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Longtime educator vying for seat on Montgomery council

Evans says leadership experience right for county

by Erin Cunningham | Staff Writer

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Some of the Montgomery County Council's decision-making this past year was rushed, according to Fred Evans, a longtime educator.

Evans, 63, of Rockville, says he would make decisions based on research and data if he were on the nine-member council.

Evans is among six challengers and four incumbents running in the Democratic primary for four at-large seats on the council. The primary is Sept. 14, with the general election Nov. 2.

"I like to look at the bigger picture," Evans said, referring to his solution for the county's epic budget trouble. "How did we get here, and how do we avoid it next time?"

"We've got to solve the problem," he said.

The problem is a \$1 billion budget shortfall the council filled this year with furloughs, employee layoffs, tax hikes and cuts to programs and services.

Evans, who worked as a teacher, principal and administrator for the county school system over a 30-year career, said this year's sparring between the school system and the council was "shortsighted."

"The council funds the school system," he said. "The school board is filing suit against the agency that funds it."

Evans was referring to a threatened lawsuit by school system officials against the County Council over proposed cuts to schools' funding. Evans said he would have worked with the school board and Superintendent Jerry D. Weast on a solution to the problem.

However, Evans is quick to point out that his experience as a leader and community activist goes beyond education.

Evans was a leading voice in the defeat of the 1978 Tax Reform Initiative by Marylanders in Montgomery County, he said.

Under TRIM, which did pass in Prince George's County, it is more difficult for county officials to increase property taxes. The county tax rate only can be changed by referendum or by enabling legislation from the state.

Evans also was treasurer for former County Executive Douglas M. Duncan's campaign when he ran for mayor of Rockville, and Evans was involved in Duncan's gubernatorial run.

Among his top priorities, Evans says he's committed to effective communication with county residents. As a council member, Evans said he would support using the Internet and scientific surveys to solicit feedback from residents.

He also would support a progressive tax structure that assesses taxes based on the individual's ability to pay. He also proposes an analysis of the county's tax structure to ensure that it meets the needs of the county's expenses.

Fred Evans

Residence: Rockville

Age: 63

Party: Democrat

Education: B.A., Ohio Wesleyan University; M.Ed., Western Maryland College (Now McDaniel College); doctoral work at Virginia Tech

Work experience: Employed by Montgomery County Public Schools for 30 years. Social studies teacher at Wootton High School; teacher specialist in the Department of Human Relations; assistant principal at Rockville High School and Julius West Middle School; principal of Parkland Middle School (4.5 years) and Gaithersburg High School (7 years). Retired from MCPS in 2000; held a variety of positions including professor of education leadership at George Mason and Johns Hopkins.

Family: Married to Trish for 20 years; two daughters, Olivia, an 11th-grade student at Wootton High School, and Grace, an eighth-grade student at Robert Frost Middle School. Eldest daughter, Dyan Gomez, is an assistant principal at Rockville High School

Top three issues: Effective communication with all county residents, a quality education system and a sound tax structure

Campaign funds: First report to be filed Aug. 8

Previous political experience: Involved in numerous political initiatives, including the defeat of the TRIM Amendment in 1978 and the successful Vote NO Coalition effort in 2002. Served on the campaign teams for many political candidates, including treasurer for Douglas M. Duncan's successful campaign as mayor of Rockville. Testified on a variety of issues before the County Council.

Other affiliations: Active participation on a variety of boards and committees including: Committee for Montgomery; chairman of the Nominating Committee for the Montgomery College Board of Trustees; member of the Mental Health Association Board of Directors; founding member of the Montgomery County Mentoring Task Force; member of the Montgomery County Juvenile Court Committee; president of the Montgomery County Public Schools Retirees Association; member of the Metropolitan Ballet Theater Board of Directors

Website: www.FriendsForFredEvans.org