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New Ohio AG known as intelligent, deliberate

By JULIE CARR SMYTH AP Statehouse Correspondent

Published on Wednesday May 28, 2008

Newly appointed Ohio Attorney General Nancy Hardin Rogers is no wimp.

But her style couldn't be more different than that of her predecessor Marc Dann, the firebrand, press-seeking politician who succeeded by his political passions and failed by his personal ones.

By all accounts, Rogers, 59, is even-tempered, soft-spoken and deliberative. She rarely raises her voice. She doesn't swear. She is strident in carrying out her convictions, usually after drawing them from the extensive input of those around her.

"She is modest, unassuming but nevertheless a very strong leader," said Dan Tokaji, a member of the faculty at the Moritz College of Law at Ohio State University, where Rogers has served as dean since 2001. "I think what sets her apart from other leaders is she's just a great listener."

Democratic Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland appointed Rogers Wednesday to serve temporarily after a sexual harassment scandal forced Dann, also a Democrat, to resign.

Rogers and her husband, attorney Douglas Rogers, met at Richard Nixon's first inaugural in 1969 _ she, the daughter of Secretary of Agriculture Clifford Hardin, and he, the son of Secretary of State and former U.S. Attorney General William Rogers. The two were married in 1970, and have three daughters.

Their relationship went down as a literal footnote in presidential history. When William Rogers was welcoming Nixon's new secretary of agriculture in 1971 he said, "I am very pleased, of course, to welcome the new Secretary of Agriculture. I had a very close relationship with the last one."

In its archives, The American Presidency Project has added the pair's marriage as a footnote after that quote.

The new Agriculture Secretary, Earl Butz, then replied: "I have no daughters." Rogers replied: "Well, it is good I have no sons left."

Edward "Ned" Foley, another member of the Moritz faculty, said Rogers keeps her cool even when things get heated, having developed an expertise in alternative dispute resolution.

"Her method is conciliatory and soft-spoken, but she's very good at leading disparate people with disparate points of view in a direction she wants to take the institution," Foley said. "She works hard at it."

Rogers, who says she's a Democrat, has a bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas and a law degree from Yale. She also served as a law clerk to U.S. District Judge Thomas D. Lambros in Cleveland and, around the same time, worked for the Cleveland LegalAid Society providing legal help to the poor. Among other assignments since, Rogers served as a visiting professor at Harvard Law School while on leave from Ohio State in 2000.

She intends to serve as Ohio attorney general for six months. After voters select a new attorney general in November, she plans to return to the Ohio State law school.

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