

POINTS OF VIEW

Patterson prank undermines Detroit race

I'm no fan of John Engler. But I'll say this, he knows when to keep his mouth shut, such as refusing to endorse any candidate in the very critical Detroit mayoral race.

Not so, our county executive, L. Brooks Patterson.

Patterson's so-called "endorsement" of Sharon McPhail is inappropriate and in bad taste. I, as a resident of Oakland County, am embarrassed by it.

He is playing games in an area that is not his ball field.

Here's the play by play. Last November, soon after he was elected Oakland County executive, Patterson endorsed Dennis Archer. A Nov. 23 story by our county reporter, Pat Murphy, said: At a press conference called Thursday to announce some appointments, Patterson endorsed Democrat Dennis Archer in his bid to become mayor of Detroit.

"I don't want to jinx his campaign," Patterson said. "But I've known Archer to be a professional" with a high degree of integrity.

And that's how it stood until McPhail recently starting using Patterson's endorsement as a reason for Detroiters to elect her rather than Archer. It fit well into her game plan to depict Archer as the candidate of white suburbanites — such as Patterson.

Thursday, Patterson, at a press conference, came out with what was described in some reports as a "humorous" endorsement of McPhail. In a press release, which has a strongly offensive tone, he claims: "I'm relieved with having finally come out of the closet with this issue."

In later televised reports, he is reported to have said that McPhail's election would give Oakland County control over the Detroit Water and Sewer Board and that Oakland County



JUDITH DONER BERNE

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would take over all the jewels of the city.

The McPhail camp originally responded with good humor.

"We've had a day of laughs now, from L. Brooks Patterson's off the wall endorsement, but it's time to focus again on the problems of Detroit — and how to solve them," the McPhail camp said.

They suggest proceeds of the "McPhail fund-raiser" — if in truth one is scheduled — be sent to the East Side Emergency Shelter on Kercheval in Detroit.

But then, to add insult to injury, Patterson did schedule a McPhail fund-raiser at Dugan's Irish Pub at noon Friday. Cost is \$20 and the program includes topics of discussion:

■ Regionalization of Detroit Water & Sewer Systems.

■ Repatriation of the Detroit Zoo.

Funny?

Patterson is known for his sense of humor. But he obviously lacks a sense of timing or his place.

Detroit is in deep trouble. And in just two weeks Detroiters — not suburbanites — will go to the polls to decide whether to let McPhail or Archer make a run to get their city back on a winning track.

Patterson, until that time, is not a player. He knows that he is viewed as anti-Detroit for some of his past actions and statements. Given that, he has misused his position as Oakland County executive — and deserves the penalty of his own county's rage.

This Detroit mayoral race, is, after all not a game but a fight for the survival of a once great city.

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Attention spans, funding shorter in education

More and more frequently I get invited to speak at various reunions where the reunites grow increasingly long in the tooth. Recently I spoke at a reunion of Macomb College's highly successful but long-defunct division of basic education, which I directed in the early '70s.

It was nostalgic time to see so many of that liberal old guard who marched on the Warren Tank Arsenal during the Vietnam War, brought in Jane Fonda and the Black Panthers to speak at student seminars, organized a Black Student Union, set up an urban bus line to attract Detroit students and did other deeds which didn't delight our conservative board and president.

Our activities ultimately got the 3,000-student division disbanded and its director suspended for insubordination. (We had the last laugh, though. Ex-division members organized politically to elect a new board which fired the president.)

I've also been asked to speak at a growing number of high school reunions of increasingly ancient classes, including Detroit Pershing High's '66 class and Southeastern's '63 class. I was track coach at both schools and had state championship runners in both classes. The Southeastern gathering on Sept. 18 filled me with particular nostalgia, because over the time-weathered span of three decades, I had forgotten what a fine class that '63 bunch truly was.

Principal Margery Readhead made sure that academic standards were high and girls' skirts were low. When over a teacher sent a student wearing a short skirt to the principal's office, Miss Readhead would have the girl kneel. If the skirt didn't touch the floor the kid got shipped home to change.

It is against that sheltered backdrop that I contemplate some of the other kinds of educational change which have occurred during the past three



JOHN TELFORD

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decades. Not only are the skirts shorter, so are the funding levels for the public education to which most of us owe our professional success. So, too, are student attention spans — due to a junky, fast-fed, rappy diet of MTV soundbites. So are performance standards. The change is particularly devastating in hardcore urban areas stricken by poverty, drugs and gunplay.

And talk about *deja vu*! I've returned from retirement to develop a guidance program at Detroit's Adult High School, a stone's throw (or an Uzi's range) from where I used to teach, coach and administrate at Martin Luther King High and Butzel Junior High. Every day, a thousand students, including kickouts from other schools, parolees, certified SEI's (severely emotionally impaired) and some strife-scarred 30-year-old combickers, stream into the big, battered building to earn diplomas.

There are two counselors, one aca-

demic department head for all departments and no metal detector. Random gunshots have been fired into my office. At night all phones and other hardware (what there is of it) are disconnected and locked in the vault in hope they will still be there the next morning. Jim Solomon, my colleague from the King High days, is the beleaguered program's chief administrator. (Donations can be mailed to the "Trombly Adult High School, 7630 Harper, Detroit 48213.")

Despite debilitatingly short staffing and funding levels, Solomon and his intrepid troops strive valiantly on their students' behalf.

Miss Readhead would be proud.

John Telford, a Rochester Hills resident, formerly was assistant superintendent in the Rochester School District. He previously was executive director for secondary education in the Plymouth Canton district.

From first news to first coos, Beaumont delivers on care

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"And, my room was great. You know you're still in the hospital, but it feels much more like home. I'm glad I chose Beaumont. I don't think I would have been comfortable anywhere else. If anything had gone wrong, I knew both the baby and I would be well taken care of."

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