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'Kids will be my number one priority.'



In the '80s kids will be Number One. School Board member Herb Cawthorne welcomes school superintendent-designate Dr. Matthew Prophet to the Portland School District. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

"Kids will be my number one priority," Dr. Matthew Prophet, Portland's new Superintendent of schools told the public Monday evening. The thing that counts is what happens to kids. There will be a delivery system that will have one priority, one objective, one goal—to maximize the opportunity for learning for every child."

Dr. Prophet was introduced to the public by School Board Chairman Frank McNamara. Dr. Prophet, who was selected from a field of one hundred, said he considers it a "singular privilege" to have been chosen by the school board and the community. Stating that he has been impressed by the quality and interest of the staff and the community people he has met he indicated that something is occurring in this city in public education that is not happening in many other parts of the country. While public schools are being buffeted by criticism there are some absolutely outstanding programs in public education.

"I will not let the Portland School District down in any way... and will measurably contribute to the betterment of opportunity for every single student."

In a subsequent press conference, Prophet said he values the experience and service of Interim Superintendent Dr. James Fenwick, who was also a candidate for superintendent, and will ask him to stay with the district.

He will expect to reorganize the staff structure of the district in a way that will best suit his style and theory of management. "When you come in new and inherit an organization, everyone knows what's going on and you don't." When he reorganizes, "I will know what is going on. I am ultimately responsible."

"I will measurably contribute to the betterment of opportunity for every single student"

—Matthew Prophet

He does not expect to immediately replace principals or administrators, but there will be changes in assignments. Keeping in mind that the education of children is the primary goal, the central office staff must set the example and provide the atmosphere. "Anyone in the central office has to set an example, to provide needed support to teachers. Teachers need to believe the administration is fully committed. Everyone in the Central Office must be sensitive to needs and dedicated."

Principals and administrators will be guaranteed due process: they will not be judged on innuendos and charges from other staff or the community. When he has determined a principal or administrator's performance is not appropriate, that

person will know what is wrong, will have an opportunity and assistance to conform.

"It all exists for kids." He will find out what is happening and what is not happening—what in the school system prevents the proper delivery of services to help children learn. He will look at student learning and work backward from there, designing the district to meet the needs of the students. The district should put in place all of its resources so there would not be a single child who does not have the maximum opportunity to learn.

Dr. Prophet will remain with the Lansing school district through March in order to assist with a tax levy election scheduled for February. He expects to take the helm of the Portland district on April 1. Although contract negotiations are not completed, no difficulties are expected. Prophet will accept a three-year contract with a beginning salary of \$62,500.

During the interim he will spend approximately 30 days in Portland, visiting every school to talk with students and staff, talking with individuals from the community and government, and making a thorough assessment of the district's needs. "I will make a very intensive study of the school system and form definite conclusions; I won't make hasty decisions, but I'm not reluctant to make decisions."

Coalition hits immigration plan

Calling Reagan's proposed "guest worker" plan for Mexican nationals "legalized slavery," the newly formed Oregon Coalition Against the Reagan Immigration and Refugee Plan, denounced the administration's proposed changes in U.S. immigration policy.

The Reagan plan includes:
•Creation of an experimental guest-worker program that would bring 50,000 Mexican workers each year. These workers could not bring their families and would be ineligible for social services.

•Offer temporary work permits to all undocumented workers who have been in the U.S. since January 1, 1980. Those who remain on temporary permits for ten years, paying taxes but receiving no social services, could become eligible for permanent residence status or to bring their families to the U.S.

•Impose fines on employees who knowingly hire undocumented workers.

•Expand the Border Patrol.

•Increase annual Mexican and Canadian immigration quotas from 20,000 each to 40,000 each.

•Attempt to gain Mexican help to stem the tide of refugees fleeing repressive governments, mainly from El Salvador and Guatemala.

•Order the Coast Guard to intercept vessels suspected of carrying Haitian refugees (in effect since September 29, 1981).

There has been widespread opposition to the proposal by Hispanic organizations and labor groups.

Ramon Ramirez, Secretary of the Coalition, said the guest worker

program—which would be the largest in the world's history—is patterned after the old Bracero Program that was used from 1942 to 1964 and kept Mexican workers in virtual slavery. Although these workers would pay taxes, they would have no legal rights and no access to social services. They would be in constant danger of deportation should they challenge the working conditions or attempt to organize.

Those workers who remained in the U.S. for ten years without returning to Mexico, and who during this time do not have the right to have their families with them, could then qualify for permanent residence. However, there are 32 reasons for which they could be disqualified and even if they met all (Please turn to page 4, column 4)

AG politicizes federal courts

Attorney General William French Smith has pledged to use the powers of his office to ensure that the federal courts become attuned to the political realities of the "Reagan mandate."

He said the Administration will seek greater judicial restraint in such areas as school desegregation, affirmative action, environmental protection, and prisoners rights.

tionally dubious and unwise intrusion upon the legislative domain" in broadening the definition of individual rights, Smith said, "The groundswell of conservatism evidenced by the 1980 election makes this an especially appropriate time to urge upon the courts more principled bases that would reduce judicial activism."

Smith has committed the Justice Department to move the law of the land toward Reagan's principles. "Simply put, consistent with the Constitution and the laws of the United States, the Department of Justice intends to play an active role in effecting the principles upon which Ronald Reagan campaigned."

The Attorney General said the Administration is working to identify "those big areas in which the courts might be convinced to desist from actual policy-making" so that "errors of the past might be corrected" and "past trends might at least be halted."

Smith is concerned about federal court decisions over the past 40 years that have broadened the interpretation of fundamental individual

rights guaranteed by the Constitution. "They now include the First Amendment rights and the right to vote in most elections—the rights mentioned by the Constitution.

"In addition, however, they include rights that, though deemed fundamental, were held to be only implied by the Constitution. The latter group, which has become a real base for expanding Federal Court activity, includes the right to marry, the right to procreate, the right of interstate travel, and the right of sexual privacy that, among other things, may have spawned a right, with certain limitations, to have an abortion....

"At the very least, the multiplication of implied constitutional rights, and the unbounded strict scrutiny (Please turn to page 4, column 4)

Community saves local library

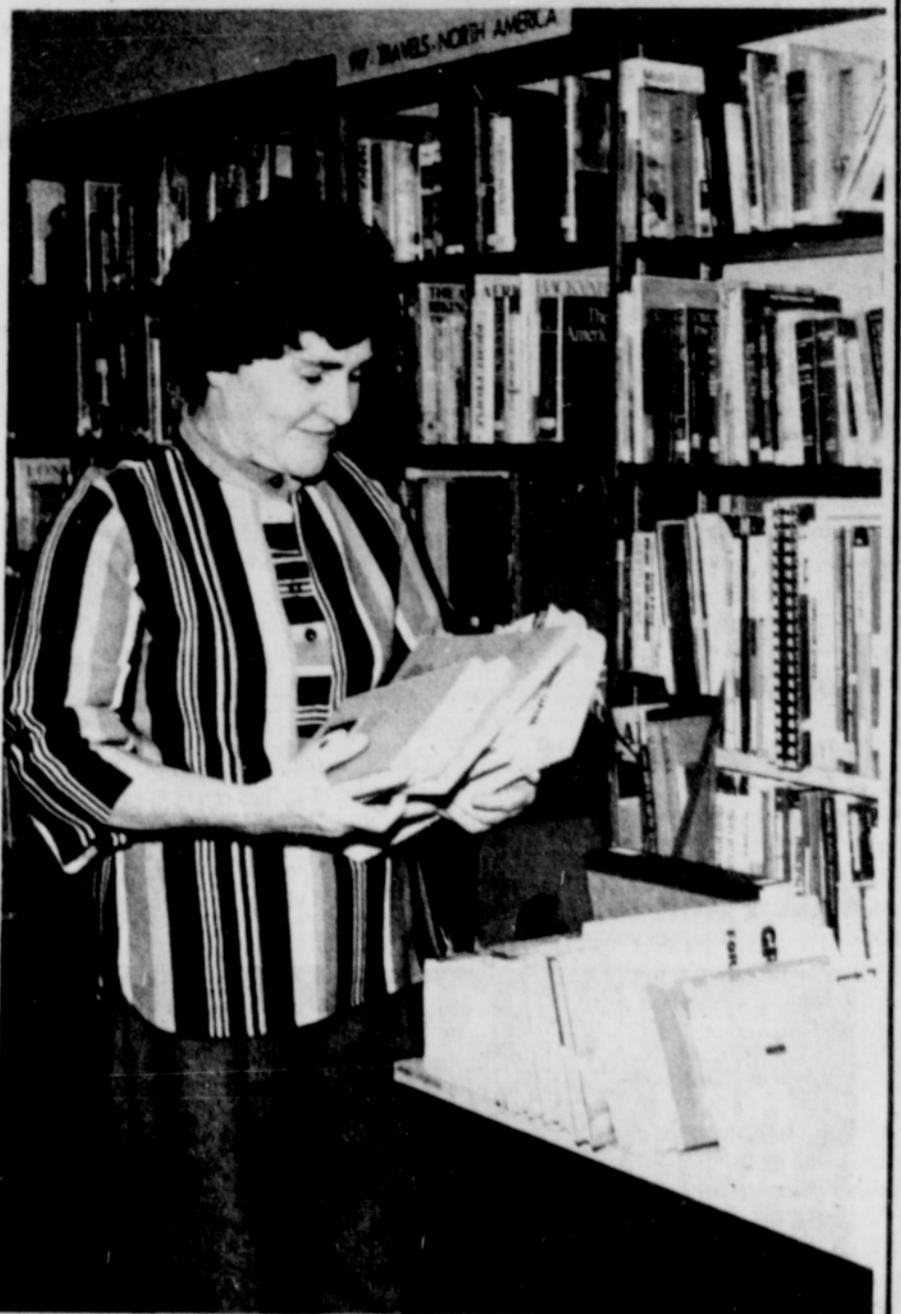
Grassroot News, N.W.—The possible closure of North Branch Public Library, located at 512 North Killingsworth, was averted by the active involvement of various members of the community. Last month the library had a series of minor criminal incidents which sparked fear and concern among its users. "It seemed like everything happened at once. First, cars were broken into, elderly ladies were harassed and there was minor vandalism," Mary Griffin, Head Librarian summarized the problem. This resulted in the library being closed for four evenings.

Sharon McCormack, a representative from Neighborhoods Against Crime, told how the community changed the situation. "After the head librarian contacted me I got in touch with Humboldt Neighborhood Association. The American Muslim Mission, P.C.C., Jefferson High School, and the Urban League. Our main purpose was to reduce victimization and restore the nighttime hours.

"It appears to be more of a fear of crime than incidents. However that fear becomes just as real as if crime was occurring. Various individuals from community groups stayed at the library during the evening hours to counteract the situation."

Because of the input received, Mrs. Griffin stated that now everything is back to normal. "I believe that only a few were committing these acts. I have been at this branch for 13 years and we never had this happen."

One concern, which is the aftermath of this temporary crime wave, is lack of use. The North Branch library is a large facility which is open to community groups during library



Mary Griffin, Head Librarian of the North Branch Library, is available to help patrons with their reading needs. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

hours. Every month the library has special sessions for adults and children. Remember, a family that reads together will live forever.