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Bill Clinton delegate Nancy Richards-Stower.

## In July, Her Dream Comes True

By William Bunch  
STAFF WRITER

For anyone who is active in New Hampshire Democratic politics — and few, if any, are more active than Nancy Richards-Stower — there is a moment about a year before each upcoming presidential election when she gets what's commonly known as "The Big Call."

So Richards-Stower was not in the least surprised one day in September when a man on the other end of the phone said that Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton wanted to speak to her.

In fact, Richards-Stower was somewhat blasé about the prospect of talking to a White House hopeful. "I told him, 'Don't waste a call — I'm already aboard,'" she recalled last week. "Let him call some folks that he needs to stroke. If this is a stroking call, don't bother."

About 20 seconds later, a hysterically laughing Clinton picked up the phone, asking, "What did you tell that guy?" It was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

### Convention '92



The Delegates

Last Tuesday, Richards-Stower's early support for Clinton paid off as the 41-year-old civil rights attorney became one of the first Democrats to win a trip — no expenses paid — to the Democratic National Convention that begins July 13 in New York City.

But the thousands of restaurateurs, hoteliers, merchants, and others in the city who view the arrival of Stower-Richards and the 4,921 other delegates with dollar signs in their eyes might be disappointed somewhat by her preliminary plans for the July events.

That's because Richards-Stower is a hard-core political activist and junkie who wants to spend her entire week's stay in New York selling the other delegates on Clinton and — she hopes — his strategy for defeating President George Bush in November. She doesn't even want to think about the spaghetti at Mamma Leone's, tickets for "Miss Saigon," or shopping at Trump Tower.

In fact, her husband — whom she met protesting the Vietnam War and who is now a Unitarian minister — hails from the Bronx, so Richards-Stower just might stay with relatives and leave the Milford Plaza, billed as "in the center of it all," to the other New Hampshire

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## Clinton Delegate's Dream Coming True

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delegates.

"This will be tops for this political activist," she said by telephone from her law office in the Budweiser-brewery town of Merrimack, N.H. "It will be wonderful going to a convention where I believe strongly in the candidate and where he will be the next president of the United States."

The July trip to New York will be the culmination of a lifelong dream for Richards-Stower. She first became interested in politics in the 4th grade in Maine, when she and her mother would watch President John F. Kennedy's Monday press conferences, which aired right after "The Mickey Mouse Club."

In her youth, she said she believed that Kennedy's "New Frontier" programs would rid the world of poverty and dictators, so she was greatly disillusioned by his assassination, the Vietnam War and the other upheavals of the late 1960s. She became an active antiwar protester and a George McGovern volunteer at George Washington University.

She went to New Hampshire for law school and — after a stint in Washington as a lawyer and aide to Delaware Sen. Joseph Biden — moved back to the Granite State to raise her son, who is now 11.

There is no better state in the nation for a political junkie.

In 1984, she found herself the New Hampshire state chair for her political hero, McGovern, who ran an unsuccessful if well-regarded comeback campaign that year. In 1988, she was an early supporter of another former mentor, Biden, who left the race amid allegations that he plagiarized speech material, and a late supporter of Illinois

Sen. Paul Simon, who was a distant also-ran.

The bottom line is that she never got to be a delegate — until she signed up with Clinton.

She had actually met Clinton once before that fateful September phone call, in 1987, when he came to a statewide Democratic meeting and made a most favorable impression on Richards-Stower — in part by laughing robustly at a comedy skit she performed.

She said her recent experience crisscrossing the state with the candidate convinced her that Clinton — who made a strong impression on her when he openly embraced a disgruntled elderly voter at a senior citizens center — is genuine, the exact opposite of the "Slick Willie" image that some have saddled him with.

"There was nothing slick about Bill Clinton walking up to this elderly lady — this guy is so real it's refreshing," said Richards-Stower, who supports the candidate even though he backs the death penalty, which she opposes.

And Richards-Stower finally realized her dream of becoming a delegate when a caucus of Clinton's backers in her congressional district gave her more votes than any other would-be delegate. When Clinton placed second in Tuesday's primary to former Massachusetts Sen. Paul Tsongas, the candidate won nine of the 18 popularly elected delegates, a list that includes Richards-Stower.

Now it's on to New York, where the New Hampshire delegate has two dreams: That Clinton wins her nomination, and that her husband — the Unitarian minister who was raised in a Jewish household — is chosen to lead Madison Square Garden in a non-denominational prayer.