

Blacks React To School Board From Page A1

shall said. "Margaret Lohr is on a conservative binge despite the fact that she was heavily supported in the black community. And I knew how Plemons would vote because she has that right-wing philosophy and Calloway is in the same boat."

Marshall said his choice for chairman would be Sheppard.

"Between the two of them (Sheppard and Calloway), I would have to choose Sheppard and, out of all the board members, I would still have to choose Sheppard," Marshall said.

"Sheppard has been there and paid his dues. He's been the most open of any board member and has never backed down on issues. He's been the most fair across the board.

"I have agreed and disagreed with him. I can't understand why they are afraid of him (being chairman). But based on the racism that is reappearing on this board, they think he is too liberal. But I can't see that. His leadership has transcended those barriers."

Norma Smith, who is chairman of the board of the Neighborhood Justice Center and has been mentioned in some circles as a possible school board candidate, said that the board's inability to make a decision does not change her opinion of it.

"In the recent past, they have not allowed themselves to get past dealing with personalities

as opposed to education," Smith said.

Smith also said she supports Sheppard as chairman. "I believe that a change is needed in the way things are going and he can provide that change," she said.

Acting county Democratic Party Chairman Earline Parmon, who expressed interest in a board seat last year when member Tom Womble resigned after being elected to the state House, said she is disappointed with the school board.

"I feel it's unfortunate at this point that the school board cannot get along with the business of electing a chairman," Parmon said. "I have viewed it and thought about it and find that some people are more concerned about individual desires.

"The situation on last Monday reflected that there are factions and friction on the board and that individuals are not concerned with the business of education but are only looking out for selfish reasons."

Parmon would not say who she supports as chairman.

Beaufort Bailey, the only black school board member, said he has received a number of calls from black people telling him how they feel and who they support as chairman.

"Everybody keeps telling me not to change my mind," said Bailey. "I don't have any

serious feelings against any board member, but I just have my preferences for chairman.

"We need a change of tempo on the board and I think Sheppard will be able to handle it," Bailey added. "I can't understand why we are having this fight. I understand that the position is powerless. This has to be a personality thing, unless there is some power the chairman has that they haven't told me about."

Bailey predicted that a chairman will be elected next Monday night and that Garlene Grogan holds the key to who he will be.

Bailey also admitted that he has himself considered seeking the post as a possible compromise candidate.

The duties of the chairman, according to the school board's bylaws, are to preside at all board meetings, appoint all committees, unless otherwise directed by the board, appoint all of the board's committee chairmen, be the official spokesman of the board, and be an ex officio member of all school board committees as well as a voting member of any committee when it is necessary to obtain a quorum at a committee meeting.

The chairman also executes any contract, deed, lease, agreement, letter or any other document for and on behalf of the board and has the right, as do the other members of the board, to discuss questions and vote.

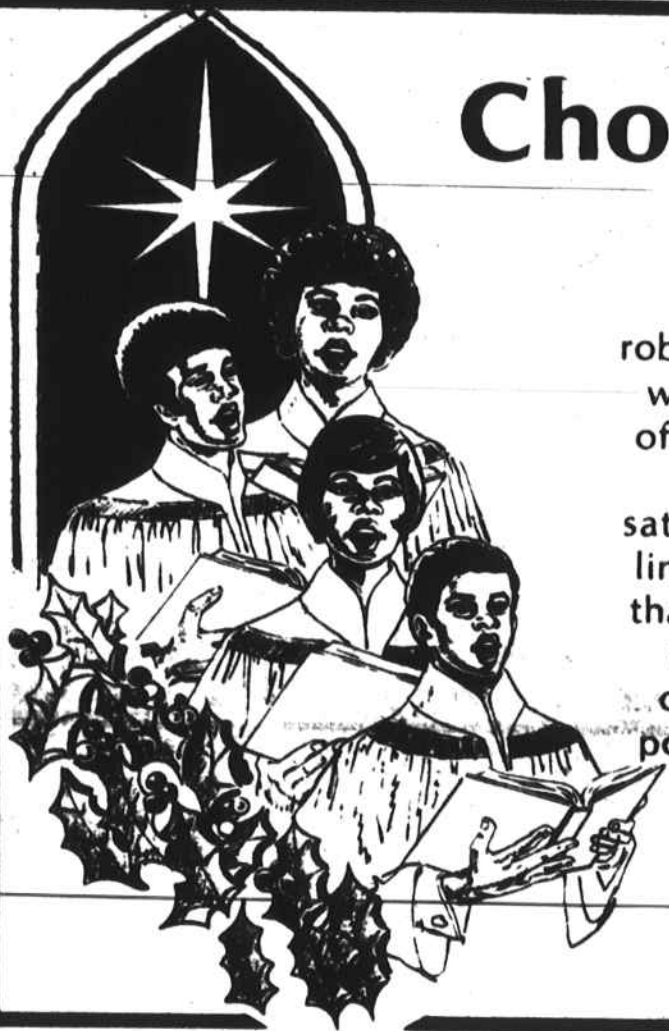
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