

## Crash from page 1A

In addition to driving Warner students to and from school, she had transported students at Eagle Elementary School. In recent years, she was instrumental in implementing a school bus safety program with the Farmington Hills police, reporting drivers who didn't stop for school buses.

### Active Goodfellow

Locally, she spent years as doll chaperone for the Farmington Area Goodfellows, helping ensure that every child had a Christmas.

Don Cowan, director of building and student services for the Farmington district, said Piltz's record was "superb" and that she had only received one ticket in 17 years after the state's "right-turn-on-red" law went into effect.

"She did nothing different than any one of us have done — it was a fluke thing," Cowan said of the accident. "It was something she would have never done before, and probably never would have done again."

"It just took that split second. I thank God no kids were on the bus."

A funeral service for Piltz was scheduled for Monday, June 1, at 11 a.m. at the Thayer Rock Funeral Home in downtown Farmington. Cowan said the family was agreeable to scheduling the service so fellow bus drivers could attend it between runs.

A memorial service will be held by co-workers late Monday afternoon.

Piltz was born in Pennsylvania, later moving to Michigan and gradu-

ating from Livonia Bentley High School in 1951. Before working in Farmington, she had jobs with the Livonia and Southfield school systems and also worked for the Great Lakes Transit Authority, when she drove buses through riot-torn Detroit in the late 1960s. She also drove for the Willoway Day Camp for some 20 years.

Farmington funeral director Bob Rock, also a Goodfellow, recalled Piltz's contributions to the community. She was his bus driver when he attended Farmington High School.

"She gave so much — she was just one of those individuals who did a lot for Farmington," he said. "She's going to be missed."

### 'Heart of gold'

Cowan recalled Piltz as a wonderful woman who "just had a heart of gold." He said she often worked with longtime supervisor, Malen Terry, who died of a sudden heart attack in February, to go out and check the district roads.

Those two deaths in so close a time have strongly affected the district's transportation employees, who are a closely knit group, Cowan said. School social workers met with drivers on the day of the accident and a grief counselor was scheduled to visit the department this week.

The district also contacted the parents of students who had ridden on Piltz's bus route.

Transportation budget cuts made in the district earlier this year played no role in last week's accident, Cowan said. "If anything, the



Popular driver: Nita Piltz, killed in a school bus accident on Middlebelt Thursday, is shown driving her route in a 1990 photograph.

cuts would reduce the need (for drivers) to hurry."

She is survived by her mother Susan Lotz, daughter Shawn Yakef of South Lyon, son Terry Piltz of

Farmington; one sister and two grandchildren. The family asks that contributions be made in lieu of flowers to the Farmington Area Goodfellows of the Michigan Heart Association.

## Candidates from page 1A

is dictated by facilities and funding. "Schools of choice can improve the quality and level of education," he said.

Skoke said issues such as staffing, transportation, a school's focus and the needs of at-risk students are a concern when looking at such programs.

DeVries said there must be "fair and reasonable procedures" for selecting students if a particular choice school is to be successful. "Every effort should be made to accommodate students and their families with respect to their individual needs," DeVries said.

Overall, the candidates offer the

following about how they will best represent residents of the district:

• Skoke vows to remain involved, stay current with educational issues, be open to suggestions, weigh all decisions carefully, rely on his administrative and organizational skills and apply constructive leadership ability.

• DeVries said he will bring accountability to the district, be in the public's corner, and make better use of the district's money.

• Prutow said she will continue her dedication to enhancing the quality of education in Farmington and throughout Michigan.

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