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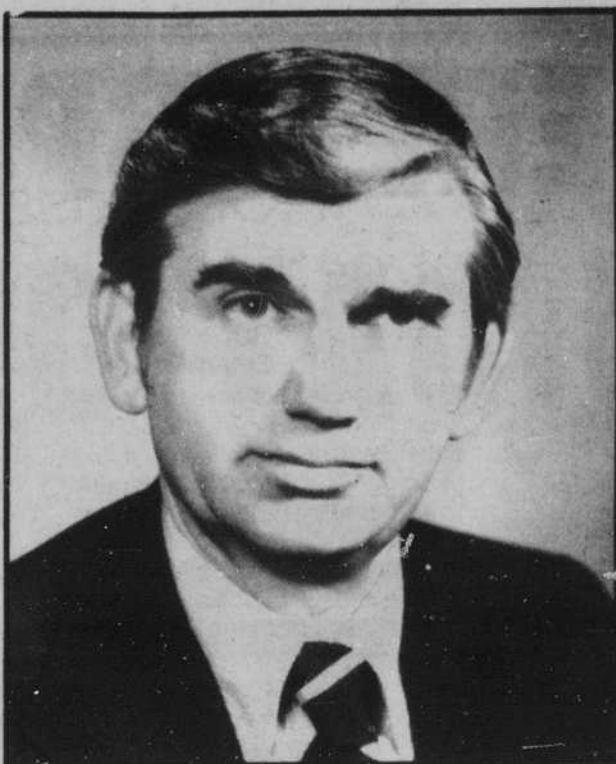
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Verne Duncan



Ruth McFarland

Schools State superintendent's race gives voters difficult decision

Analysis by JACK CONDLIFFE
Of the Emerald

It's a rarity to be sure, but Oregon voters have a chance to choose between two exceptionally qualified candidates in the race for state superintendent of public instruction. Incumbent Verne Duncan faces Ruth McFarland for the four year post.

The superintendent's job is a curious one as elected positions go. The job is an administrative one, while the State Board of Education, which is appointed by the governor, makes policy decisions.

The major issue between Duncan and McFarland is Duncan's administrative abilities versus McFarland's leadership qualities.

In terms of actual qualifications, the candidates are difficult to distinguish. Both hold doctorates from the University, while McFarland is now a professor at Mount Hood Community College and Duncan was a school principal and an Idaho legislator for 12 years.

Outside personal abilities, the race's major issue was one forced upon the candidates. Measure 6 establishes a property tax limita-

tion of 1.5 percent of assessed valuations and rolls back assessed valuations to 1975 levels.

School districts derive their income primarily from property taxes and Measure 6 is likely to have disastrous effects on many districts.

McFarland points to Duncan's lack of leadership, characterized by a low-key and lackluster style, as a factor which will inhibit his ability to work with the Legislature to solve any problems brought on if Measure 6 passes.

Duncan cites his past legislative experience in explaining how he would better work with the Legislature than McFarland.

Duncan also says the Legislature's adoption of his proposal increasing basic school support from 29 percent to 40 percent in the 1977 Legislature. Another increase will be necessary to rectify possible adverse effects of Measure 6.

On finance, and other issues, the candidates differ little. Both emphasize leadership and administrative abilities, and both are attributes important to the performance of the superintendent's job. The choice, a difficult one, is left to the voters.

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