

University student goes for state rep

By DINA MILES
Of the Emerald

Citing several objections to the voting record of the incumbent, a University student has entered the democratic race for state representative in District 36.

Gill Thomas, a 25-year-old senior in political science who worked as an intern at a Salem legislative office and as a staff member during the 1975 legislative session, has filed to run against Rep. Mae Yih of Albany.

Thomas, who lives in Albany and commutes twice a week to the University for classes, says a major objection to Yih's policies is "the way she handles her office and her voting record."

Specifically, he cited her two-time rejection of HB 2702, a bill which proposed to make student evaluation of faculty members open to the public. He says he believes the evaluation should mandatorily become accessible to students, which differs from the current policy of allowing university and college presidents to decide if the Evaluations are to be made public.

He says students who examine the evaluations can make better decisions about which courses and instructors would seem most beneficial to them. He believes the

investment students make in higher education would be better served if they were allowed to review the evaluations.

Thomas says he also objects to Yih's rejection of HB 2227, a bill which would limit excess profits of utilities, as well as her vote to eliminate the budget of the state Department of Environmental Quality after it began an investigation of the worker health and safety conditions of Teledyne Wah Chang, an Albany mineral refinery.

"Mrs. Yih is not an effective voice — but a negative voice — representing that district's constituency," he says. "That constituency may have been better off without that representative."

Thomas says he wants to return the state government to the form of "advise and consent," in which the elected officials are more accountable to their constituents and they listen to citizen suggestions.

People in Oregon, he explains, have come to expect elected officials to be accessible to them, but he says many officials have moved away from that expectation.

"You ought not to be afraid of people's ideas," he says. "It's a partnership."

Thomas says Yih's own record of accessibility was particularly disturbing to him as a constituent.

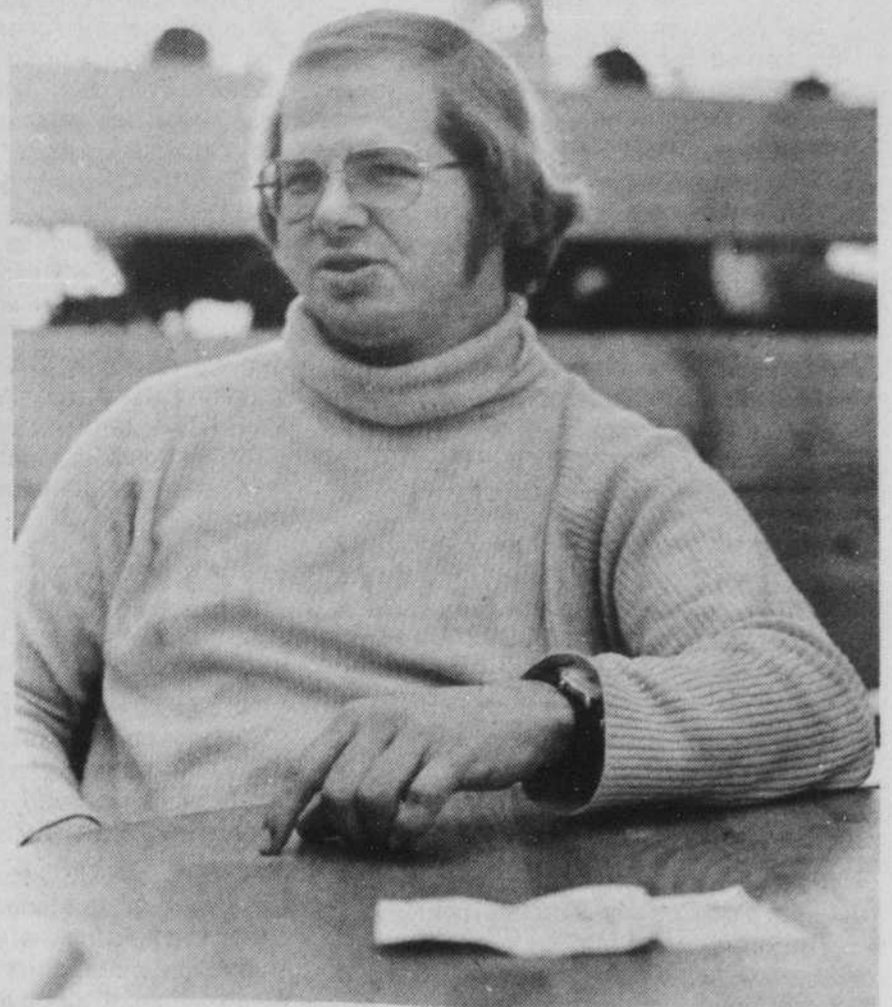
"Most of the time I didn't know where she was coming from. Most other people didn't know where she was coming from. I believe it's absolutely essential to have a person you can count on."

Thomas also harbors a strong belief in accountability in state government and he would like every bill presented during legislative session to be accountable for hearing and testimony in committees. Many bills do not reach committee discussion he says, especially at the end of the session when the workload is especially heavy.

Thomas was a member of the University Democrats and worked with the ASUO on legislative matters.

For three years he assumed various volunteer community service duties as a conscientious objector when he was chosen for selective service. He served an internship last fall in Albany for the Linn County commissioners.

Thomas said his campaign is "low budget," and he will conduct it primarily on a door-to-door basis. Persons interested in the campaign may write to Thomas at Route 1, Box 258, Albany, 97321, or call 928-8708.



Gill Thomas

Photo by Greg Gawlowski

City Council

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Williams, is sought by Gretchen Miller and Jade Douglas McKay.

Miller, a Eugene attorney, has lived in Eugene since 1971 and graduated from the University's Law School. She has been active in the Laurel Hill Neighborhood, serving on the Transportation Network Committee and the Executive Committee.

"I am running," she says, "because I want to help preserve that congenial environment that makes Eugene unique."

She believes city government should emphasize a strong, well-balanced economy and encourage regional industries, while remaining responsive to individuals and their neighborhoods.

McKay is a partner in McKay Investment Co., among whose assets is the Oakway Mall. He is running because, "Eugene has been good to me and I'd like to return the favor." He sees the need to change some people's attitudes" so job opportunities, especially for youth, are readily available.

Bill Hamel, incumbent Ward 5 and Eric Haws, incumbent Ward 6, are lone bidders for those two positions.

Hamel, manager of outside sales for Farwest Steel Corp., is president of the present city council and is running for reelection. "The first time around, you're just getting your feet on the ground," he said. He wants to see continued downtown development further his involvement in the battle against Lane regional air pollu-

tion. He stresses he is not in favor of a third term and is not a politician, but just wants to "see some good things done for the people of Eugene."

Haws, a local attorney, is running again and sees the council as "becoming more and more conservative and less and less concerned with civil rights." Citing this as "deplorable," he feels he needs to stay on to maintain a "balance" on the council. He also says he would like some student involvement in his ward and in his campaign.

Two Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) seats will also be determined by the May primary. At press time, only two persons have filed — John Bartels for the seat encompassing Wards 4 and 5 and Calvin Schmidt for the At-Large position.

Bartels, a researcher and journalist in the fields of electric energy, utilities, economics and environment, has worked in the local, state and congressional arenas as a reporter, administrative assistant and consumer and environmental advocate.

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