

New edition author Pensoneau's credentials as an observer of the state's most powerful executive office are well-known. He was once a Statehouse reporter for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. He covered five of this state's governors, including Richard Ogilvie and Dan Walker. Third edition editor Boyer Long is the recently retired editor of *Illinois Issues*, the state's leading public affairs magazine, where she also served as Director of Center Publications for the Center for State Policy and Leadership, University of Illinois at Springfield. Boyer Long updated Howard's original chapter on Governor James R. Thompson and wrote the section on Governor Jim Edgar for the second edition of Mostly Good and Competent. An Illinois native, she has covered Illinois government

for print publications and public radio. As a reporter based in the Statehouse, she covered three governors: Dan Walker, James Thompson and Jim Edgar.

The Illinois Governors: Mostly Good and Competent is available from Center Publications at 217-206-6502, or on the Web at <http://cspl.uis.edu/centerpublications>.

The cost is \$34.95 plus shipping and handling.

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The Illinois Governors: Mostly Good and Competent by Robert Howard
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Note:

Press kit, including photos of the book cover and the authors in JPEG format, are available at the Web site listed above.