



EMPLOYEE FEDERATION

of

North Harris Montgomery
Community College District

2700 W. W. Thorne • Suite A-217 • Houston, Texas 77073



THE ADVOCATE

JANUARY, 1993---BOARD ELECTION SPECIAL

Edited by Steve Davis

REAP, ROBINSON, AND BATES FOR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Recently, the AFT Executive Committee polled Employee Federation members in regard to the January 16 election for the NHMCCD Board of Trustees. We are pleased to announce the union's endorsement of candidates Dave Robinson, Margaret (Peggy) Reap, and Randy Bates for these positions. Randy Bates, an attorney from Aldine and the first African-American to serve on the Board, is running unopposed for his first full term. Alan Hall has documented in this publication the fine work Bates has done as a Trustee since his appointment in August, 1991. Dave Robinson is a professor of political science at the University of Houston Downtown who has served as a Trustee for twelve years. He has been a progressive voice over that span in regard to college affairs and has maintained cordial relations with the AFT. Peggy Reap served North Harris College for thirteen years as an accounting instructor and administrator before her retirement in 1989. Anyone who ever served with Peggy on a committee or witnessed her leadership in the Faculty Senate knows her unwavering commitment to educational excellence and employee needs.

The Employee Federation is proud to recommend these candidates. It is imperative to mobilize as large a turnout as possible for them this Saturday. Due to voter apathy, participation in Board elections is pathetically small. Low turnouts give the advantage to well-organized and well-financed local special interests who have a narrower vision and philosophy of education than those of us who devote our lives to teaching and learning. The support of Advocate readers for Robinson, Reap, and Bates will put the best possible representatives on the Board of Trustees.

If you would like to help in this campaign, please contact Alan Hall (443-5544, 353-8634) or Steve Davis (359-1645, 446-3669). Plenty of work needs to be done in the remaining days. Since polling places are often consolidated for school board races, there is a good chance you will not vote at your regular precinct location. For information about polling places, check your community paper or call the District office at 591-3514.

The Editor

"Education for Democracy — Democracy for Education"

CANDIDATE PERSPECTIVES

As part of the endorsement process, the Employee Federation sent out questionnaires to all Board candidates. The following are some of the answers submitted. Candidates for Position 1 are Margaret (Peggy) Reap and Woodlands realtor, Mary Matteson. Contenders for Position 2 are Dave Robinson and North Harris College student, Chris Robinette. Some of the replies have been shortened for considerations of space.

1. Describe your qualifications for the office you seek.

REAP: Business experience as an accountant and auditor, 12 years; teaching experience, 23 years; bachelor's and master's degrees in accounting, doctorate in education; Director of Basic Business Survival Skills, Houston Project (10,000 students); community volunteer--Humble Area Assistance Ministries, Lighthouse for the Blind, Houston Area Women's Center, historical society, hospital; self-employed tax and financial consultant; married 43 years, 5 children.

MATTESON: As a product of a technical/business school, and a student of NHMCC, I understand and appreciate the community college system. I have several years of community and business involvement which have given me an understanding of the need for qualified employees in the marketplace. I consider myself to be fiscally conservative and bottom-line oriented, and as a businesswoman owner for the past ten years, and in my current management position, I have experience in developing and monitoring budgets.

ROBINSON: Member of the Board since 1981. College faculty member since 1962--12 years with South Texas Junior College, 18 1/2 years with UH-Downtown. Resident of Spring ISD since 1974.

ROBINETTE: My qualifications for the office include the minimum to run for the office, and they also include my intimacy with the issues and faculty and students since I am always at the campuses.

2. What are the major issues in the 1993 election?

REAP: The major issues are reconciling financial constraints with the desire to become the premiere teaching institution in Texas, upgrading instructional equipment, prioritizing spending, providing opportunity for minorities, reducing part-time faculty ratios, and providing vocational education for new and changing industry.

MATTESON: I am not aware of any major issues in this election year, other than the ever present one of exploding growth and enrollment with limited resources available to provide a quality education for all. The need for the District to be the best it can be must be foremost in everyone's mind.

ROBINSON: Keep NHMCCD the best community college in Texas. Keep faculty and staff among the very highest paid in the state. Work for the overall good of NHMCCD.

ROBINETTE: In my opinion, the major issues of the 1993 election include: 1. ensuring the continuing high pay rate of the faculty above the state average 2. keeping property taxes low 3. the new Montgomery College 4. gearing up classes for the 21st century.

3. What is your position on single member districts as opposed to the current at-large system of representation employed within NHMCCD?

REAP: I am in favor of single member districts. The closer trustees are to local voters, they better they can represent them.

MATTESON: Single member districts are important in areas where representative imbalance exists. It is my understanding that such an imbalance does not exist in the District.

ROBINSON: Keep at-large. The Board never has been provincial or territorial. We have all worked for the District as a whole.

ROBINETTE: I feel single member districts would give a more accurate representation of the areas served by the college, and it would cut down the expense of running a campaign across the entire district.

4. In looking at the District's budget, which areas do you think are underfunded? Which areas do you feel could be cut back?

REAP: Examination of the 1992-93 budget shows that 20.8% of the categories compared have been changed since 1991-92. Explanations are not available. Comparison of full-time faculty salaries with administrative salaries, however, does indicate overfunding in the administrative salaries area. Administrative salaries show a proportionate increase of 34.8%, faculty only 10.4%.

MATTESON: I have not had the opportunity to study the budget in depth, but from what I have seen, I think the overall breakdown of expenditures is very reasonable. It is very important that the faculty have the tools to do a first class job. I would need to evaluate how this District compares with others in the state to be able to comment more fully.

ROBINSON: The District spends prudently with the bulk of the budget going for salaries and benefits. Possibly some administrative costs could be reduced but compared with other senior colleges in Texas ours are proportionately less.

ROBINETTE: After looking at the budget and checking into the value we are receiving for our dollars spent, I can only really say I have found problems with the nursing programs and the legal programs on the

campuses. I'm sure more exist, and I am always listening and looking for new problems, as well as discussing possible solutions.

5. How might the College improve in its service to area residents?

REAP: Classes should be offered at as many convenient sites as feasible. Public transportation is badly needed.

MATTESON: The District must increase its efforts to reach out to the students who are not now being served. The colleges must find a way to expand class offerings outside of the campus itself. If the student can't come to the campus, then the campus must come to the student.

ROBINSON: The South Aldine Center will be a big help in servicing that part of our District and I look forward to the Center doing big things.

ROBINETTE: To improve its service, I think the college could work with Metro to help provide transportation. Also, if the college wants to teach daycare, then allow students the option of paying for daycare at the school.

6. What is your vision in the future for NHMCCD?

REAP: My vision is that NHMCCD should be universally recognized as the finest community college in Texas, and among the finest in the nation. We should lead the pack in the measurement of our students' achievements, in the quality of our faculty, in meeting the changing patterns of employment, and enriching the cultural and social life of our community.

MATTESON: The District is well on its way to being the number one community college system in the state, and it requires a joint effort of all parties involved to see that it is achieved. We must have the most dedicated and innovative faculty, the most capable and visionary administration, and a Board of Trustees who are responsive to the needs of the community at large, as well as to the administration, faculty, and students.

ROBINSON: See my answer to # 2. Again, to make NHMCCD the best in Texas and in the nation. I think my twelve years service on the Board has shown that I support NHMCCD and the people associated with the District.

ROBINETTE: My vision for NHMCCD is to become a leader on the national level for junior colleges. It is imperative that our Board of Trustees become a proactive board and not a reactive board. It is high time that the cancerous dead weight on our board be cut out with an active, goal-achieving board which is accessible to the faculty, students, administration, and constituency. My number one priority is to educate the children to the best of my ability!

THE PAPER TRAIL

The democratic process is a delicate one, easily abused by power and money, and perhaps even more susceptible to abuse in smaller, more intimate communities where everyone knows everyone else. I think, therefore, that we need to be especially careful in elections like this upcoming race for the college's Board of Trustees, an election called and overseen by members of the sitting Board. With the previous administration, I have witnessed abuses and heard of others in earlier elections. The new administration starts with a clean slate. Unfortunately, another violation of fairness reared its head with the December 11th issue of The Paper, featuring a front-page photograph of Mary Matteson, a candidate for Board position 1, and a cutline with personal information on her and the January 16th election. No mention was made of her opponent, Peggy Reap, or the other contested position involving incumbent Dave Robinson and his challenger, Chris Robinette. As a result, a number of complaints were lodged with the journalism department and appropriate administrators for what appears to be clear partisanship on somebody's part. Only partisanship or ignorance could account for such a blatant act, and neither has a place in journalism.

The advisor for The Paper has agreed that the situation "could have been handled better" and "...judgment on the placement of the picture could be questioned." Any respectable journalist, when presented with a press release from a political candidate, in fairness seeks information on other candidates. A college paper, paid for by public funds, exists as much as an instructional tool as an information vehicle for students. Unbiased journalistic integrity must be part of a student's training. The advisor pled the pressure of an "end of the semester deadline;" however, on the last day (December 2) to file for Board positions, well before The Paper's publication date, I called the District office and obtained in two minutes the names and addresses of all candidates. Believe me, it was not a great journalistic coup on my part. We're not talking about Woodward and Bernstein. Anyone could have done it.

Therefore, we must, once again, question the motivating force behind the single picture. Ignorance on the part of the faculty advisor? Favoritism by The Paper? Partisanship on the part of the administration? Whatever the cause or causes, the election process begins once more with the appearance of impropriety.

Alan Hall

THE VOICE OF A PROPHET

Editor's note--North Harris College president Sandy Shugart passed along to me this excerpt from a letter Thomas Jefferson wrote to George Ticknor in 1817. Here, Jefferson outlines his work on behalf of mass education. Certainly, he would have enthusiastically championed community colleges and understood our anxieties as the nincompoops and scoundrels who comprise the Texas legislature prepare to assemble in Austin. The Advocate publishes this piece in honor of a great

American revolutionary and also in celebration of the victory of William Jefferson Clinton, whose inaugural's festivities will soon commence with a bus ride to Washington from Monticello.

"...I am now entirely absorbed in endeavors to effect the establishment of a general system of education in my native state, on the triple basis, 1. of elementary schools which shall give to the children of every citizen gratis, competent instruction in reading, writing, common arithmetic and general geography. 2. Collegiate institutions for ancient & modern languages, for higher instruction in arithmetic, geography, and history, placing for these purposes a college within a day's ride of every inhabitant of the state, and adding a provision for the full education at the public expence of select subjects from among the children of the poor, who shall have exhibited at the elementary schools the most prominent indications of aptness of judgment & correct disposition. 3. An University in which all the branches of science deemed useful at this day, shall be taught in their highest degree. This would probably require ten or twelve professors, for most of whom we shall be obliged to apply to Europe, and most likely to Edinburg, because of the greater advantage the students will receive from communications made in their native language. This last establishment will probably be within a mile of Charlottesville, and four from Monticello, if the system should be adopted at all by our legislature who meet within a week from this time. My hopes however are kept in check by the ordinary character of our state legislatures, the members of which do not generally possess information enough to perceive the important truths, that knowledge is power, that knowledge is safety, and that knowledge is happiness."

Thomas Jefferson

JOIN THE AFT!

All faculty and staff can enjoy the benefits of association with other employees committed to making NHMCCD an excellent place to work and teach--and the benefits of strong legal and professional liability protection should you ever need them. If you agree with the stances we take on educational and workplace issues, then it's time for you to join the union. Monthly dues rates are \$19.85 for fulltime faculty, \$12.70 for fulltime staff and adjunct faculty, and \$9.60 for part-time staff. Discuss membership with Alan Hall, District President (443-5544, 353-8634); Marilyn Kron, District Staff President; or any other member (Tony Foster, Thelma Jones, Bob Locander, Mel McFadden, Greg Mitchell, Patricia Plunk, Allen Vogt, Steve Davis) of the Federation executive committee.