

Long-time public servants vie for Ward 5 spot

Political newcomers offer 'unique' qualifications

By Don Peters
Emerald Associate Editor

The Eugene City Council, Ward 5 election features two candidates who are making their first bid at elected office, but have long histories of public service behind them.

Kaye Robinette, 54, is a local attorney, and Ken Tollenaar, 65, is the senior research associate for the University Bureau of Governmental Research and Service. Both feel they have unique qualifications for the North Eugene city council seat.



"I think I can make a unique contribution to the council," Tollenaar said. "My background is in state and local government."

"I never thought I would run," Robinette said. "But nothing affects us more than city government, and I think I have the skills to help it run better."

Robinette is no newcomer to politics. After graduating first in his class from the University law school in 1960, he went to work for the same law firm as current Sen. Bob Packwood. Robinette helped Packwood when he ran for the Oregon Legislature in 1962, and he has worked on every one of Packwood's campaigns ever since. He has also served on the Oregon Board of Education and the state Ethics Committee.

"It's been all good experience on how government operates and should operate," Robinette said.

Tollenaar spent 18 years as the director of the Bureau of Governmental Research and Service before retiring in 1986 to take the part-time job he currently holds. His specialty is intergovernmental relations. He received a master's degree in public administration from the University of Minnesota in 1953, and he has been a part-time professor at the University.

"I think the question is who's the best qualified," Tollenaar said. "(Robinette) knows schools. I wish he was running for the school board, but he has no background in city government. I've had extensive government contacts on many issues."

The economy is Robinette's main concern. With an ever-dwindling timber supply, Robinette said the city needs to find different types of industry.

"We need to diversify from the (timber) business," he said. "We need industries that pay wages a person can raise a family on. We need to take the burden off the timber industry and get jobs not subject to that influence."

Tollenaar agreed about the current state of the economy, but said he would concentrate more on being the liaison between the city council and county, state and national agencies.

"I hope to improve the climate of cooperation," he said. "It's had its ups and downs, particularly at the local level. Relations between the council and the county commissioners are OK, but could be better."

BIOGRAPHY

Ken Tollenaar

Candidacy: Eugene City Council, Ward V
Party: Non-partisan
Age: 65
Home: Eugene
Occupation: Senior research associate for Bureau of Governmental Research and Service.
Background: Director of bureau, 1968-86.



Kaye Robinette

Candidacy: Eugene City Council, Ward V
Party: Non-partisan
Age: 54
Home: Eugene
Occupation: Attorney
Background: J.D. from University, 1960. Oregon State Board of Education, member, Ethics Commission.



"I'd like to represent the council in front of legislative committees," Tollenaar added. "That would be a special interest of mine."

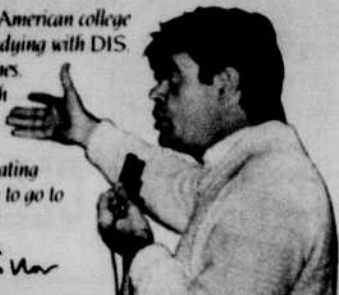
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Nicole Ratto, Mount Holyoke College:

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Mike Whitton, The American University:

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Damian Geistkemper, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign:

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