



DAN TANGHERLINI

When Dan Tangherlini arrived as a freshman at the University of Chicago in the fall of 1985, he felt like “the country mouse coming to the big city.” He had grown up in Auburn, Massachusetts, a small town outside of Worcester where his father was a physics professor at Holy Cross. Dan had thought he would study business but quickly found that he was fascinated by the energy and diversity of Chicago. The university had just created a five-year combination bachelor’s degree and master’s in public policy and the second person to sign up for it was Dan.

As a twenty-three year old Presidential Management Intern, Dan set a pattern that would repeat itself when he accepted the “lowest paying but most exciting” job he was offered, working at the Office of Management and Budget. He progressed through a number of positions with OMB and in 1997 moved over to the Department of Transportation, gaining a deep respect for the professional staffs that run our government and for the setting of priorities that undergirds the formulation of the budget. In 1998, when the Control Board took over much of the D.C. government, Dan was loaned to the city as acting-CFO for the Metropolitan Police Department. This was, he says, like being “thrown into the deep end of the city politics pool.” The work was intense, the hours punishing and Dan was hooked. What was supposed to be a temporary appointment became permanent just as Tony Williams was taking over as mayor. Later, Dan went on to serve for six years as Director of the newly created D.C. Department of Transportation. He was also general manager of Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

The day after Adrian Fenty won the Democratic primary, Dan read in the paper that the probable mayor was interested in having him serve as City Administrator. It is as Mayor Fenty’s right hand man that Dan has led the city’s extraordinary response to the fire that wrecked the historic Eastern Market building a year ago, getting the temporary structure up and running in just four months. This was an exciting opportunity for Dan to work with the mayor to demonstrate the conviction they share that government really does work for the public. Because he lives on the Hill, it also means that Dan’s life turned into a “rolling community meeting.” He refers to himself as “a human 311,” often stopped at soccer practice, on the street or at Frager’s by people politely asking if he minds if they ask him a question.

He does not. Fifteen years ago, Dan chose to live on Capitol Hill because he needed a place where he could rent with a dog. He found much more than that and today, Dan and his wife, Theresa, are totally committed to the neighborhood. They live near Stanton Park in an old house they lovingly renovated with the help of Theresa’s father and which they share with daughters, Cassandra and Francesca, and with Lily, a Welsh Springer spaniel and a Cavalier King Charles puppy named Chloe.