

1993, he stood up against injustice and helped diversify the force.

Nowhere was Potter's positive impact more deeply felt than among sexual minorities. He proudly supported his daughter Katie, also a police officer, when she came out publicly. He initiated the now commonplace tradition for the police chief to march in the annual Pride parade.

"I don't think I did a particularly heroic thing," says Potter. "I felt that it was the right thing to do."

An outspoken member of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Potter's unwavering support for queers made him a surrogate dad to some. "When I was chief," Potter says, "I had a number of officers say, 'I wish they had a dad like you.'"

As Mayor Vera Katz's tenure comes to a close this year, many Portlanders are now wishing they could have a mayor like Tom Potter. And they just might get the chance. But in limiting donations to \$25 a person, can Potter's folksy campaign stand up to Francesconi, whose campaign materials read like a PowerPoint business plan?

Potter's lowbrow fund-raising technique is just one example of how he walks his talk. "I think we need to redefine what makes an able and viable candidate," he says. "Let's get the money issue out of the way."

One advantage to this approach is that Potter has received contributions from citizens who have never given to a political campaign before. He says this grassroots, door-to-door organizing is going to be his edge. While other candidates will use media to get their messages out, Potter says he'll be relying on word of mouth. "I believe if you tell a friend, 'Vote for Tom Potter,' that carries more weight than an ad."

Sticking to his guns is not without risk. Potter's commitment to equality cost him a high-profile

position in 1994 when he withdrew his name from consideration to head the Clinton administration's federal community policing program after Justice Department officials expressed "concern" about his advocacy for queer rights. Unwilling to water down his beliefs, he walked away from the job. And apparently never looked back.

Potter says the lessons he learned as chief of police will come in handy as mayor. If elected, his main goal is to build a sense of community for the entire city, and he says the way to do that is through building relationships. "It's about educating people and engaging them in discussion. In order to get things done in a group, you have to make sure everybody is represented, and you have to move toward a specific outcome."

One such outcome Potter wants to achieve is to remove what he sees as unnecessary fees and obstacles to small-business development. He explains: "70 percent of jobs in Portland are in small businesses. I want to make sure [small-business owners] have an opportunity to take part in the economic recovery that Portland is going to have."

Another goal for Potter is one that hits close to home. His granddaughter—Katie and Pam's child—will enter first grade next year. He wants to make sure when her two moms show up for parent-teacher conferences and school events that none of them experience discrimination. Though times have changed since he was a student, he doubts homophobia has been eradicated. "We've got to work with the school boards to make sure all of our young people are treated fairly," he says.

Potter lauds accurate representation of community members in government, schools, businesses and other public life. "I read that by the year 2040, there will no longer be a majority population here," he says. "Our city will be a series of minorities, which will create a different dynamic...so I want to lay the foundation for change and diversity."

In addition to the two E's every candidate is focusing on—education and economy—Potter's platform includes support for the arts, for public involvement in government and for re-energizing community policing. Supporters include Maria Rojo de Steffey, Jo Ann Bowman, Bev Stein, Susie Shepherd, Jack Cox and other heavy hitters.

When Potter left the police force in 1993, he said he would return to government. He felt he'd done his part and wanted to pursue other opportunities and experiences. He changed his mind last year—with some nudging from longtime friend and former Mayor Bud Clark—because, in his words, "I feel like Portland needs a vision for the future.... I want to make sure there's leadership, and...I want to bring back the idea that citizens are part of government." ■

For more information on TOM POTTER visit www.tomformayor.org.



Potter celebrates the wedding of his daughter Katie (below left) to Pam Moen (below right) with their children, 1-year-old Madison and 4-year-old McKenzie, March 3 at Keller Auditorium

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