



answer. I did not campaign as a single issue or single goal or single direction candidate. I tried not to appeal to people's baser instincts or gut level emotions. Rather I tried to appeal to their intellect, to their desires for this school system and for the children in it. I tried to present an approach that was not simplistic, not easy, not all neat and wrapped up in pretty paper and tied with a red ribbon.

"H.L. Mencken once said that for every complex problem, someone has a solution that is neat, simple and wrong. In my opinion, so many of the decisions with which the school system has to wrestle fall into that category. Complex problems to which people are applying neat, simple and wrong quick fixes. My goal for myself for the next four years is to try to remember the words and wisdom of Mr. Mencken and try to avoid falling into the trap he so beautifully outlined. "As a member of the Board of Education I am exact that. One member of the Board. One vote of the body politic. I do not have my white charger of educational reform tethered outside this room. I do not have my lance of my own brand of truth and justice propped just out of arm's reach.. Nor am I wearing my coat of heavy iron mail. I am neither knight nor Napoleon, sergeant nor savior, dictator nor devotee. Rather I am a simple foot soldier, taking each challenge as it arises, working cooperatively with the other members of my company to make sure the job gets done. And that the job gets done wisely and well.

"I believe with all my heart that we have an excellent school system here. I am proud of it. Do I think it is perfect? Heavens, no. Do I feel there is room for improvement? Absolutely. And that is what I hope to do over the next four years. Keep that which is good, improve in those areas in which we are lacking, and get rid of those things which are holding us back. One day at a time, one step at a time, one vote at a time. And with your help and that of my colleagues on the Board, I know that all of us, working together, can do it.

"This speech should have been the easiest one I have ever had to write. Instead it was, I believe, the most difficult. Why exactly I'm not sure. Perhaps it was because I felt I had so much I wanted to say, so much I needed to say, and so much I knew I could not or should not say, that the "want to's" and "need to's" became overshadowed by the second thoughts and don't-you- dares. I literally found myself paralyzed by caution when it came to putting fingers to keyboard and words upon paper--a condition totally alien to me. Suffice it to say, the words did not cascade trippingly from the typewriter as they have been known to do in times past.

"Quite frankly, nothing came "trippingly" to me this time around. The initial decision to run was not an easy one but one I knew had to be made much earlier than a similar decision two years ago. But this time, said I, I was not going to go out there and Lone Ranger it as I had in '82 with no staff, no commitment, no visible means of support. So, well in advance of my filing I lined myself up with a campaign manager, a public relations/press release person, a fund

raiser, a precinct organizer. And then I filed. The campaign manager moved away. The PR person went to work in a conflict of interest type position. The fund raiser disappeared into the proverbial woodwork. And the precinct organizer got cold feet and backed out. Accordingly, I would like to thank the remainder of my committee for her unflagging support, encouragement and faith in this Lone Ranger. My undying gratitude and thanks to my Tonto and treasurer, Lee--a friend who kept me up when it was easiest to be down, who made me laugh when I really wanted to cry, who made me lemonade when the world handed me lemons.

"Thank you, too, to the dedicated and loyal band of supporters who made tonight possible. You were the ones who supported me in spite of what may have been the politic thing to do. You were there in '82. In January and February of '84. In the spring and throughout the summer. You were there in the fall. And most importantly you were there on November 6. You were there with your financial support, and with your physical support, but most importantly, with your emotional support. You were the rocks upon which I built my campaign. I will be eternally grateful to each and every one of you. I offer you my thanks, my gratitude, my love.

"And last but not least, the most special thanks of all to my family--the four men in my life. To my sons, Danny, David and Michael who did not don tee shirts with "Vote for My Mom" on them, but rather made the ultimate sacrifice. They wore suits and ties and real shoes and stood at the polls and urged the electorate to "Vote my My Mom."

"To my friend, roommate and husband, Dan, who was there when I needed him. Who held me when I needed to be held, who chewed me out when I had it coming, who encouraged me when I was down in the dumps. Who proof read, ran errands, made coffee, and took us to dinner when cooking was out of my question. Who put the first bumper sticker on his car, distributed literature and planted signs beyond Poolesville. Who did such an excellent job of keeping my feet on the ground, playing devil's advocate, and sounding like a negative Nellie, that it was not until three days after the election I allowed myself to really believe I had won. Thank you, honey, for everything. See you in four years.

"Two more things before I shut up. One has nothing to do with anything really, but is my favorite story of all time from the campaign. And perhaps addresses the question, "Why did you win?" The obvious answer is because I got more votes than the next guy. But the reality is this: I was handing out literature on election day when a gentleman approached. He not only refused the literature, but actually pushed it away, saying, 'Just tell me one thing. Does your name begin with either E, S, or D?' Well, I figured I had that one covered whether he was talking first or last name. 'Yes,' I said, 'it does.' 'Good,' he said, 'cause that's who I'm voting for. Those are the first three letters on my license plate.' So much for the warm, fuzzy feeling of informed electorates.

"In closing, I would like to re-tell a story I told to this Board two years ago. At that time I told it to them. This time I am going to tell it again, but I am reminding myself about what it says.

"Once upon a time there was a butterfly, a very beautiful butterfly, who was hopelessly head-over-heels in love with an elephant. And the elephant was in love with her and they wanted to get married. They realized that there was no way that they could get married because she was a beautiful delicate butterfly and he was a big klutzy elephant. And the elephant moped around and moped around and he felt terrible because he wanted to marry the butterfly and he didn't know what to do. One day one of the lions in the jungle saw him feeling very sad and asked him what his problem was, and he explained his love for the butterfly and how he wanted to marry her but that he couldn't because they were of different species and the lion said, 'Oh, that's no problem. You need to go into the farthest deepest depths of the jungle and there on the branch of the biggest tree you will find the wise old owl and he has the answer to everything. He'll solve your problem.' So the elephant went thundering off into the jungle and he found the tree and he looked up and he found the owl. He said to the owl, 'Mr.

Owl, I've got this bad problem. Could you possibly help me with it? I'm in love with a beautiful delicate butterfly. I want to marry her but obviously I'm an elephant, she's a butterfly, we can't get married. What should I do?' And the owl looked down from his lofty perch and he turned to the elephant and he said, 'It's simple. All you have to do is become a butterfly.' And the elephant thought, oh, of course. How simple, how brilliant. And he turned and went thundering back off into the jungle, delighted, trumpeting his joy to heaven. And he got a ways away and he came to a screeching halt and he thought about what the owl had said. Then he turned around and he marched his body back to the base of the tree and he looked back up at the owl and he said, 'Mr. Owl, I told you that I was in love with the butterfly and you told me that all I had to do to marry her was to become a butterfly, but you didn't tell me how to become a butterfly.' 'Well,' said the owl, looking down from his perch at the elephant, 'We merely set policy, we don't implement it.'

"I think as Board members we need to remember who sets policy, who implements it. But I think we also need to remember that in this school system we are not seven wise old owls, although we may pretend to be, but we must never forget that there are 92,000 beautiful butterflies out there, each of which is different, each of which has special needs, none of which is like any other, and we have 11,000 lions out there who are doing their best to put things together for the rest of the world. Thank you."

Mr. Ewing read the following statement into the record:

"Thanks to all whose votes were cast for me; to those who worked and contributed, especially Carol Petzold; to the two people with whom I

ran, who were my partners, Marshall Grigbsy and Peggy Slye; to the five others who ran and the still others who were candidates in the primary for the good sense and civility with which they conducted their campaigns; to Barbara, my wife, whose patience is boundless, whose political judgment is impeccable, whose price is above rubies.

"Congratulations to Peggy Slye and to Sharon DiFonzo, who will be fine members of the Board of Education.

"I have some observations about the future of public education in the county which I want to share with you tonight. I have been elected to a third term, which is unprecedented for the county, and I came in first in the election, which is unprecedented for me. However, that does not figure in my remarks, except to give me this platform and your patience, I hope, for a few minutes.

"I hope in the next four years to persuade my colleagues, those in positions of authority in county government, and the public at large of two things:

- 1) that there is in place in this county a fine school system, the credit for which belongs to all of us--parents, teachers, students, staff, taxpayers, and, yes, even the Board and county officials.
- 2) that there is much to be done to make it still better, and we must get on with those tasks as rapidly as possible, but with the participation and involvement of all in the county who care about education--and I assume that includes everyone.

"With regard to that first point--that we have a fine system--we need to remember that we have done what few in this country or anywhere have ever done. We have built and maintained in this county an educational system of the highest quality which serves not just the fortunate few, but all in the county who wish to take advantage of it.

"We must not, in our hurry to get on with what still needs doing, forget the history of that effort to build, its difficulties, its triumphs, its setbacks, its failings, and we must not forget the moral and political principles which have governed that effort over the years. If we forget our history, we will surely repeat the errors of the past, or worse, repeal past actions which remove some of the foundations, or some of the keystones which sustain the whole structure.

"With regard to the second point--that much still remains to be done, I want to say more. Public education needs to change, but not be totally changed. Adlai Stevenson once said, "Change for the sake of change alone has no absolute merit." I believe change needs to come in the form of building blocks resting on past achievements. It needs to correct errors, having first identified them with care. It needs for the most part smooth transitions if it is to

succeed in its objectives, not abrupt departures. It needs continuity and stability, even as it grows and changes. Like a child maturing to adulthood, it needs to develop within a framework in which some things remain constant, some values remain permanent, some objectives remain unchanging.

"Change, furthermore, needs to result from careful debate, thoughtful deliberation in a calm atmosphere, close examination of options, thorough scrutiny of the facts, but also from a passionate conviction that the task of change needs constant attention and occasionally urgent action.

"Alterations need to meet a single, but highly important criterion: What is demonstrably most likely to promote excellence for all. Those last two words have great significance for me--and I hope for all of us. As we think about what needs doing, it is essential that we think about the public interest, about what will be best for all, and not just about all the individual and separate interests. One cannot answer the question about what will be best for all without examining the composition of the student body and the characteristics of the community as a whole, without considering the goals of the people of the county and the individual needs of the students. And one cannot begin to find a fair answer to that question unless public educational policy is designed to include all in its decisions and in its processes for decision. We must include male and female, black, white, Asian, Hispanic, American Indian, people of all religious and cultural backgrounds, students with vocational and technical interests, as well as those bound for college, those with handicaps, those who are gifted, those who are talented, those who have average or below average abilities, those who are rich and those who are not, those who are educationally well prepared and those who are not, those who are supportive of what is happening in the schools, and those who are critical.

"We must be clear--more than in the past--that we seek inclusiveness, that we plan to educate everyone, that we expect all to learn and grow and achieve, and that we want everyone to participate, that we solicit their ideas, that we welcome their presence and that we encourage their involvement.

"Only when we have drawn everyone into the common effort to improve this educational enterprise will we have established fully the basis for the public confidence we must have if we are to achieve all that is potentially within our grasp for ourselves and for our children and for our community.

"The Board has a major role here, a leadership role. The Board of Education must be comprised of people who are unabashed advocates of public education, of an educational enterprise operated for all, committed to excellence for all. The Board must take on the responsibility for persuading the reluctant and the doubtful that they, too, are welcome to participate, and not only that, but that they are wanted and needed.

"The themes of care in decision making and inclusiveness are extremely important in this county and essential to the success of educational progress in the county. But they are not enough for success. All the care in decision making, all the involvement of the public are of little avail if there is no vision about what the future ought to hold.

"I have some views about the substance of that future. I do not claim that these views are in any sense visionary. I offer them tonight as I have before, with a sense that they are reasonable propositions I am willing to debate, willing to amend, and, unless talked out of them, I am eager and willing to pursue them in whatever forum with as much determination as I can muster.

"Before I turn to some of the specific things I believe need doing, let me say that it is convenient for rhetorical purposes and handy for journalists when public officials declare that there is a single key which will unlock the secrets of educational success for everyone. I do not take that view. What is essential is that progress must be made on a wide variety of fronts, complex problems must be mounted and coordinated with other programs, there must be competent leadership as well as able instruction, good facilities, as well as solid planning, outstanding teachers and outstanding bus drivers, building service workers, and other staff. In short, there must be a Board of Education and a staff with the intelligence, the will and the insight to see how to make all of the things happen that need to happen, at the right time, and in the right order with the right people. It is a complex and difficult job and there are mistakes. Mistakes do not need to be forgiven necessarily, but they do need to be admitted and corrected. Successes do not need to be applauded every time, but we should learn from them and apply their lessons system wide.

"What, then, do we need to do specifically, in my view?

"We must provide leadership at the Board level, with the understanding that much leadership also must come from the superintendent and his staff. We must commit ourselves to excellence and to equity, and to whatever it takes to assure the improvements we need, the levels of excellence, the equity in programs and facilities, which we all have a right to and which we all surely want to achieve.

"Activist leadership will often lead to conflict with other parts of the government. We ought not seek conflict for its own sake, but we ought not to avoid it only in order to avoid it. We need to be articulate, ardent, active and aggressive when necessary on behalf of the things we care about.

"What issues should we care about in my view?

"We need to complete the job of seven-period day for all the high schools. We need, in my view, to expand all-day kindergarten and I'll have a paper on that for the Board to consider shortly. We

need to have lower class size. We need to have program equity around the county. We need to have an upcounty magnet program, in my view. We need to do a better job of placing and educating and training and providing transition to jobs for handicapped students. We need to expand programs for the gifted so that all have access. We need to expand the availability of counseling time, real counseling time so that students have more direct help.

"We need to have an assurance that in the future we will have in Montgomery County high quality teachers. We need to address the issues that bear on our ability to attract and retain them. We need to ask the question and answer it, 'What will it take for us to do that?' It's clear that we must pay better, in my view. It's clear that we have to improve working conditions. It's clear that we have to treat teachers as full professional partners. It's also clear that we must evaluate them and do so more rigorously and more frequently and I think we have to insist on full accountability. And there are probably a whole lot of other things we have to do and we need to get on with that job as well.

"We need to have some expectations clear with respect to our students. That all can learn; that all can learn a lot more; that not all can learn or should be expected to learn in the same way or same thing in the same timeframe. And that isn't always something that Boards of Education understand. We need to have high standards but we need to make sure that students get help in reaching those standards and all students need help in reaching high standards.

"We need also to make sure that we have the right materials for learning, that we have staffing patterns which are fair to women and to men, to blacks, to Asians, to American Indians, so that we show students in the community that we are open, fair and interested in equal opportunity for all and for opportunities for students to experience the cultural and racial diversity that comes with various staffing.

"We need to support what we have done that has succeeded so well so far with respect to integration. We must continue our support of it not because it's required by law,--it's not in Montgomery County, at least not in the form we have created it--not because there is the threat of a lawsuit--there isn't-- but because it's right. It's right that students should go to school in settings which include people of various races and cultures and heritages because that teaches a lesson of immense importance, the lessons of tolerance, decency, fair play and openness to diversity, lessons which are essential for students to learn if they are to function effectively in a democratic society.

"Just as one cannot make a good educational system by focusing on a single element of that system alone, one cannot focus on a single objective and expect to achieve excellence. It is often said that the objective of education is learning intellectual things. It is an objective and without question a highly important one. But it is not the only one. Students must also learn marketplace skills.

Students must learn about citizenship and how to carry out their duties as citizens. But it is also so that public education has a moral purpose, and that purpose is to teach students the permanence of certain moral values which show them how those values are embedded in their history, their culture, their society, their institutions, and how they are essential to our survival as a free people in a democratic society.

"The most fundamental justification of education in this society is as a moral enterprise, its potential for contribution to the nation's survival as the last best hope of mankind, as the refuge and bastion of freedom and justice in a world where injustice and tyranny are rampant.

"Education is thus a high calling. We none of us need make any apology for our commitment to it. And we need to continue to press on to achieve the levels of excellence and equity we know to be possible here--and more than that--that we know to be necessary."

Mrs. Slye made the following statement:

"Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Since it's highly unlikely that I'm apt to match Sharon in wit or Blair in eloquence, I will exercise that virtue which I've had adequate opportunity to develop on the campaign trail and that is, I will be brief.

"It's a tremendous honor to be here this evening. Perhaps the most singular honor any citizen can enjoy in the sense that aspiring to and having the opportunity to serve in public office is the highest form of exercise of the rights of a citizen in our democracy, and from that sense alone it's a very humbling experience to be at this table.

"It's also an honor to serve the citizens and students and parents of Montgomery County in helping to make our educational system the very finest it can be in a county where people really know what the very finest is. And it is an honor to sit at the table with the ladies and gentlemen who tonight become my colleagues, both the continuing and outgoing Board members, because their dedication and their concern is known throughout our county. Their efforts have been enormous during times that have frequently been difficult, often rancorous, and yet they have pursued their task with faithfulness and with care that's made us all proud to be part of this process and to be citizens in this county, so it's an honor to be this evening in their company.

"It's an honor, also, to have the opportunity to represent the interests of our students. Our students are 92,000 of Sharon's butterflies who represent children from families from every walk of life, from every economic level, every intellectual level, and we do a very good job most of the time meeting all of their needs. They are wonderful students who participate in a wonderful system and we have the opportunity beginning again this evening to make that opportunity even more worthwhile for all of them.

"And, finally, it's a tremendous honor to be here and to serve our county at this particular time because, as one of our local papers noted in its editorial pages today, we're a county standing on the brink of a very new era. We're a county about to come into its own in terms of sense of economic and sociological identity. We are no longer anyone's bedroom community. We look forward to a future in which we become an increasingly unique entity in our region and in our state and for those of us who care deeply about education we believe that our educational process and system is the very foundation of that future. Its excellence will determine the excellence of all of our endeavors. Our growth will be as strong as its ability to deal with our students' needs effectively and well. Frequently, it's quite a challenge for local government to provide both the services that citizens need and the opportunities for business to promote the growth that the county needs and, yet, at the beginning of this new era we have the opportunity to be in the forefront of all of that. The one thing that we know that our citizens appreciate, that businesses flock to and thrive on, is an excellent educational system, one that's not content simply to stay abreast of what's happening but to anticipate the best of the new as it moves into the future. That's the very fortunate position we find ourselves in. There are so many opportunities in the time that we are facing. Opportunities that we as county citizens and leaders will have a chance to make the most of that will make Montgomery County no longer just unique in the Washington region. Hopefully we will emerge and become unique in the United States. I think that's a challenge that stands right within our grasp and is indeed within our purview to secure as long as we are dedicated and faithful to our task.

"There are many people here that I need to thank this evening, including all of you for your kind time and attention, but before I do that let me add, I think the measure of our ability to succeed in that challenge of the future is less perhaps in inspiration than in perspiration, in our willingness to continue to be faithful to be dedicated, to exert ourselves to the task at hand and not to shrink from the challenges that we know will be there as the county's needs diversify and continue to grow.

"Thank you so much to the citizens who have given me and my running mate, Mr. Ewing, and my colleague, Mrs. DiFonzo, the opportunity to serve during this wonderfully unique timeframe. Thank you to all those who supported us during our campaign and to those who didn't support us but who came out to public forums to help correct our thinking, because that's very definitely part of being an elected representative. Thank you to my friends and my family who served in my campaign and our joint campaign and, most especially, thank you to my husband who not only had to cook but manage five children while mother took her case to the public. There are rewards, however. I have perhaps the best reflection of the audience's attention span here in the front row--my three youngest children have joined us this evening--and I can see that my time is rapidly drawing to an end. I am very, very grateful to all of you for your

interest and concern in our education and look forward to working with you in the future."

Resolution No. 612-84                      Re: Commendation of Outgoing Board Members

On recommendation of the superintendent and on motion of Dr. Shoenberg seconded by Dr. Floyd, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:

WHEREAS, Dr. Marian L. Greenblatt is retiring from the Montgomery County Board of Education after serving for eight years; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Suzanne Peyser is retiring from the Montgomery County Board of Education after serving for four years; and

WHEREAS, During their terms of office they provided leadership and creative solutions to problems faced by public education in Montgomery County; and

WHEREAS, They have constantly sought to advance educational opportunities for students; now therefore be it

Resolved, That this Board, on behalf of the superintendent and staff, the students and parents who have benefited from the dedicated service of Dr. Greenblatt and Mrs. Peyser, and mindful of the high standards they set during their tenure on this body, express its deep gratitude and appreciation for their outstanding leadership and devoted service to the Montgomery County Public Schools; and be it further

Resolved, That this resolution be included in the minutes of this meeting and that a copy be presented to Marian Greenblatt and Suzanne Peyser.

Re: Presentations

Mrs. Praisner presented certificates of appreciation to Dr. Greenblatt and Mrs. Peyser.

Re: Statements by Outgoing Members

Dr. Greenblatt read the following into the record:

"I have mixed feelings this evening as I retire after eight years on the Montgomery County Board of Education.

"I want to thank so many people who have made this experience so rewarding. The staff of MCPS is a dedicated group of people who work very hard for our school system. There are constant reminders of how excellent they are, especially compared to educators elsewhere in the country.

"I am proud to have helped choose two fine superintendents, Ed Andrews and Bill Cody, both of whom brought energy, wisdom, and perseverance to a difficult job. Harry Pitt as deputy superintendent has been a rock on which this system has rested during some very challenging times.

"I am happy to have worked with Associate Superintendents Lois Martin, Bob Shaffner, Dick Fazakerley, Hi Fountain, Paul Vance, Bob Shekletski and Lee Powell, who have had to endure long and arduous meeting schedules and have always been professional in the development and implementation of Board policy.

"A special thank you to Tom Fess, the master of smoothing the path for the Board and for citizens seeking help from a large, bewildering system like ours. Now this is a man who is Teflon-coated.

"Mary Lou, David, Larry, Cliff, Lillian, Midge, Ann and all the other staff members have provided efficient support and tender, loving care. A special nod to Bob Cooney and Bill Wilder is essential. The citizens may not realize their contributions, but some of us here do.

"I am happy to have worked with so many fine principals. I hope we helped make your job easier by backing reform in your schools. And to the teachers in the classroom, where the learning actually takes place, I extend my thanks for your making this the best school system in the country. Without you, nothing.

"I have been honored to work with a fine team of Board members who shared my goals - Joe Barse, Eleanor Zappone, Carol Wallace, Rich Claypoole and, of course, my comrade in arms and fellow retiree, Sue Peyser. I have enjoyed working with the other members of the Board even though we didn't always agree.

"I want to thank the loyal "troops" of the Green Machine, who have worked year after year to champion our cause. It was your hard work which led to our successes. Time permits only a partial list of the people to whom I owe so much: Berdansky, Bullock, Burns, Chalet, Clark, Cooper, Feitel, Gervase, Johnson, Katz, Loss, McKelvie, Menzer, Moss, Orens, Plante, Potter, Press, Rosen, Shapiro, Shuman, Sittner, Starr, Ury.

"I want to thank my parents, Stella and Lou Friedman, who transmitted their love of education and who have always been available when I needed them.

"Most of all I want to pay tribute to my husband Mickey, who has shared the joys and has endured the pain with me. Whenever I might weaken, he was always there as a loyal supporter and confidant. He was able to gracefully play the role of husband to a woman politician, and in this respect is truly a liberated man. I could not have done it without him.

"When I was sworn in to office, I remarked upon how special it was for the granddaughter of four immigrants to be elected to serve on the Board of Education. I have had the opportunity to make a significant contribution to our society. I think I would have made them proud. But I'd like to address the remainder of my remarks to my three sons, Drew, Robert and Mark, now 18, 14 and 11 years of age respectively. After all, they were the reason I was so involved in the first place, when the oldest was in fourth grade, another in kindergarten, and the youngest in diapers. There are some valuable lessons for them and for all of us, lessons more significant than the fact that they will not have to share their mother with 600,000 other citizens and they can now reclaim our basement, which had become an extension of the Board of Education.

"Nine years ago, when I announced that I was running for the Board of Education, we wondered whether our alarm would be heard. Since we were not part of the establishment, would anyone listen to us? I said over and over again that "something was not right" and that I was trying to reverse the tide of permissive excesses which were destroying our schools. The liberals had pushed education so far off base that its effectiveness had plummeted.

"You see, I did not want you boys to go to the public schools as they were, without discipline, without a strong sense of mission to educate you and all of the county's children, to be fully prepared for college and for life. I was fully prepared to fight for the push "back to basics" - or "forward to fundamentals" as some prefer. "Along the way, this fight had many happy moments and some very tense moments. I am sorry for the unpleasant fallout on our family. I quickly developed a thick skin to the biting criticism from the liberal establishment, but I know it hurt you. You wanted me to fight back more. You never understood how people could be so cruel to your mother, how they could invade our privacy with pickets and hound us on the phone, or how vicious the press could be in beating the war drums against our cause and with such gross distortions.

"And it was a cause. And we won. Just look around you today. Look at Montgomery County and look at the nation.

"Our cause was to return to the basics. I wanted to see academic rigor in our schools, not just for a few gifted students, but for all our students. I wanted the schools to set many hurdles, high enough to challenge and yet still able to be scaled. Rigor required high standards as measured by two-hour final exams, SAT, CAT, and minimum competency tests. I talked about homework and study skills as important components of learning. I wanted to reduce frivolous courses, to end social promotion, to put more class time on the task of learning, to increase graduation requirements, and even to read silently for 15 minutes a day in order to instill the habit of reading instead of watching television.

"Secondly, it was a cause to restore discipline. The rampant disorder then prevalent in our schools has yielded to a more disciplined environment today; drugs are no longer acceptable on school grounds, in the bathrooms, or in the corridors; chronic absenteeism and hooky have been controlled through limits on unexcused absences; principals know they will be supported for imposing firm discipline.

"Thirdly, it was a cause to change the focus of integration from forced busing to magnet schools and quality education in neighborhood schools. Unfortunately, some people focused, and still would rather focus, on the number of minority children in a school or neighborhood; when will they focus on the schools delivering quality education and not on finding scapegoats?

"Finally, it was a cause to achieve budget control. To stretch our limited dollars in the classroom, we focused the money on teachers and textbooks rather than bricks and heat. This required reducing our administrative overhead, closing two area offices, closing many schools and thereby freeing up funds so class sizes could be reduced and textbooks purchased for every academic subject. We instituted a bonus system to motivate and reward our administrators for excellence.

"That's what we wanted to do, boys, and for the most part we succeeded. We pushed the pendulum in the opposite direction. There has been some backtracking, and we still have a long way to go, with work still to be done in Master Teacher pay for teachers, abandoning the "New Math," achieving still smaller classes, and so on. But it will have to be someone else's crusade; it's time for me to move on.

"In closing, I hope that you will not be jaded by the arrows of public service. I hope, as you look back over these eight years, you will realize that we had many successes. If there is one thing which you have learned, I hope it is this: if you believe in a good principle strongly, then fight for it, no matter what the odds. That's what makes our democracy so great; it's why your great-grandparents came here."

Mrs. Peyser read the following statement into the record:

"I first want to congratulate the new members of the Board, Peggy and Sharon, and Blair on his reelection.

"I am very happy to have had the opportunity to serve my community and specifically Montgomery County Public Schools during the past four years.

"I'm especially proud of being a part of a major reform movement in education which has made many changes in our schools since the permissive years of the 60's and 70's. This important reform movement began two years before I joined the Board. The conservative Board, led by Marian Greenblatt, did things that had

never been done in Montgomery County -- they put limits on large class sizes, they doubled the textbook funds, required written final exams, and reduced the number of times students could cut classes. I can personally appreciate the tremendous significance of these changes since I was teaching in one of our high schools when the Board took these actions. I saw the most dramatic changes that I had seen since I began teaching here in 1963. Class sizes were manageable, I had enough textbooks to send them home with individual students for homework, and far fewer students were cutting classes. "Since I have been on the Board, departmental and countywide final exams have been implemented in all our high school academic classes. No longer can students draw posters instead of writing an exam in a history or science class. Most importantly, students know they are in school to learn, and we are seeing concrete results: test scores are rising again! Marian's leadership of this reform movement and her continuous efforts to focus on academic standards and rigor in the classroom are largely responsible for these improvements. Incidentally, Marian is the youngest person ever elected to the Board and received more votes than anyone else ever has.

"I am leaving Montgomery County Public Schools a much better school system than it was four or eight years ago. As a result of our efforts over the last four years, we now have an educational policy for kindergarten through eighth grade, a companion to the Senior High Policy. This K-8 policy required homework three to five nights a week and required student achievement for promotion from one grade to the next.

"We now have a Core of Courses that are offered in every high school in the county, and we eliminated some outdated and frivolous courses from our mass of over 500 high school course offerings.

"We have put more emphasis on the critical reading and writing skills with a new K-12 language arts curriculum, the Superintendent's Annual Writing Awards, and an effort to reduce the number of unnecessary interruptions to English classes.

"We cut administrative and nonclassroom costs and put the dollars saved into the classroom for improvements for children.

"Through Marilyn Praisner's leadership we now have a study of guidance and counseling services in our schools. I hope this study will result in a permanent college and career counselor for each high school. With all the counselors we have in this county, there is no reason for high school students to have to pay hundreds of dollars for private college counseling.

"Recently, we increased graduation requirements. Jerry and Bob, your votes helped us make that initial move in the right direction.

"In our efforts to strengthen academic standards, we voted to require student government and class officers to maintain passing grades in all their courses. Jim, the support of you and Odessa was

critical in that important vote.

"During the past few years, we have expanded programs for our gifted and talented students and now provide transportation for them.

"The seven-period day is now in almost all of our high schools. Jacquie and Blair, we share the same concern that all students have this educational opportunity. I'm sure you will continue to be forceful on this issue so that next year all our high schools will have seven periods.

"While I wasn't able to accomplish all that I feel is needed to improve the education of our children, a great deal of progress has been made. Throughout these four years, I focused attention and resources on the classroom and presented the perspective of the classroom teacher, never forgetting my own first-hand experience teaching. Much more needs to be done to reduce class sizes, improve discipline, increase graduation requirements, and deal with a serious teacher shortage.

"Our hard-working staff is responsible for implementing these policy changes, and they do an excellent job. Bill Cody, Harry Pitt, Bob Shaffner, Lois Martin, Hi Fountain, Dick Fazakerley, Paul Vance, Lee Powell, and Bob Shekletski, you do a tremendous job. And to all our administrators, principals, teachers, students, and parents, you are terrific, and it's been wonderful working with you.

"I must pay very special thanks to Tom Fess, who has been a friend, advisor, and an enormous help to me these four years as well as to many teachers and parents in cutting through the administrative red tape of a huge bureaucracy.

"And to our outstanding Board staff -- Mary Lou, David, Larry, Midge, Lillian, and Ann -- your help has been invaluable, and it would take me all night to thank you for all you've done.

"My wonderful family and friends have been tremendously supportive and helpful in hundreds of ways, and have tolerated a lot these four years.

"I'm so grateful to all of you who worked hard so that I could have this opportunity to be on the Board. Joe Monte, Al Ferraro, Jim Hagy and the Montgomery County Federation of Teachers, the Losses, Presses, Shapiros, Zappones, Katzes, Potters, Mosses, McKelvies, Mallets, Menzers, Claypooles, and the thousands of other citizens who supported traditional education.

"And I'm thankful to God for giving me the strength, the skills, and the energy to do this important work, and for the blessings of living in this great country where a person like me can seek the support of her fellow citizens and serve her community as an elected official.

"Finally, I want to wish much luck and wisdom to the superintendent

and the members of the Board in your very important work of improving the education of our children."

Mrs. Praisner thanked Dr. Greenblatt and Mrs. Peyser for their service to the school system. She especially appreciated the way Mrs. Peyser, in her statement pointed out the way the Board had worked together even though they didn't always agree on issues. She welcomed Mrs. DiFonzo and Mrs. Slye to the Board and looked forward to a continuing Board relationship with Mr. Ewing.

Re: Adjournment

The president adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

President

Secretary

WSC:msl