

Our School Board

Veteran Board Member Sheppard: Simply Ask And He'll Answer

By **ROBIN ADAMS**
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This article is the first in a series profiling members of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education

Dr. William F. Sheppard, 53, and dressed in the traditional gray business suit, leans back in his reclining office chair, props his feet on his desk, lights the cigarette he customarily smokes and begins to talk.

Sheppard, the most candid member of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education, is free and open with any topic. Ask and ye shall be told.

"Any return to racially identifiable schools would be a great disservice to this entire community."

-- Dr. William F. Sheppard

"My open manner is just my way of making sure that I do the job I was elected to do," says Sheppard, a six-and-a-half year veteran on the board. "I feel I represent the entire county and I believe firmly that every child in the county deserves an equal opportunity to get an education. It is our job to make whatever the taxpayers provide available to everybody."

Equal education is one of the reasons Sheppard says he has opposed forming neighborhood schools, which, he believes, would lead to segregated enrollments and unbalanced educational standards.

"Any return to racially identifiable schools would be a great disservice to this entire community," he says.

Concerning race relations in the schools, Sheppard notes, "I don't see any conscious racial discrimination, but there are unconscious racial attitudes. The level of expectation (for a student) is a very important ingredient in the teaching process. Some people, because of their histories, don't form those expectations with a totally open mind."

He adds, "But our situation has gotten better in the

past couple of years. Of course, there are still a few racial incidents, but anytime you put a lot of people together, every once and a while there will be a fight."

While Sheppard does not agree that black history should be taught as a separate class, he does feel it should be incorporated into the schools' history curriculum.

"Some of our teachers have not been exposed to black history. And I didn't know a lot about black history when I came here," says Sheppard, who is director of Government Relations at Winston-Salem State University. "I would resist anything that says you have to teach one quarter of black history, but I believe that everybody should be exposed to black history."

Sheppard describes the school board as "a very hard-working group."

As for individual members, these are his perceptions: **Marvin S. Calloway Jr., board chairman:** "Mr. Calloway and I don't always agree, but we understand each other."

Margaret Plemmons: "I have a good relationship with her, also. We are similar kinds of people with many things in common."

Beaufort O. Bailey, the board's only black member: "I have known him for 13 years and I managed his unsuccessful campaign for the Board of Education in 1972 and his successful campaign in 1974. He has been a good friend for a very long time."

John W. Wood: "While we frequently disagree, we agree as often as we disagree. I would say we get along well."

Mary Margaret Lohr: "I am impressed with her dedication and willingness to do her homework."

Gärlene Grogan: "I have served with her for four and one-half years. We have some things in common, but frequently, you will find us voting on different sides."

John Holleman Jr.: "I don't know him well at all. Philosophically, he and I ought to be the two closest members. We got off to a rocky start on a couple of issues and I hope it (our relationship) will calm down."

Reorganizing the schools and forming four-year high schools is one issue the board has been discussing for three years. Sheppard says that the board has been "foot-



Dr. William Sheppard is one of the most candid and talkative members of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education. Sheppard says the school board has dragged its feet on instituting a four-year high school plan (photo by James Parker).

dragging" on the issue because of personalities and personal preferences.

Sheppard says that, if he could develop a plan, he would opt for independent districting, which would eliminate the present feeder pattern that requires children to go to school with the same classmates through all 12 grades, unless they move out of their districts. Families moving from one district to another make the present system ineffective because some schools become overcrowded while others lose large numbers of students, Sheppard says.

"I cannot see busing kids from East Winston out of their neighborhoods to go to school at West Forsyth, driving past empty classrooms," Sheppard says.

Sheppard also has recently criticized the board's decision to push for eight high schools in its four-year plan, saying he suspects that it may be motivated more by politics than educational or financial considerations.

Overall, Sheppard says that the school system is "excellent." The one thing he says he would like to change,

however, is the maximum class sizes, which he addresses at each semi-monthly school board meeting.

State law requires a 26-to-one teacher-pupil ratio in grades K-3. The state legislature provides money for teachers on that ratio using enrollment figures from the previous year. If the number of students exceeds the previous year's teacher/pupil ratio, many classrooms will surpass the maximum class size, unless the system spends the money to hire additional teachers. If the system does not wish to hire additional teachers, it simply asks the school board for temporary permission to exceed the prescribed ratio each month.

The local system should not have that authority to exceed the maximum class size, Sheppard says. Overcrowded classrooms dilute the learning strength of the students and the teaching power of the teachers, he argues.

When asked how he feels about his tenure on the school board, Sheppard drops his feet from his desk, turns around in his chair, looks directly at this reporter and says, "I have worked very hard at it and it's a task that satisfies me."

Crime Prevention

Assault Victims Include Women

The following "Crime Box Score" is designed to keep you abreast of criminal activity in your community and to help protect your family and property from crime.

Rape

- 300 block, Lakeview Boulevard

The complainant reported being sexually assaulted by a friend. A warrant is outstanding.

- 800 block, Pitts Street

The complainant was walking in the area when a black male forced her into his car and sexually assaulted her. No further description is available.

Strong-Armed Robbery

- 1300 block, Dunleith Avenue

The complainant was walking in the area when three suspects knocked him to the ground and took his wallet.

Purse Snatching

- 2200 block, North Patterson Avenue

The complainant's purse was snatched by a black male described as being 5-feet, 6-inches tall and weighing about 150 pounds.

Storebreaking

- 4400 block, North Cherry Street

Cigarettes were taken.

- 200 block, Glenn Avenue

Two turntables and speakers were taken.

- 4500 block, Cherry Street

Food and cigarettes were taken.

- 3500 block, Patterson Avenue

Eight watches were taken.

Housebreaking

- 1200 block, East Second Street

Cameras and stereo equipment were taken.

- 1900 block, Hollywood Street

Cash was taken.

- 500 block, Claremont Avenue

A revolver and cash were taken.

- 1200 block, East 25th Street

The following are tips on how to save the lives of a child how has been involved in an accident:

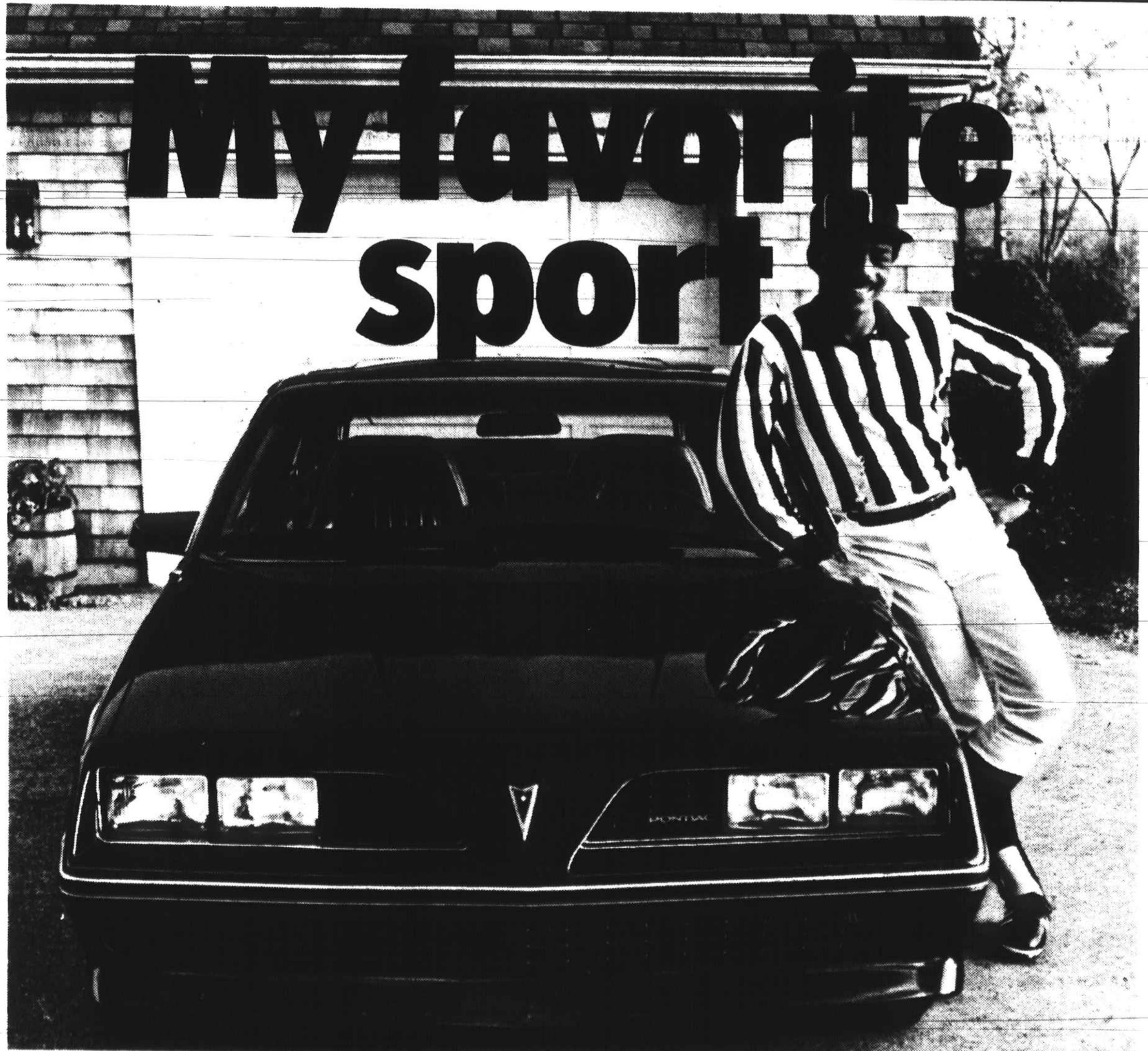
• If a child's clothes should catch on fire, the first thing to do is to not let him run. Throw him to the floor and roll him up in a rug, coat or blanket to smother the flames.

• If a child is unconscious but breathing, cover him with blankets or a coat to keep him warm. If he has vomited, turn his head to one side to keep him from choking. Do not move him and immediately call a doctor or police for advice.

• If a child swallows an object, call a doctor for advice. If the object is caught in the throat, encourage the child to cough it up. Do not probe with fingers; it may punch the object deeper. If coughing doesn't work, hold the child's head down and slap him hard on the back between the shoulder blades. If you cannot dislodge the object, call a doctor. If breathing stops, apply artificial respiration.

Above all, do not panic in the case of an accident or emergency. Your ability to remain calm could be the difference between someone living and dying.

This column is brought to you weekly as a public service by the Chronicle, the East Winston Crime Task Force and the Winston-Salem Police Department.



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