

School chief discusses district's future

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LEWIS' LIFE and 26-year career have led him along a path of lost and found educational dreams.

Education began for Lewis at grammar school and Smith Naval Academy in Cardiff, Wales. It continued in this country through the Pontiac school system onto graduate and undergraduate work at Michigan State and Wayne State.

Many dreams — including a career in the Merchant Marines —

were lost until he received his United States citizenship in 1953 after being drafted into the U.S. military and serving in Nuremberg, West Germany.

Ironically, it was a U.S. economic recession in the late 1950s that moved him into a career in education. "If the circumstances are not there for you, you look for them or create them," he explained.

Lewis went from a career in graphic illustration back to school to receive his teaching certificate. "There was such a need for teachers at the time and a lot of people in the same boat who couldn't get jobs," he said.

Since art was his background, it seemed the logical subject to follow

in teaching. But administrators in the Pontiac school district had other ideas for the young man from Wales. The teacher was placed in one of the first special education classes in the state, and given a scholarship for special education training at Wayne State. Even though he loved art, "I committed myself to this area. Caring for the handicapped was here to stay," Lewis said.

THE SPECIAL education field blossomed, and with it, Lewis' career. While in Pontiac, he became active with two fledgling unions serving as president of one, where he learned to "concentrate on problems. The job doesn't get done unless you have a cooperative effort."

Bringing a background rich with art, teaching, and management and

negotiating skills, Lewis moved to the Farmington schools in 1972, working first as director of the special education programs. He was then promoted to assistant superintendent for special education services and, most recently, to interim superintendent and superintendent.

He views his new position as top decision-maker with a global view, which has developed over the years. Some current board of education members expect the new chief will be tough.

"I'm not tough in the traditional sense," he said. "I'm firm in my convictions and philosophy — and flexible in my management. But, if you are not continuing your responsibility, it will be tough for you. You will not be selected to carry out the mission."

"I expect people to do their job, to do what they promise to do."

Lewis intends to make changes that are positive for the district, including changes in curriculum and staff development. His philosophy includes a team approach for school employees utilizing individual, unique skills that each person has acquired, and keeping an open line of communication.

HE MANAGES with a carrot, not a stick.

"I don't like the term 'boss,'" he added. "Everybody has to work with each other. I've worked for tough people and you tend to avoid them. I don't want people to avoid me."

Although Lewis does not normally

work on weekends or carry his work back and forth from the office, the mental stimulation of the on-going job remains.

"You take your brain home and it doesn't turn off," he said, adding he's "never felt the need" to work weekends and take work home.

At home on the lake near the village of Milford, Lewis is an avid and diverse reader — from Seventeen Magazine (he has a teen-age daughter at home) to Harpers. He doesn't subscribe to any particular magazines, so he can get different points of view.

"My wife says I'm an addicted reader," he said. "I read anything and everything with a variety of points and issues."

Park chief resigns

Continued from Page 1

course and a citywide recreation program.

Under his direction, the department has developed two comprehensive parks and recreation master plans, and completed purchase of the 212-acre Heritage Park, formerly known as the Spicer property.

"I have had a very rewarding experience here," Gaynor said. "I believe I have gained a great deal from my experience here. And I hope I have given back to the community at least a portion of that."

Following Gaynor's announcement last week, Farmington Hills City Council and City Manager William Costick lauded his work in the past decade.

Referring to Gaynor's resignation and the upcoming special park millage, Costick asked, "Why now?" But he called Gaynor "a true professional," who has "contributed to every facet of city government."

MAYOR JOE Alkateeb said to Gaynor, "You have been very valuable to us and we appreciate everything you did for us."

"We hate to see him go," Alkateeb continued. "He started our parks and recreation and special services from scratch."

Gaynor has served in many offices, including president, of the 2,500-member Michigan Recreation and Parks Association. He was awarded the Fellowship Award, the state group's highest honor.

He also has chaired the Council of Affiliated Presidents and has served on the board of the National Parks and Recreation Association's American Parks and Recreation Society.

Gaynor and his wife, Judy, have two daughters, Lesley and Julie.

After Gaynor's resignation becomes effective June 6, information regarding the special parks millage can be obtained by calling Costick or Eric Wurmeling, special services assistant director.



Douglas Gaynor is leaving Farmington Hills after more than 11 years of service.

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