



Re: SWEARING IN

Ms. Geraldine Stark, clerk of the court, administered the oath of office to Mr. Sims.

Re: STATEMENT BY MR. SIMS

"I am deeply honored that all of you were able to come tonight. The year ahead for me and the students of Montgomery County will be full of challenges that must be overcome. But, there will be numerous opportunities as well. If there ever was a time when student involvement was needed, the time is now. We can and we will help our schools through these tough times, but we must work together to do it.

"Every generation except ours, I've been taught, has had a distinguishing trademark that bound the young together, giving students a sense of future and identity. Our parents were the baby-boomers. Some of our older brothers and sisters will always remember the Vietnam War and Watergate. What are we known for? If you ask the national press, you may hear that we are the 'all take and no give generation.' Anyone who has felt that way has never been in Montgomery County's schools. Our school system has labored for years to produce an active, involved citizenry. Their efforts have been successful. Most of all, I believe that if every student plays a role in helping improve our school system, the best is yet to come. We, the students here in Montgomery County, can give ourselves our own sense of identity. **Let us be known for our involvement!**

"By far the largest issue that dominated my campaign was the budget crisis. While the budget cuts have been severe, I've watched as this Board and this Superintendent did an outstanding job of minimizing the effect on student life and the quality of education. But at the same time, I fear future cuts. The potential that exists in every student is far too valuable to be subject to the budget axe. I feel lucky to have attended Montgomery County Schools since the sixth grade, and my greatest fear is that my third grade brother and his peers won't have the same opportunities that I've had. With the limited power of the Student Member to deal with budget issues, I will do whatever possible to prevent further cuts and retain the unique programs that have made us so successful. It is heartwarming to see all of the different and diverse groups working towards the solution to the budget problem. During the year ahead, I will work towards an even greater amount of cooperation between students, parents, and employee groups in solving the most fundamental of difficulties. It is foolish to portray these constituents as adversaries when we all have the same primary goal: excellent schools.

"Tonight is a very special night for me, but there are countless people that I must thank for giving me this opportunity. I'll could go on all night, but as anyone who has watched an evening meeting of this Board will tell you, we often go all night anyway! I'll try to keep my list somewhat shorter than what it probably should be. I need to start four years ago this summer - in Chestertown, Maryland, at the Maryland Leadership Workshops. It was there that I met Chan Park. He put up with my innumerable questions about the Board and the student's role in shaping policy, and managed to retain a smile. After watching the job he did in this position, the way he worked countless hours to help students and advance the position, I decided that there was no way I could do it too. Well, a year later, I met David Chang and Shervin Pishevar. David has been a great friend and a superb political strategist. His help has been invaluable. As for Shervin, we met one Saturday at the Rockville Library to do some routine work for MCR, and ended up staying awake until four that morning working on a project for an under-21 club. Working with Shervin changed my mind and made me feel that this job was something that just maybe, I could do. I'm very lucky to have had the opportunity to work with him, but now I've must face the awesome challenge of filling his shoes. I've always felt that Shervin and I made a great team. I'd be remiss if I didn't admit that it will be a tad scary going it alone. Sherv - you can expect plenty of calls from me when you're at Boston U next year. "This spring there was the campaign, a three-month crash course in stress management. I couldn't - and wouldn't - have made it without the support of six wonderful understanding teachers at Richard Montgomery: Mr. Don Poole, Mrs. Maria Solernou, Ms. Mary Martin, Mr. John Day, Mr. Gilbert Early, and Mrs. Sandra Heyman. My Principal, Dr. Thomas Quelet, has been a great friend and advisor not only throughout the campaign, but throughout my three years at R.M. He was especially inspiring to me during the vandalism crisis at Richard Montgomery two years ago. Mike Kovak, the SGA President of R.M. and my campaign co-manager, freely gave his time to help in every area of the campaign, and made sure I stayed focused on the task at hand until the election day.

"Whenever I speak of Student Government, I must thank a dear friend and mentor, Mr. Mike Michaelson. It is because of his tireless efforts and respect for students that many opportunities are available for students who desire to play an active role. I look forward to working with him in the year ahead. I'd also like to thank the wonderful staff of the Board of Education for helping me feel at home as, quite literally, the new kid on the block. Mr. Fess, Mrs. Bahr, Ms. Dodson, and Ms. Wood have made the job of becoming a Board member easy and enjoyable. One of the best parts of the last two months has been becoming acquainted with the other Board members. It's become clear that not only are these seven public servants dedicated to working for

their constituents, but they all really love students, which I feel is essential in this business. Montgomery County is lucky to have Dr. Paul Vance as superintendent. He has, on several occasions, made time in his busy schedule so that we may meet and get to know each other better, and for that I am truly grateful. I'm anxiously looking forward to working with the Board, Dr. Vance, and deputy superintendents Mrs. Kathy Gemberling and Dr. Phil Rohr. I must say thank you to all of the employees and volunteers of the school system who literally 'make the magic happen.' Every employee of this school system has given a little of themselves so that the future may be a bit brighter.

"Before I finish my thank you's, there are five people in the audience that I'd like to introduce. My family. Unfortunately, my wonderful grandmother who I affectionately call "Nana" is in Pennsylvania and couldn't be here tonight. I want everyone in the audience to know that my family has always been there for me. Mom, Dad, as you watch the summer Olympics, keep in mind that if parenting was an event, you'd both win the gold. Guys, if it wasn't for you, I wouldn't be sitting here right now. I love you very much.

"To every one of you who lent your support, your vote, or an encouraging word along the way - I owe you a debt of gratitude that I may only repay by dedicating myself to achieving my campaign goals and giving this job my all. The year ahead will be challenging, but at some point in every person's life, there comes a time when sacrifice becomes the ideal choice. From watching Shervin and his predecessors, I know that I will have less time for friends, less time for family, less time for myself, and of course, less time for sleep. To every public official, the importance of fulfilling one's promises weighs heavy on the mind. But unlike most public officials, the student member of the Board has only one year, compared to the typical four. As Shervin has often pointed out, 'a month to an adult member is like a week to the student member.' I will make every month and week of my term count. Thank you all for coming. Montgomery County Public Schools has given so much to me that is an honor to have the opportunity to give something back. I'm looking forward to be a great year."

Re: PRESENTATION TO MR. PISHEVAR

On behalf of the members of the Board, Mrs. Hobbs presented Mr. Pishevar with a photo album and Dr. Vance presented a certificate of appreciation for his service on the Board.

Re: STATEMENT BY MR. PISHEVAR

"July 1, 1991: There I was barely 17 years old and given the power and responsibility to represent 46,000 of my peers in one of the most American of institutions -- The Board of Education. Not just any old Board of Education; The Montgomery County Board of Education -- an educational system ranked consistently as one of the top public educational institutes in the country and in a county ranked as one of the richest. I had just gotten my hair cut the day before. I had, I mean my dad had, gotten my beige suit pressed the day of the inauguration. My speech laid crisply in my hands, I was ready. Ready to give every one an idea of what kind of person I was. I say 'was' because I'm not the same person today.

"For starter's I was naive. I had no idea what I was in for. Sure, I thought I knew, but without going through the experience you never really know. For the benefit of my successor and for the public I'll list the things you usually don't know before becoming a member of the Board.

"1. You don't know really about the time commitment. Sure, you might hear about it from someone or let's say maybe you wake up at 3:00 a.m. for a snack and decide to flip through the channels and just happen to discover that you actually have a channel 60. There, right on the screen, you see twelve really tired people sitting around a doughnut shaped table. Behind them you see a bald guy sitting behind what seems to be a kindergarten table but you're not sure. Your first thought is you're hallucinating and that ham sandwich must have had some kind of psychedelic mold growing on it. Your second thought is that it must be an official meeting of Insomniacs Anonymous. But then you hear the red haired lady, the one with the big hammer in her hand, say something about Early Childhood Education. Hardly a topic for a bunch of insomniacs to talk about. Then it dawns on you that these are the people you had or had not voted for last November. It is the Board of Education. You do have a three year old kid and for a fraction of a second you think about sitting down and listening to what's being said. In the remaining fraction of that second you realize it's 3:00 a.m. and that you aren't crazy.

"The time commitment is one thing you don't really know about on a first hand experience because there are very few brave souls out there who sit out an entire 12-18 hour meeting without being an actual Board member and even with that experience it is not the same as sitting at the Board table, attending the executive session, receiving mammoth board packets delivered at your door, receiving constant telephone calls and receiving tons of mail in your mailbox.

"2. You don't really know how slow democracy really is. Once you get elected to a public position you think you're going to go

in there and give 'em hell. You think your ideas are just too great for anyone to resist. Once you propose something everyone's going to say 'wow' and approve it without further trepidation. But then you realize that guy Robert must have been a big pain well. With his 'point of this' and 'motion to' that you think for a minute you can understand the motivation behind a jerk like Castro or Noriega. But then as time goes by and the day comes that your idea is lifted off the papers and molded into an action or when a mother of a special education student comes in to tell her child's story you begin to understand what a guy like Jefferson was thinking. So sure it's hard to get used to but in the end everyone gets a say and you realize it's worth putting up with old Robert's Rules of Order.

"3. You don't realize how much people really care. Before becoming a Board member you'd never think that people care so much about your decisions. Yeah, somewhere inside you hope that people care about what you're talking about or voting on and pray that someone appreciates the effort and energy. But as soon as you see a lady come in with a couple of pounds of dirt that she undoubtedly dug up herself, lifted it, carried it to her car, drove all the way to the Board, carried it into the Board Room and during her public comments poured it all over the Board table to protest a boundary change, that's what you call caring and dedication. Once you start getting hundreds of phone calls on one topic, and receive tons of letters and petitions you start realizing the effect that you have on people's lives and how much they care about your decisions and actions. You realize that, along with the activism, there is appreciation for the chance to express their views and for the time you take to listen to their calls or call them back.

"4. You don't appreciate the actual beauty and power of the vote. At first, of course, it seems like a relatively simple act. You just raise your hand, or raise it with style like me with a pencil deftly held between the thumb and the index finger. But once you hold in those hands the power to change people's lives, to affect the direction of an entire institution your hands feels heavier -- not of course physically, but symbolically. The power of the vote is a heavy and precious power. Every time you raise your hand you are raising the hands of thousands of others. To vote is never a singular and simple act but an act that carries on the tradition of democracy and speaks for the many who have no other voice. Slowly, you begin to become aware of the omnipresent forces that pressure you to vote in one way or another. With time you begin to master your responsibility -- knowing when to take a stand and when to abstain. To abuse this power is to let down the thousands who hold their trust in you and to erode the very fabric of democracy.

"5. You don't know that you will gain weight. I know Jon is actually looking forward to this fact, one of the few people I know that do. But it really is a given that once you become a Board member you will undoubtedly gain weight. The student member is lucky in that they have only a year to gain weight while adult Board members have four or sometimes more. It's the combination of stress, sitting down in a chair for hours on end, and having cookies and all kinds of sweets available at the meetings. Exercise is a must, after your term of course.

"6. You don't realize how much work staff have to do. Slowly as the year goes on, especially in a year with dramatic budget cuts, you begin to realize how heavy the load is on staff. They are the people who make up a lot of the muscle of this institution and are frequently called the fat that must be cut out. Well, as a Board member, you see first-hand how many people work late at night, and put all their effort into their projects and duties. You see the stress in their faces and you realize that without them the institution would stall and decay into an institution with no direction or support.

"7. You don't realize how important your family and friends are. For the student member this applies most especially. For the student member has always been with their family and friends, and except for the occasional summer camp they haven't really had to be on their own and away from their family and friends. Once you become a Board member, you become independent and you must weigh and judge your decisions on the Board on your own and slowly you realize that you don't have as much time to spend with your family and your friends. You also come to appreciate the time you do have with them more than you ever did before. You begin to realize that once it comes down to it, your family and few rare, true friends you have are the only constants in your life.

"So, I was naive on July 1, 1991. I still am in many ways. I was also disorganized and if you ask my parents they will tell you without hesitation, that I still am. Although I believe I have moved up a positive notch in my level of disorganization. I also didn't know how to change a tire which I changed quickly on that cold winter night after our Budget meeting adjourned at around 3:30 a.m. and I discovered my tire had a nail wedged in it. With the help of Brian Porter, Melissa Bahr, and one of the reliable janitors I now know. I, as my friends know, was an idealist. I still am. But now I know more about reality. About the many obstacles that are always there to stop any dream from happening. I'm glad I learned that now. Because I got a feeling that idealism fades with age. As more experiences and disappointments come your way, and when reality slaps you hard in the face it's hard to keep on dreaming that things actually will be better for everyone. So I'm glad I got this lesson early on in my life so that I have a chance to have some experience in

bringing ideas into the realm of reality before I go on in my life and take on positions that hold more responsibility and opportunities for change.

"I learned all these lessons not by sitting in a big orange chair for a year but by interacting with people, and people are who count. The first obvious people I learned things from are of course the other board members.

"Sharon DiFonzo: If you know Sharon DiFonzo, well you'd know that her sole goal in getting so involved in education was to make a difference for even just one child. Well, I'm here to say that she's definitely made a big difference for one child -- me. She's been like a second mother to me. She is probably the wittiest person I have ever known, with one of the finest and quickest minds anywhere. She's told me stories that I'll never forget and taught me lessons about life and what is really important. One of the most important things I've learned from Sharon DiFonzo is what a difference dignity, honesty, and integrity make.

"Catherine Hobbs: The first impression that Cathy Hobbs makes on everyone is that of the sweet, shy, and pleasant lady she is. But don't be fooled by that sweet exterior. Along with that sweetness comes a will that's as strong as steel, and when it comes to children and in things she believes in, she won't back down. She has been a great president for this Board of Education and it was an honor serving as Vice-President Pro Tem, even if it was for just a day. When I think of Cathy Hobbs, and I know this might sound strange, I think of Jimmy Stewart in 'Mr. Smith Goes to Washington.' They both have that love for children, that stubborn yearning to do what is right and to not back down no matter what. And I have learned a lot from her will and the strength that lies inside.

"Blair Ewing: When I first met Blair G. Ewing I was in awe of just the sheer number of years he'd served. I thought either this man has a twin, someone put Crazy Glue in his seat, or this is one spectacle of pure dedication to serving people. As a Board member I realized that the latter option was most likely the case (although the twin idea could still be a possibility). Also as a Board member I observed that all these years of service had tuned this man's political skills to a tee. He has mastered the art of public speaking and it has been an honor sitting next to him half of the year. I have been amazed at how he can scribble a line or two of notes and then give an eloquent speech that for most people would take many hours to prepare. So from Blair Ewing I learned the meaning of dedication, how to speak more fluidly, and to always check your chair before accepting any job.

"Fran Brenneman: Whenever you think of Fran Brenneman you think of smiling. Because when you look at Fran Brenneman there is always that eternal smile. I have rarely turned to look at her without seeing her trademark smile and it really has been amazing that in this whole year I have never seen her totally angry. I have seen her slightly annoyed but her smile returns in moments. Even being surrounded by so much stress and pressure the smile is there. So from Fran Brenneman I take the lesson of never letting things eat at you, having patience, and always trying to smile.

"Alan Cheung: Alan Cheung has always been willing to take time and give me advice. Each piece of advice has a special meaning and I still remember a lot of his advice to me. He's guided me in everything from education to management to college and medical schools. There is a special sincerity in everything he does. I thank him for his guidance and the help he's always been willing to give.

"Ana Sol Gutierrez: Ana Sol Gutierrez's enthusiasm and energy is amazing. If she believes in something she'll fire away and state her beliefs with zeal. She represents someone who has worked hard, on her own accord to achieve success and make a difference for others. It is this lesson of working hard and never quitting that sticks with me from Ana.

"Carol Fanconi: I have been amazed throughout the year at Carol Fanconi's ability to speak on so diverse a number of issues. With energy, no matter how late the meeting, she expresses with all her heart her beliefs on many issues. It is a characteristic and persistence that must be admired.

"Now for the Board staff without whom, the Board would not operate. Tom Fess, the ombudsman, has been a close friend and advisor without whom my year on the Board would have been totally different. Mary Lou Wood is the Board secretary who somehow musters the energy and the sanity to record everything that is said at the Board meetings. She is also one of the sweetest ladies that I've ever met. Nancy Dodson is the Board secretary who typed most of my memos and without whom I would not have survived. Beldina Arah is the new secretary who has been a valuable addition to the BOE staff.

"Dr. Paul L. Vance -- a man who I consider an idol who mixes both idealism, realism, and intellect into one powerful package of leadership that I have learned from and aspire to become. Mrs. Kathy Gemberling and Dr. Phil Rohr, the dynamic duo who have really amazed me through their hard work throughout the year.

"Mike Michaelson has been one of the highlights of my high school life in general and has had a profound effect on me. The quality

of quantity of student leadership in Montgomery County is due in most parts to Mike Michaelsons's efforts and mentoring.

"And, who could forget the teachers? There are of course the bad ones, the ones who you wished you'd switched out of the first time you met him or her. But then there are the truly magnificent ones who with their pure hearts, enthusiasm, and caring help mold young little kids into great people. I'd just like to thank Mrs. Walker, my fifth grade teacher at Washington Grove Elementary School, for her nurturing. It was really with her mentoring that I actually began to do and achieve things. It was her encouragement that helped me realize I could achieve great things. Thank you, Mrs. Walker. Then she was immediately followed by sweet Mrs. Sloe, my sixth grade teacher who continued the encouragement. Then there is Mr. Harrison, my ninth grade history teacher at Blair who always gave me encouragement and cared about how I did and always checked up on my progress. The only other special teacher that had a profound impact on me and my development was Pete Robertson, my tenth grade history teacher at Blair, and who ironically also served as student member of this Board. With his mentoring and the frequent talks we had, I learned from him what was to be complete person. He too is one my idols and who is a model of how I want to be.

"Lastly my family and friends. My mom and dad are really all I live for. I would be lost person with no direction to go without my parents. They have loved me and encouraged me and molded through their love who I am today and who I someday will be. My older brother and sister Afshin and Bitia I love with all my heart and who without which I wouldn't survive. I can always count on them to cheer me up and make me forget about stress and pressure. We as a family have been through a lot and survived a lot of storms together and my love for them is truly immeasurable.

"Sharon DiFonzo, during one of our many late night conversations once told me that in one's life span you only find two or three friendships that last. My mother also told me a Persian saying that says, 'Friends are like flowers, if you pick the most beautiful flowers you will begin to smell like them.' Well, it sounds a lot better in Farsi, but I have truly been blessed by some of my friends. I'd like to thank David Chang for his rewarding friendship and his dedication to me and for always caring about me; Jon Sims for the past three years of warm friendship and for sharing our dreams and plans together; Ignacio Tzoumas, who I've been friends with since seventh grade and who knows more about me, probably too much, than anyone, and Ellen Johnson for her love and caring and for being there for me and giving me the strength.

July 1, 1992

"One of the most important lessons I've learned this past year is that education is the link to our future. (This is the serious part.) If we want a better world we can't just work with the present day -- we can't just try to reform the grown-ups. We've got to work with the children and instill in them certain universal and golden values that will stick with them throughout their lives and will be passed on to their children, and their children's children. It is more important and profitable to invest in children than to invest in stocks and business. What I believe is that every child can succeed if you show them that you believe in them.

"Another thing I learned is that you must work with each individual day and enjoy it. I came onto the Board in July 1, 1991, as a very goal-oriented person. I still am. But now I know that instead of wasting time trying to plan tomorrow and the next day, it is more important to live today to its fullest. Take advantage of the time, relish the moment. As writer Robert J. Hastings says, 'It is not the burdens of today that drive men mad. It is the regrets over yesterday and the fear of tomorrow. Regret and fear are the twin thieves who rob us of the beauty of today.' This lesson was probably the hardest to learn because it was realized through sacrifice and disappointment.

"The Board has truly been a great and rewarding experience and I have been honored to serve so many people."

Re: COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS AND  
SUPERINTENDENT AND DEPUTY  
SUPERINTENDENTS

Board members, Dr. Vance, Mrs. Gemberling and Dr. Rohr welcomed Mr. Sims and congratulated Mr. Pishevar for a distinguished year on the Board.

Re: ADJOURNMENT

The president adjourned the meeting at 9:06 p.m. to a reception for Mr. Pishevar and Mr. Sims.

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PRESIDENT

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SECRETARY

PLV:nwd

