

# Kaplan, Plyler see things quite differently

At large race for County Commissioner is one of the most hotly-contested

BY LAYLA FARMER  
THE CHRONICLE

Schools and funding for the Downtown Health Plaza have become hot-button issues in the at large County Commissioner race.

Republican incumbent Dave Plyler is trying to fight back a challenge from Democrat Ted Kaplan, whose family owns a mega school supply business.

"We have had 12 years of declining performance," said Kaplan, who served 16 years as a state legislator. "We have completely neglected our schools and the current County Commissioners have to step up to the plate."

Plyler - whose smooth voice has earned him a long and distinguished career in broadcasting - has been a county commissioner for the past 12 years. He defends the job he has done in terms of education.

"I have voted for every school bond issue and I have voted for every budget that the schools have ever asked for," Plyler commented. "As a result, we've ended up with



Kaplan



Plyler

something in the neighborhood of \$105 million worth of new and improved schools."

Plyler said as a commissioner it's not his job to micromanage the school system.

"The fact is the school system has an elected school board. They're the ones who make the policy. They're the ones who ... carry out those policies," he said.

But Kaplan says commissioners have left school officials empty-handed in terms of funding, forcing school officials to use money that would normally be set aside for teacher salaries and small-

er class sizes for the purchase of trailers for the growing student population. As a result, Kaplan said, the local school system has earned a dubious reputation.

"It is, without a doubt, one of the worst school systems in North Carolina for the number of people that we have in our system, which is about 50,000," he commented. "We have more trailers than any other system, we've got a higher teacher turnover rate than systems that are our size."

Plyler counters that education is always high on the commissioners' agenda.

"One-third of the entire county budget goes to the schools. Over that figure, we provide \$11 million in teacher supplement money to make sure that teachers get salaries commensurate with the national average," said Plyler, who has two daughters that teach in the school system.

Kaplan is also concerned about funding of the Downtown Health Plaza. Commissioners provided no funding for the plaza, which treats mostly low-income patients, this past budget year.

Kaplan called commissioners decision not to fund the plaza "spiteful".

"The Downtown Health Plaza and other facilities like that play a great role in this community. It should be supported," he remarked, adding that the facility would be a priority for him if elected.

Plyler, who sits on the board of the Downtown Health Plaza, repudiates Kaplan's claim that he "voted against the Downtown Health Plaza."

"I voted for every budget

that contained funding for the Downtown Health Plaza, every budget. When it came to approving the final budget, I voted for the budget, but I did not vote against the Downtown Health Plaza," Plyler commented. "If I had said, 'I'm not going to vote for the budget' and voted against the entire \$350 million budget over \$300,000, what sense would that make?"

Plyler says he has worked to find other ways to fund the health plaza.

"I also am on the Novant board ... in that capacity, I was able to persuade Forsyth Medical Center to open the Community Care Center to 600 women for prenatal care," he explained. "That will reduce the need for ... referrals from the Community Care Center to the Downtown Health Plaza, thereby saving the Downtown Health Plaza ... \$2 million, and this is just the first year."

Plyler said he would also fight for the commissioners to once again provide funding for the health plaza.

## WSSU will begin enforcement on MLK

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem State University Police Department has begun radar speed enforcement on MLK Drive in the area of the WSSU campus. Officers will issue warnings for the first week, but beginning Nov. 6, officers will issue North Carolina Uniform Citations.

WSSU is taking this step because the expansion of the campus has resulted in resident and classroom facilities being located on both sides of MLK Drive, forcing increases in pedestrian traffic on campus. More than 800 faculty and staff, and nearly a 6,000-person student population cross MLK Drive several times a day. The high volume of pedestrians coupled with speeding vehicular traffic has resulted in pedestrian/vehicular accidents, near-misses and pedestrians being trapped in the middle of the road.

"Our officers have monitored vehicular speeds on MLK Drive periodically over the last month and they have frequently averaged in the 45-50 mph range. The posted speed limits is 35 mph," said WSSU Police Chief Willie Bell.



Photos by Kevin Walker

Members of the Big Four Choir make their way into the sanctuary.

### Big Four

uttered by the crowd. The choir was directed by local music legend Eddie Bines, a member of the last graduating class of Atkins High.

"This was easy because everyone likes each other," Bines said of fusing together the more than four dozen voices.

There was a time when the schools were extremely competitive among one another, especially on the football field and basketball court. But outside of sports, Big Four students always got along, Bines said. It is a lesson that he believes young people today should be exposed to.

"(Young people today) seem to be missing a lot of things we had back then," he said.

Foster said part of the reason the reunion was created was to try to instill some of those "Big Four values" in today's students.

"We saw all of these troubles in the schools," he said. "One of messages that we want to send is that we were disciplined in school and we survived."

The reunion does give back. Scholarships have been



Ralph Meadows, left, with Choir Director Eddie Bines.

presented as well as donations to schools and youth organizations.

The most memorable portion of the worship service was also the most heart-wrenching. Four popular Big Four alums who passed away since the '05 reunion were remembered during a candle-lighting service. The sanctuary went black for several minutes, the only light coming from four candles near the pulpit and smaller candles held by members of the choir. In the dark and silence, the crowd reflected on the many contributions of their departed friends: Anderson alum Donald Campbell; Atkins' Caroline

Shelton; Paisley's Cornetta Archie Hunt and James "Bro" Smith, also a Paisley grad.

"It was really emotional for a lot of us," Hampton said. "It seems like we just saw them ... now they are gone."

Bishop Edwin Allen Sr., a former Paisley football star who pastors a church in Thomasville, delivered the sermon at the service. The other members of the committee that organized the service are Doretha Crosby, Odessa Gaither, Robert Noble, Cheryl Philson, Wanda Reader, Clell Roseboro, Donald Scales, Georgia Smith and Steve Tillman.

### Angelou

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harder she used to say to me, "Sister, Momma is gonna step out on the word of God."

"I would look at that tall black woman and imagine her stepping up into the sky, nothing solid beneath her, but suns and moons and stars swirling all around her head, and novas and comets swishing past her body, her faith allowing her to step out on the word of God. I wrote a song about Momma because she planted both my soul and my feet in confidence in God.

You said to call on your name

and I'm calling;  
You said to trust in your word  
and I'm trusting;  
You said to lean on your arm  
and I'm leaning;  
I'm steppin' out on your word.

You said you would be my  
protection,  
Honor and glory, my Savior,  
Beautiful Rose of Sharon,  
I'm steppin' out on your word.

You said you would be my  
protection,  
Honor and glory, my Savior,  
Beautiful Rose of Sharon,  
I'm steppin' out on your word.

I'm steppin' out on your word,  
Steppin' out on your word.

I wish all young people could have grandparents or parents or relatives who could prepare them for this journey called life, the twisting rocky roads, the steep hills, and the low valleys.

I hope the readers will be reminded of their own Grandmothers and Grandfathers.

World-renowned poet and author Dr. Maya Angelou, the city's most famous resident, is the Reynolds professor of American studies at Wake Forest University.



### Senator Linda Garrou North Carolina State Senate

"Thank you for allowing me to serve you in the State Senate. Please don't forget to vote on November 7th and I hope you will support our outstanding Democratic Candidates."

32nd District  
P.O. Box 11843  
Winston-Salem, NC 27116  
Tel: (336) 922-6142  
lgarrou@lindagarrou.com

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## We're Going In The Wrong Direction Forsyth County Can Do Better

In the last 12 years property taxes on an average home in Forsyth County have gone up 30%. We've put thousands more of our school children in trailers. And government spending in Forsyth County has increased 41%. We're going in the wrong direction. But by changing our priorities we can invest more in education. Make sure our poorest citizens have access to healthcare. Recruit good paying jobs. And get our county going in the right direction again. Vote for change on November 7th because Forsyth County can do better by electing Ted Kaplan as our commissioner.

See Ted Kaplan's plan for education on our Web site  
**ForsythCanDoBetter.com**



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