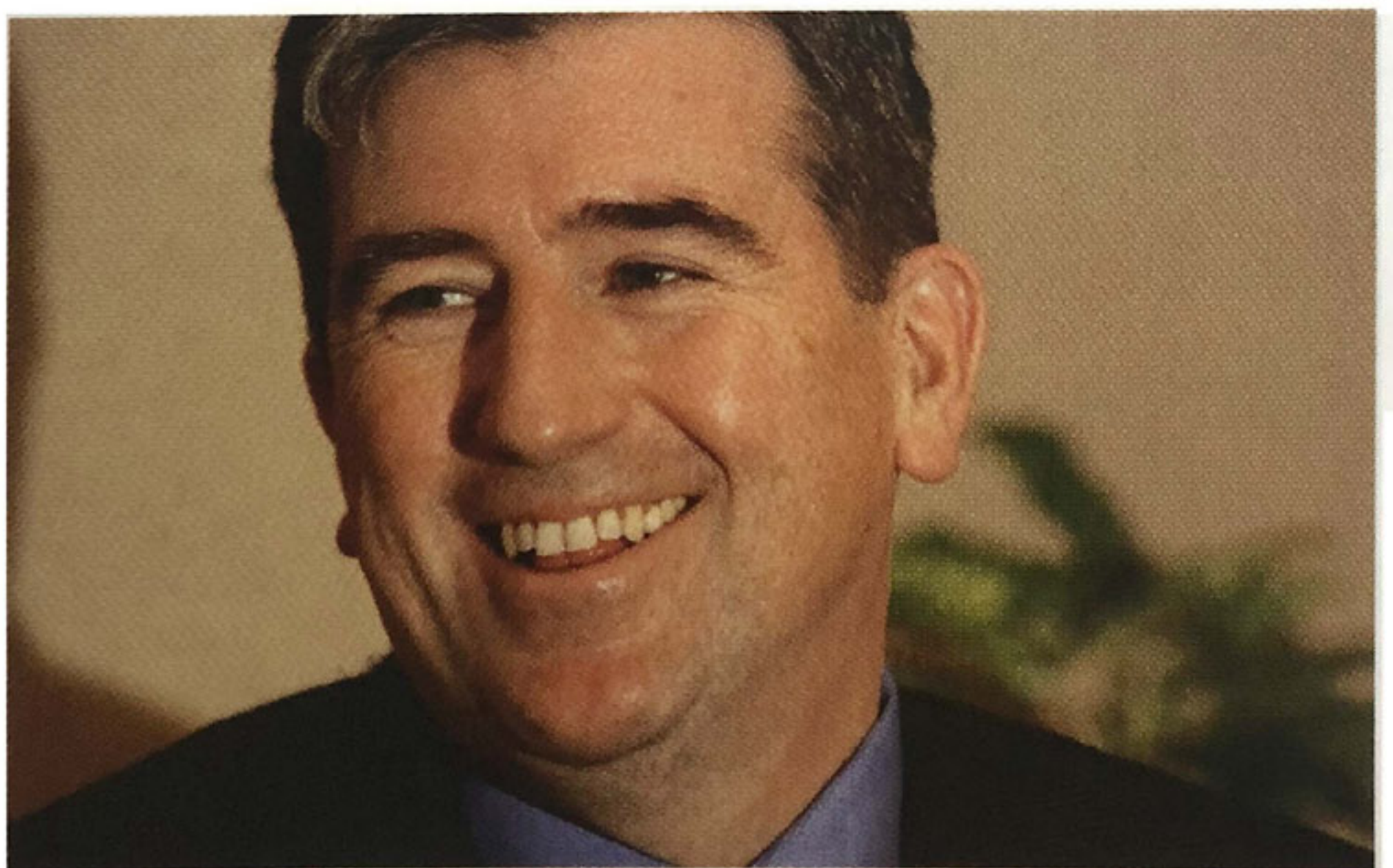


MURRAY, Glen, politician (b Oct 26, 1957, Montreal) was Winnipeg's most colourful and controversial mayor since **STEPHEN JUBA**. Murray was raised in the Montreal neighbourhoods of Notre Dame de Grace and Rosemont, and was educated at CÉGEP John Abbott College and at Concordia U. He left Concordia in his final year to take a job in communications with Canada Post.

In 1984, he transferred to Winnipeg. His public involvement began with volunteer work at a community clinic, and in 1987, he left Canada Post to become education co-ordinator of the Village Clinic, serving people with HIV/AIDS. Two years later, he ran successfully for Winnipeg's city council, and was re-elected in 1992 and 1995. He had been elected initially as a member



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Glen Murray

of a left-liberal reform group called Winnipeg into the Nineties (WIN). Elected Winnipeg's 41st mayor in 1998, he was the first openly gay mayor of any major Cdn city.

Murray's primary challenge as mayor was to balance his left-leaning philosophies with a business-oriented city hall. His initial appointments to the executive policy committee (EPC), council's most influential committee, included only 2 of his left-leaning colleagues together with 4 right-wingers. Within 2 years, he had demonstrated his political mettle by keeping the business community onside, while appointing all of his left-leaning colleagues, and only 2 right-wingers, to EPC, and marginalizing the right-wingers most troublesome to him.

There followed a flurry of activity. Murray solidified his standing by delivering a 2%-a-year cut to property tax. He then breathed life into a longstanding but desultory effort at revitalizing of the commercial heart of the city by creating an economic development agency, CentreVenture, that gained credibility through intelligent leadership, strong support from the business community, tax credits, and govt funding. At the same time, he oversaw the formulation of the Winnipeg Housing Policy, which, with the help of substantial contributions from other levels of govt, had seen marked improvements in some of Winnipeg's more threatened neighbourhoods.

Murray was not universally lauded. He took a sharp turn when he repudiated an election promise to save the 8-storey downtown **EATON'S** building, and instead oversaw its demolition and replacement with the **MTS CENTRE**. He also earned mixed reviews when he pushed for the development of a pedestrian bridge with a restaurant at the centre over the **RED RIVER** to **ST. BONIFACE**, and the bridge itself, later named Esplanade Riel after **LOUIS RIEL**, was commended for its landmark design by some and derided by others.

Murray's policies were always on the knife's edge between his longstanding ideology and political necessity. He was controversial. His supporters – who, by this time, were more likely to be centrists or liberals rather than leftists – saw him as bringing a welcome infusion of visionary leadership to the city. His detractors on city council and in the provincial govt, however, said he was *too* visionary and criticized him for ineffectively implementing his own ideas.

Murray also made an appearance on the national stage, often tied to NGOs such as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, of whose Big City Mayors Caucus he was chair. His venture into tax cuts had convinced him that Canada's cities needed access to a revenue source more likely to grow with the economy than property taxes. He

showed his political skills by defining the quest for more revenues as a venture into charter cities and urban autonomy, enlisting urban visionary Jane Jacobs (1916-2006) as a supporter. For a time, Murray was the primary spokesperson for cities on the national stage, and his timing was right, because cities were making an appearance on the national agenda, especially after Paul Martin became PM. Murray's campaign had some limited success when the Martin govt agreed to share gas taxes with cities and municipalities.

Murray's career as mayor came to an abrupt end in 2004, when he resigned to make an unsuccessful bid for a seat in the House of Commons in Charleswood-St James. Had he won, it was widely assumed that he would have been appointed to Cabinet. However, he was defeated and soon moved to Toronto, where he accepted a position as Visiting Fellow at Massey College, U of Toronto and formed his own consulting company.

• CHRISTOPHER LEO/MATTHEW MULAIRE