

Retain OCC incumbents

Smile, Carol L. Crow and Pamela M. Davis, you've earned our endorsements for additional terms on the Oakland Community College Board of Trustees.

On Monday, June 12, Oakland County voters — probably an embarrassingly few county voters — will settle the OCC election, along with dozens of local school races. In the OCC race, there are four challengers battling Crow and Davis for two seats on the board, which sets policy for a community college with more than 27,000 students on five campuses and a budget of \$116 million.

All six candidates seem to care deeply about the quality of education in the far-flung OCC system, but we believe Crow and Davis deserve to be re-elected. In this particular election, we think experience is to the candidates' advantage. What location is to real estate — everything.

Crow and Davis have made the most of their first terms on the board. Both have good attendance records.

Crow, a Waterford Township resident, seems to have matured into an effective trustee. Currently, she's the OCC Board Chair. A nurse in a psychiatric hospital, she has been known to start a work shift at 4 a.m. so that she's available for a typical ceremonial luncheon that board chairs have to attend.

Royal Oak resident Davis, who has served as a building inspector in that city, has the

ability to cut through the bureaucratic nonsense to get to the heart of an issue. She seems to be without guile; what you see is what you get. She keeps the board grounded.

"She's more like one of the (OCC) students than anyone else on the board," said a long-time OCC observer.

A note to Oakland voters: If you're thinking of skipping the OCC election, please think again.

OCC is a major part of the economic engine that drives Oakland County. With its 27,000-plus students, OCC is the 12th largest community college in the nation. The college has five campuses (Royal Oak, Southfield, Farmington Hills, Waterford and Auburn Hills), an extension center in downtown Pontiac and a district office in Bloomfield Hills. The campuses consist of 46 major buildings containing 376 classrooms and laboratories.

In addition to those students who collect their associate degrees and go directly into the workforce, over 40 percent of OCC's grads go on to four-year colleges. The college also retrain 20,000 workers each year for the county's industries and is responsible for taking hundreds of single parents off public assistance and putting them on payrolls.

The seven trustees oversee a budget of \$116 million of which 58 percent is from Oakland County property taxes. Their actions have far-reaching effects on the future of the school — and the county.

So why do only 15,000 or so bother to vote in this important election? Unless a community has a hotly contested local school or a millage question, many tend to skip the June school elections. Perhaps school elections should be changed to coincide with November's general elections. It's something to think about... as you're voting in the OCC election Monday, June 12.

Incumbents deserve seats

The outcome of the June 12 Farmington Public Schools election will be no surprise. Two seats are open and two incumbents, board president Priscilla Brouillette and trustee Gary Sharp, are seeking re-election.

While turnout is expected to be low in this uncontested race, we urge voters to get to the polls and cast ballots for Brouillette and Sharp.

We are disappointed that no challengers came forth in this election.

A contested race generally prompts debate and creates a need for more in-depth discussion of issues. It also forces incumbents to defend their positions and actually campaign for the seats to which they wish to be re-elected.

Without the benefit of a contested race, however, Brouillette and Sharp have nonetheless been visible during the campaign season. Both participated in a candidate debate hosted by the Farmington PTA Council and both have been conducting meetings with individual school's parents and PTAs, speaking in opposition to the voucher proposal on the November ballot.

With or without a challenger, Brouillette deserves re-election. She clearly speaks for the students in the district, cares about them and cares about their education. But she remains ever mindful of the district as a whole, parents, administrators and educators.

As board president this year, she has used her authority with care, attempting to strike a balance between the needs of all parties involved in, and affected by, the school district. She speaks her truths quietly and clear-



Priscilla Brouillette



Gary Sharp

ly. Sharp, an attorney, has shown he knows his stuff and, like Brouillette, is concerned about the students. He was appointed to the board in 1998 after the resignation of Joe Svoke. He was then elected in June 1999 to serve the final year of Svoke's unexpired term.

There is no doubt Sharp enjoys his work on the board. His enthusiasm is evident, particularly for the students and their accomplishments. In the years to come, we expect Sharp will play a key role, using his legal background to sort through delicate, yet complicated issues.

We wish Brouillette and Sharp good luck.

We also urge them to remain ever mindful of the public's right to know about what is happening in the district. We also urge them to lead the way in encouraging parental involvement, not only in the schools, but at public board meetings. As we have said before, putting a parent off because of what he or she has to say only leads to increased resentment and bad feelings.

GEOFF BROOKS



THE OUTLAWS OF FARMINGTON HILLS IN ACTION

LETTERS

Opinions are to be shared. We welcome your ideas, that's why we offer this space for your opinions. We will help by editing for clarity. To assure authenticity we ask that you provide a contact telephone number and if mailing or faxing a letter, please sign it. Letters can be mailed to: Joanne Maliszewski, 33411 Grand River, Farmington, MI 48335, faxed to Joanne at (734) 459-2700 or emailed to jmaliszewski@oe.homecomm.net

Fortunate

I'd like to share with you how fortunate I feel that Priscilla Brouillette is seeking re-election to the Farmington School Board. Prill has shown during her term on the school board that she is a caring, thoughtful listener who takes the time to learn all the facts before casting her vote.

Prill is able to keep the needs of Farmington's children and youth at the forefront of all board discussions while still being sensitive to the needs of the teachers and administrators.

We are indeed fortunate to have someone of Prill's integrity and leadership skills working on behalf of our schools.

Deb and Paul Ramsey
Farmington Hills

Vote for Marjorie

An election that is drawing little attention is the June 12 balloting for two positions on the Oakland County Community College board of trustees. That is also the same election for two Farmington school board members, both of whom are unopposed.

I want to call attention to the OCC trustee candidacy of Marjorie Nanian Mugerian. First of all she is a resident of Farmington Hills and with an OCC branch located in our city it would be nice to have someone from our community on the board.

Secondly, and more important, Mrs. Mugerian has a background of educational and community involvement that qualifies her to sit on the OCC board. This includes teaching in high school and junior high as well as in business college.

She is an attorney who was founder and president of the Armenian American Bar Association, as well as past president of the Parent-Teacher Association at a school for children with learning disabilities. Locally, she has been active as a board member of Fox-Mor Subdivision Association in the 10 Mile area.

She has been in the private practice of law since 1982, a published author and a fellow of the Michigan State Bar Foundation.

I hope you will consider voting in this election and voting for Marjorie Mugerian.

Aldo Vagozzi
Farmington Hills

Teens deserve credit

It is shameful for Rep. Andrew Raczowski to imply to any parent that he was responsible for the county's decision to install a green arrow at the traffic light in front of Harrison High School. This is why I must respond to a letter in your newspaper on June 1.

Three students, Andy Metry, Tony Kalas and Nevin Hill, decided to take on the issue of traffic safety in front of their high school. They were compelled as a result of the tragic accident involving a fellow student earlier this year. After meeting with Kevin McCarthy, the city's traffic safety engineer who recommended they involve County Commissioner Terry Sever, things began to happen.

The students met twice at 7 in the morning with Commissioner Sever and once with Kevin McCarthy and Dave Allen, the county's traffic safety engineer, to plead their case. They requested a public hearing with the Farmington Hills City Council and continued to meet in the morning prior to classes to produce a video and gather statistical information to support their need for change.

The results of their extra effort brought forward recommendations that exceeded those of previous studies. Their data, compassion and determination made it impossible for the Oakland County Road Commission to deny their request. Brent Bair, director of the County Road Commission, was impressed enough to commit to City Manager Steve Brock that the county would install the most advanced equipment. This will result in safety improvements any time the school creates traffic at that intersection.

These remarkable teenagers made it happen. They were the ones studying, recommending and pressuring the authorities to act. In fact, Rep. Raczowski got involved weeks after Andy, Tony and Nevin created such an interest in this issue as a school assignment.

Our teenagers deserve to be recognized and credit must be given properly. Andy, Tony and Nevin are examples for all of us that if you want to make a difference, you can! Adults must step back from the limelight and let our teenagers get their just reward and recognition. They are our future, and they must believe in themselves!

Cheryl Oliverio
Councilmember
Farmington Hills

COMMUNITY VOICE

QUESTION:

What are your plans for a summer vacation?



"We're going to my Mom's. She's in Saugatuck."
Janet Diehl
Farmington Hills



"We're going to the beach and going on picnics."
Kate Diehl, 4
Farmington Hills



"We're going to Norway. It's a family reunion."
Bill Champion
Farmington Hills



"We're leaving for a cottage near Sault Ste. Marie."
Margaret Foulmer
Farmington Hills

Farmington Observer

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— Philip Power