

Dolan from page A1

became Judge Schaefer," Dolan said. "I'd worked on her campaign, but politics was not my thing."

She first encouraged a neighbor to apply for the open spot, then found herself on the other side of the fence when he told her the Council wanted women to apply. After jokingly agreeing to do it, she finally applied... as a joke.

During the interview process, Dolan answered the questions honestly, from the perspective of a person who had lived and raised children in the community. She really had no agenda or special interest, and believes that played a part in her being appointed.

The mother of four sons and longtime Boy Scout den mother says her parenting experience gave her skills that proved valuable in politics.

"Anyone who has raised children knows there's a give and

take," she said. "You can't just pick up your ball and go home."

That held true at both the state and local level. Dolan found serving on city council a very personal experience. She met her constituents all over town; even a trip to the grocery store usually ended with someone stopping her to talk or complain about an issue.

Things were quite different in Lansing. Much of the work was done in committee sessions, which were open to the public but not well attended. Dolan held regular office hours at home and encouraged people to call or write her with their concerns or questions.

"You have to remember who sent you," she said. "You represent all of your constituents. You have to work harder."

While women legislators are still in the minority, Dolan felt she was treated fairly and respectfully. She'd like to see the

balance shift a little and encourage women of all backgrounds - whether or not they've considered politics as a career - to seek public office.

"I would like to see a much higher representation in Lansing, in Washington and everywhere else," she said. "We need all types of backgrounds to be in politics."

While she enjoyed public service, Dolan didn't care much for campaigning and fund-raising. However, she found having built-in community connections, through her involvement in beautification committees, garden clubs and Scouts, among other groups, gave her a leg up in the process.

"To me, the better way to do it is if you get involved in the community first," she said. "That made it easier for me, because I had a base of contacts. And life experience is a big help."

Webb from page A1

shot. In 1990, I was elected to my first term."

Webb ran her first election "from scratch. I got a tiny bit of advice from Janice Kolnick. I searched and discovered things on my own, developing techniques."

Those techniques included "making the campaign personal. That's very important. I wrote letters announcing my intention to friends, I held family-oriented fund-raisers. I relied and I continue to rely on friends and family. I use them as a sounding board."

Webb believes it's great to be a woman in politics.

"Women bring a nice balance," she said. "They tend to look more at family issues and are less partisan. They tend to be more remedial rather than punitive. It can be challenging for women. I found that out when I ran for state representative. A

man in politics is perceived as ambitious. A woman is looked at as taking time away from her family. But you really can have the best of both worlds."

She recently received a bachelor's degree in political science. She is a fellow of the Michigan State University Political Leadership program.

Beginning at the PTA district level, Webb's public service to the Farmington Public Schools now spans a decade of service on the board of education. She was also appointed to the Commission on Children, Youth and Families and was a three-year member of the board of trustees of the Farmington YMCA.

"It's great to be able to make a small contribution. It is much needed."

Cafe to host free Rufus concert

Contemporary Christian recording artist Rufus Harris will perform 7 p.m. Saturday, March 18, at the Jesus Center Christian Music Cafe in Farmington Hills.

MARCH 18

Admission is free. The cafe is located at 20911 Inkster Road, between Eight and Nine Mile roads.

Harris, a former Farmington Hills resident, released a self-titled album of original music last summer, shortly after headlining a concert at the Warner Mansion in Farmington.

"It's great to be able to make a small contribution. It is much needed."

Feldman from page A1

for when it was time to run as an individual."

After seven years on the board, she reflects on what is most meaningful.

"I'm working for kids," she said. "I'm working to ensure they get the knowledge and skills appropriate for them. That's really gratifying to me."

She also enjoys working with parents, especially when she can resolve a problem that is bothering them.

In addition to her school board position, Feldman works at Wayne State University as a research assistant. She intends to earn her master's degree in social work from the Detroit-based university this year.

Asked how it felt to be a woman in politics, Feldman was stumped.

After a pregnant pause, she said, "I don't know how a man feels... I don't know how to answer how it feels. It feels fine. I've never felt any type of discrimination. There's never been any gender issue at all for me. In fact, it's probably very empowering to be in my position."

With her casual manner, Feldman doesn't exude a political presence. She's a mom with a cause that she believes in.

Thus, she doesn't consider herself at all media savvy. She just says what she thinks.


"Everyone I've dealt with has been wonderful," she said. "It's been a really nice relationship."

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