

# Candidates seek appointment to school board vacancy

Twenty-nine candidates for appointment to the Portland School Board are in the process of being interviewed by a three member subcommittee of the Board -- Jonathan Newman, Joe Rieke and Bill Scott.

Desegregation and the threatened boycott by Black parents permeated the interviews, with Rieke asking nearly every candidate their opinion on the district's desegregation program and the Board's response to Community Coalition for school integration, and for advice as to how to deal with the pending boycott.

Almost without exception the candidates expressed opinions that Black children bear the greater burden of desegregation and that the Board must deal fairly with the issue. Most, white and Black, also advised the Board members to meet with the leaders of the boycott to find out what they want and how the district can meet their demands.

Six Black people applied for the position. Following are excerpts from their interviews:



Robert Phillips

man of the Community Education committee of BUF and as such had acted as Master of Ceremonies at the community meeting, and "I will continue to act as Master of Ceremonies."

"I have tried to give you an accurate picture of what people believe -- as a friend. The Board needs a permanent involvement in the Black community."

Brenda Green

Brenda Green, personnel director for Northwest Regional Lab, is a former administrator with the Salem school district and was director of Citizen Participation for Model Cities.

Mrs. Green said she is not totally aware of the Board's discussions with the Coalition and the boycott leaders, but "If I were a board member, I would have discussions with them." She considers a boycott to be a valid and legitimate way of attaining rights and has been a critic of the district's desegregation policies.

One area in particular is that of employment and the district's failures in affirmative action. "Since you say you can't find qualified minorities, I would look at where you recruit and who you send."

She considers the step toward multi-culture education a good move, but one that was too long in coming. She advocates human relations training for teachers and administrators. She agrees with pairing for desegregation, although it could be phased in and might not be necessary to the degree proposed by the Coalition. Middle schools could be used to further desegregation if the attendance boundaries were appropriate. She thinks if it were presented right, community support for desegregation could be gained.

Mrs. Green advocates incentives for outstanding teachers, such as classes paid for by the district that would help prepare the teacher for administrative positions. She favors



Brenda Green

more citizen involvement, in a more meaningful way, rather than allowing citizens to attend public hearings after the decisions are made.

Costella McCullough

Costella McCullough has operated a restaurant and landscape business. She is perhaps best known for her membership on a number of school advisory committees including Title VII, Title I, Transportation, and local and area boards. Mrs. McCullough expressed general satisfaction with the current desegregation program and the Board's response to the Coalition.

She is interested in Adams High School and thinks the new computer program will enhance the offerings at that school.

She would like to see the curriculum offered at the various schools more uniform so that it would not be so difficult for students to change schools.

Mrs. O. J. Gates

Mrs. Oslly Gates is a homemaker, freelance writer and lecturer. In previous years she has been active in textbook selection and an advocate for multi-ethnic curriculum.

Mrs. Gates explained "three-fold integration", which would integrate schools racially, economically and in achievement. At least 40 per cent of the students of each school would be above the median income level and 50 per cent would score above the 60th percentile in reading.

To achieve this mix, schools would have a larger "service area", drawing from larger geographical areas and not necessarily based on geography. Students would be assigned to schools in a manner that would achieve "three-fold integration" and this would alleviate the problem of rapidly changing neighborhoods or neighborhoods where older people retain their homes and cause declining enrollment.

Al Jamison

Al Jamison is an aid to Commissioner Charles Jordan and is a former director of the Model Cities Program. He said he would "blend in with the present composition (of the Board) to make things happen." He is concerned about multi-ethnic curriculum, and would like to look at test scores and the district's testing and evaluation procedures.

Regarding the boycott, he believes the Board has to listen. "I feel boycotts are a legitimate part of the process. They don't come into being without a reason." The only way to determine whether the reasons are valid is to go to the schools and attend meetings. "I don't know the issues they put forth. I haven't studied enough to know if they are real or unreal." He suggested that the Board be willing to support the evidence it presented to HEW with regard to the discrimination complaint.

For the most part, he agreed with the Board's response to the Coalition in all areas except pairing. In that response, he felt the Board was a little too harsh, though "not saying whether the response was right or wrong."

He believes that if the Board continues the current "voluntary" desegregation system, a strong resolution should be passed to advise whites that they are expected to participate.

Robert Phillips

Robert Phillips is a manager with the State's Adult and Family Services and is active in community affairs.

Phillips said he felt the Board's greatest problem is one of credibility.



Al Jamison

The citizens lack confidence in the Board and feel they don't have a part in the policy making process. They find no way to make a real impact on the Board. If appointed, he would seek to implement ways to bring more people into the process and to



Herb Cawthorne

restore confidence and credibility with the community.

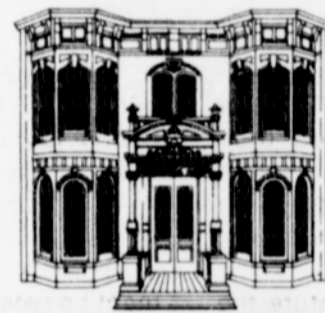
He believes the people have the right to use the boycott or the strike to gain their legitimate ends and would not oppose the use of either. He feels that in the cases of both the



Mrs. Oslly Gates

problems facing the Black community and the potential teacher strike, the problems should have been dealt with at an early stage while they are still issues rather than waiting until there is a crisis situation.

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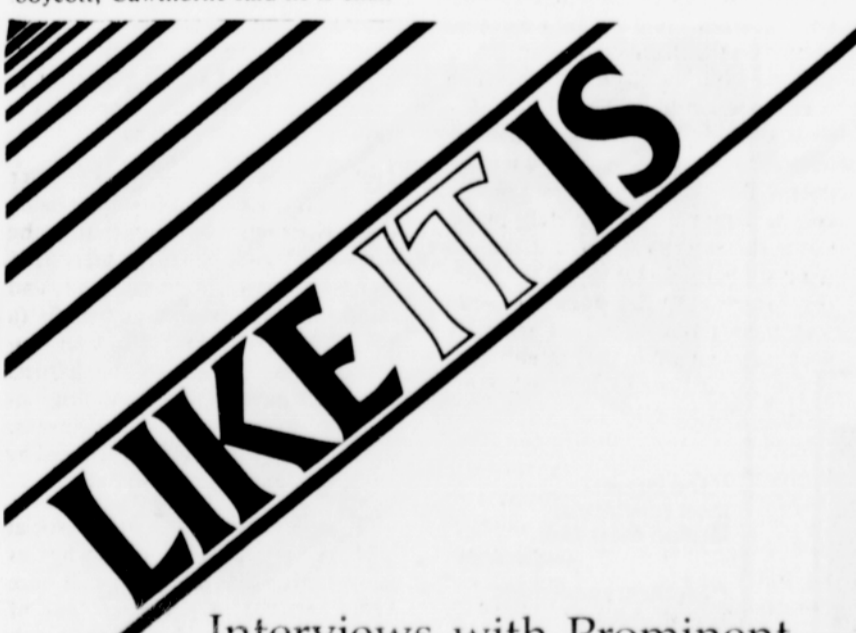
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