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HEADLINE: Q&A - Ann DeLaney, Executive director of the Julian Center, lawyer, political commentator

BYLINE: INTERVIEW BY KONRAD MARSHALL | PHOTO BY MICHELLE PEMBERTON | THE STAR

BODY:

During the week, Ann DeLaney gets up early and runs. She likes the early morning chill, which seems fair, given the blustering hot air the 62-year-old lawyer, political pundit and not-for-profit director has to deal with in boardrooms, courtrooms and on the weekly television show "Indiana Week in Review" on WFYI (Channel 20)

DeLaney, who graduated from Indiana University in 1977, has become a regular fixture in her Meridian-Kessler neighborhood -- where she runs on weekdays -- just as she has become a familiar presence in Hoosier politics and advocacy.

The Julian Center, of which DeLaney is executive director, provides shelter and counseling to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, and survivors of child sexual abuse. She's also a partner in the law firm DeLaney & DeLaney, with daughter Kathleen and husband Ed.

A former deputy prosecuting attorney and Marion Superior Court commissioner, DeLaney also was the Democratic nominee for lieutenant governor of Indiana in 1984, and later Evan Bayh's legislative director during his first term as governor.

She served as chair of the Indiana Democratic Party -- becoming the first woman to head either major political party in Indiana -- and is the author of "Politics for Dummies."

Is the nonprofit sector in as much trouble as every other business right now?

It's hard to equate it with every other business, but we've had some serious setbacks in terms of contributions. At the same time, in the domestic violence area, when a recession hits, the demand for services goes up, so we've (The Julian Center) been pretty much full for months. And with our outreach base, the demand has really escalated for services -- our food pantry, our thrift store -- and donations are down about a third. So it's been a pretty big hit.

Is there any personal reason for you wanting to help domestic violence victims and their children?

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Just wanting to help women who don't have the resources to help themselves.

What is it about politics that you enjoy?

The opportunity for policy change. There's really not an awful lot of difference between being in politics or being a lawyer or being a not-for-profit advocate. You advocate on behalf of a cause. The cause may change, the audience may change, but it really isn't all that different.

You ran for political office 25 years ago, seeking the job of lieutenant governor. What have you learned since then that you might put in practice now?

This is going to sound kind of cynical. When I first ran for office, I didn't realize the power of money in the process and how important it was to have a well-funded campaign, even more than being right on the issues. So I probably would have waited to run, in retrospect. But it was all still a good experience. It opened doors to other things. I don't regret any of it.

Would you ever run for political office again?

I don't think so. I've reached the stage of my life where I'd like to uncomplicate it rather than complicate it.

As the first woman to head a major political party in the state, do you feel you opened things up for Hoosier women in politics?

I think there is some of that. . . . When (men) look for candidates, they just look for people like them. And somebody else has to say, "Well, we're not all like you, and you need to look a little bit broader afield for your potential candidates."

I end listen to "Indiana Week In Review" (on 90.1-FM) most Friday nights . . .

Don't have a social life?

. . . just when I'm driving home. And it always sounds like you're the lone liberal lady among a group of conservative men.

I don't think Ketz (Indianapolis Star columnist John Ketzenberger) is that conservative, but he'll occasionally let that come out. Jon Schwantes (of Dispatch Broadcasting, and host of WFYT's "Indiana Lawmakers") is so anxious never to take a position on anything, with stats everywhere, that occasionally I'll turn to him and say, "Is that a yes or a no? What are you trying to say?" Mike (McDaniel, former Indiana State Republican chairman) certainly is pretty conservative.

Does it get annoying every week to hear them sort of scoffing at your viewpoint?

They do that sometimes, and yes, sometimes it can be infuriating. But by and large, we get along. I don't know how much Mike believes everything he says.

On the run: Ann DeLaney talks about working with family, running marathons and writing "Politics for Dummies" in the full conversation on IndyStar.com/entertainment.

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