

Tax talk thrills few OCC candidates

By Tim Richard
staff writer

IT'S a crowded ballot — 13 people seeking two posts on the Oakland Community College Board of Trustees.

Eleven candidates last week fielded questions on a proposed tax increase, their involvement with the two-year college and what they see as priorities in the six-year terms for which they are running.

In the audience were 13 members of the Farmington branch of the American Association of University Women and guests. OCC board members are elected at the same time as local school boards next Monday.

Q. Chancellor R. Stephen Nicholson has floated out the idea of asking a second mill of property tax in a couple of years. Your reaction?

A. Marcia Van Creveld, 53, a real estate associate broker from Farmington Hills, promised to keep "an open mind. Before going to the taxpayers, we should look to other resources."

A. Lucius Theus, 66, retired Air Force general, business consultant and member of several civic boards, said OCC should seek "efficient use of its resources. If the need is there, it (millage) should be supported."

A. Gene Stanley, 57, Pontiac business president, said the argument that "we've had one mill" for many years "doesn't hold water." But he said the college needs to rejuvenate its aging physical plant.

A. Thomas Nelson, 37, a police officer who lives in Pontiac and owns of several small businesses, said property values are rising and producing "a big increase in the tax base."

A. David W. Meldman, 34, a labor and employment relations lawyer from Walled Lake, said, "Perhaps by 1999 people may be willing to vote for it. In Farmington, people are against (more) taxes — with extreme prejudice."

A. Ralph V. Maranda, 57, Royal Oak teacher and chair of the Michigan Education Association's regional political action committee, called a tax rate increase "inevitable," though he allowed that property tax reform by the Legislature "could throw a different light on it."

A. Michael R. Lewis, 33, a former employee and student at OCC, said, "With all the development, there's a



R. Blonde



J. Doyon



D. Hackett



M. Lewis



D. Meldman



G. Stanley



L. Theus



M. Van Creveld



E. Gonzalez



B. Pearlman

lot more taxes flowing in. You can't shame the chancellor on this," said Lewis, charging the chief executive had received pay increases totalling \$9 percent in three years.

Hurticene Hardaway-Shepherd, 37, Pontiac city attorney and former Southfield resident, had "no intention" on the question and no discussion with the chancellor.

David Hackett, 64, incumbent board member from Rochester Hills, said, "We may have to ask for more." He said the comparisons of tax base to previous years were invalid because enrollment has gone from 3,000 to 27,000, and faculty has quadrupled. "It's best to be frugal," he added.

James Doyon, 41, a seven-term Oakland County commissioner who is going into high school teaching, said, "I'm going to take a very cold, hard look" at whether more is needed. Doyon said he would insist on a publicized plan for use of any new money.

Richard Blonde, 33, an OCC student who works as a Michigan Bell analyst, said he would "take a good, hard look. If it's needed, I would have to support it."

Q. What is your history of involvement with OCC? How many meetings of the OCC board of trustees have you attended?

A. Richard Blonde said he has taken 54 credit hours, is on one of the campuses at least once a week, and has attended the last two board meetings and one special meeting.

A. James Doyon said he was a Madison Heights neighbor and close friend of the late OCC trustee Earl Anderson and frequently discussed issues with him. As a county commissioner, Doyon said he has ap-

proved funds for the police academy OCC operates. He attended Henry Ford Community College, and his wife teaches at Macomb CC.

David Hackett said he tries to be on campus "as a citizen as often as possible . . . I move around to see what people do." He told of discovering an unauthorized dump site on one campus and of monitoring trees and wildlife.

Hurticene Hardaway-Shepherd has a law degree from the University of Michigan and has taken "personal development" classes at OCC.

Michael Lewis said he served on two selection committees — one for the Orchard Ridge campus and one for the college presidency — and has attended about 20 board meetings. He referred to Earl Anderson as "my buddy."

Ralph Maranda, the Royal Oak teacher, said he had "no involvement" with the college and had not attended a board meeting. He attended HFCC when it was called Dearborn CC and had sent students to OCC.

David Meldman said he had taken "fun courses" at OCC and added that as a trustee he could help in labor-management relations.

Thomas Nelson said he had attended meetings with the chancellor and had "a dozen contacts with the administration."

Gene Stanley said he has done contract work for the college, has taken courses, and used OCC as an employer (in his storage business). His wife has an associate degree from OCC and one child attended. Stanley said he has attended three trustees meetings in the last six months and eight over the years.

Lucius Theus said he has attended no board meetings, has "interacted with administrators," has lectured in and observed classes.

Marcia Van Creveld said she has attended no meetings but has taken classes at the Orchard Ridge Campus.

Q. What specific, single area of OCC concerns you most? What changes would you like to make?

A. Richard Blonde: "Upgrade the physical plant. Equipment is antiquated."

A. James Doyon: Northwestern Oakland is unserved. The Highland Lakes Campus needs upgrading.

A. David Hackett: Some buildings are 20 years old and need maintenance and repair.

A. Hurticene Hardaway-Shepherd: Assure there is adequate equipment, particularly at the Auburn Hills Campus where high-tech programs are offered.

A. Michael Lewis: Talk of a millage increase is bothersome. "A lot would be spent on 'marketing' the millage to voters." Downtown development authorities and tax increment financing authorities in places like Auburn Hills have been misused, take tax revenue from the college and give it to businesses (in the form of road work).

A. Ralph Maranda: The college must teach not only vocational programs but also liberal arts because "that's why colleges were invented in the first place."

A. David Meldman: Students should get their security not just from the specific jobs for which they were prepared but from the skills they acquire.

A. Thomas Nelson: A big improvement is needed in equipment and roofs.

A. Gene Stanley: Equipment and physical plant.

A. Lucius Theus: Continue to assess and reassess the quality of education.

A. Marcia Van Creveld: "I agree with everything that has been said and would ask, 'Why have they (plant and equipment needs) not been taken care of?'"

NOT ATTENDING the forum were Edith Gonzalez, Troy school board member, and Ben Pearlman, restaurant owner and former teacher.

Gonzalez said she was occupied by tenure hearings in her district. Pictures of Hurticene Hardaway-Shepherd, Ralph Maranda and Thomas Nelson were unavailable.

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Primary preview

County staffers challenge
their bosses at the polls

TWO Oakland County office-holders find members of their staffs running against them.

William M. Eckstein, a Troy engineer, wants to unseat 16-year drain commissioner George Kuhn in the Aug. 2 Republican primary.

Eckstein, noting he was incorrectly identified as a former employee of an early news story, said, "I am currently employed at the drain office. In addition to receiving \$400,000 as a settlement for my two lawsuits against the county, there was also a consent judgment, agreed upon by the county, that treats me as an employee with continuous service since 1968. In other words, I have been at the drain office for almost 20 years — longer than the incumbent, by the way."

To Kuhn, the chief challenge is not Eckstein but cleaning the Rouge River.

"It is absolutely essential that our office play a major role, in particular the planning phase, to keep the costs down since it's estimated at over \$900 million. With financial bonding, the cost is estimated at \$1.8 billion."

Phillip R. Marcuse, a deputy county clerk who lives in Huntington Woods, is running for the Democratic nomination to face Republican incumbent Lynn D. Allen.

"I feel that after 20 years of Republican officeholders, the voters of Oakland County are ready for a change," said Marcuse, who also has run for county commissioner and state senator and actively supported presidential candidate Michael Dukakis.

A University of Michigan graduate, Marcuse said he has done graduate work in management science at the University of Southern California and completed a computer programming course.

Marcuse said he has been looking to this race for 18 months. He will have a Democratic primary challenge from attorney Diana Trivax of Birmingham.

FEW ATTORNEYS want to run

Court trains volunteers

Oakland Probate Court will hold training and orientation sessions for volunteers who work with children ages 6-16.

All sessions are held in the Probate Court conference on the second floor of the Oakland County Court-

house, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac. Patil Reedy, volunteer coordinator, can be contacted during business hours at 855-0041 for information on the program.

Dates and times are 7-9 p.m. Mondays, June 13 and 20.

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