

Road to council began with community service

BY MARY RODRIQUE
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Like so many other local women, Shirley Richardson's road to politics began with community service.

"I never expected to go into city government," said Richardson, who was the first woman to serve on the Farmington City Council when she was appointed to complete a three-and-a-half-year term of outgoing councilman Alton Bennett in 1986. She subsequently ran for a four-year term and was elected.

"I was involved with my three kids in the schools, first at Longacre Elementary," said Richardson, whose husband, John, had served on the Farmington City Council a decade prior to Shirley's tenure there.

"I was very involved with the PTA, with various projects, and serving as president. And I've been active with Keep Michigan Beautiful for over 30 years."

When Bennett, who had been elected just six months earlier to

the Farmington council, announced he was moving out of town, friends, co-workers and those who had spent time with Richardson on various committees urged her to consider finishing his term.

"At that time, people thought it was time for a woman to serve on city council. Some had run in the past, but not been elected," said Richardson.

"At first I wasn't sure I was interested. But as more people, including council members inquired, I said, 'Why not?' One of the questions the council asked if I would consider running for office after this term expired. I said yes, depending on how the three-and-a-half-years go," she recalled.

"It went well and I did run down the road."

Richardson drew on her long-time community involvement and leadership skills to run her campaign, which she described as "low-key."

"I did mail letters out to voters and I had a team working for

WOMEN IN POLITICS

...," she said. "We had regular meetings."

An interesting twist: as a long-time member of the state beautification organization, Richardson was opposed to campaign signs. She refused to have any. Instead, the team devised a scheme of tying green ribbons to trees - less intrusive.

"The green ribbons became an identity logo for me," she said. Being a pioneer as the first female city councilwoman wasn't always in the forefront of her mind.

"Actually when I was appointed I didn't consider myself as the First Woman. I just considered myself civic minded. It was tremendous working with the four other council members. Three of them I knew well and one not at all. That fourth one I got to know well. It was a wonderful experience."

"I did my job the best I could. I

tried to show a woman could be just as effective as a man. I enjoyed the experience a great deal."

In addition to Keep Michigan Beautiful and school volunteerism, Richardson was involved for many years with Farmington Goodfellows, including being a member of its board of directors. She was also active with the City of Farmington Beautification Committee.

The Richardsons moved to Waterford five years ago. Their three children are grown. They're both still active with Farmington friends, and Shirley admits "(Farmington) is still very close to my heart."

She continues to be active with Keep Michigan Beautiful. For the past several years, she has served as chairman of the group's annual conference. She is also involved with the Lotus Lake Association and the Water-



Shirley Richardson

CLUB CIRCUIT

FARMINGTON GARDEN CLUB
 The Farmington Garden Club will meet at noon Monday, April 3, at the Longacre House in Farmington Hills. A representative from the Eleanor and Edsel Ford Estate Gardens will present "Experience a virtual tour of the breathtaking 87 acres of gardens and grounds."

NORTH FARMINGTON GARDEN CLUB
 The North Farmington Garden Club will meet at noon Tuesday, April 11, at the Farmington Hills Public Library. Guest speaker Bonnie Bowie will discuss "The Basics of Bonsai." Call Lutie at 853-2368.

EMBROIDERERS GUILD
 The Farmington Hills Embroiderers Guild will meet at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, April 5, at Faith Covenant Church in Farmington Hills. Call 926-0899.

HILL & DALE GARDEN CLUB
 Hill & Dale Garden Club will meet at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 13, at the Farmington Hills Library. The program will be "Container Gardening for Your Home." Call Barb for details at 926-2233.

CHRISTIAN WOMEN
 The Farmington Hills Christian Women will sponsor a "Get Acquainted" breakfast 9:30-11 a.m. Thursday, April 13, at the Maples Country Club in Novi. The cost is \$10.50 per person and includes on-site child care. Call 788-2168.

ENI
 Business Network International Farmington Hills chapter will meet 7-8:30 a.m. Wednesday, April 5, at the Grand Cafe in downtown Farmington. The Greater Farmington Hills chapter will meet 7-8:30 a.m. Thursday, April 6, at the Comfort Inn, 30715 W. 12 Mile, in Farmington Hills.

OPTIMIST CLUB
 The Optimist Club meets at 7:30 a.m. every Wednesday at the American Legion Hall at 31775 Grand River. Call 474-8980 or 442-9796.

KIWANIS CLUB
 The Kiwanis Club of Farmington Hills meets at 12:15 p.m. every second and fourth Tuesday at Steak & Ale Restaurant, 27690 Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills. Prospective members are welcome. Call 661-8463.

TOASTMASTERS
 The Windbaggers/Toastmasters Club meets 8:30-8:30 p.m. every Thursday, except the first Thursday of the month, at Kerby's Koney Island, 21200 Haggerty, in Farmington Hills.

To have your club listed in the calendar, submit the information no later than Monday for Thursday publication to Club Circuit, Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington MI 48336.

Photographer is FAC speaker

Balthazar Korab, a photographer of architecture, will speak to the Farmington Artists Club on Wednesday, April 12.

The club meets at 7 p.m. at the Farmington Community Library on 12 Mile.

Korab was design editor for Metropolitan Detroit magazine. His education in architecture was obtained in Hungary and Paris. He studied art history in Paris. He has written many books about architecture and photography.

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- BLEPHAROPLASTY (eyelid surgery)
- ABDOMINOPLASTY (tummy tuck)
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