

Passing the RCC Torch from Mother to Daughter

By William Nicoson

Though her name is Rose, she didn't expect a rose garden when she joined the Board of Governors of the Reston Community Center.

Jo Ann Rose for the last two years has steadfastly championed a North-side outreach of RCC's activities, focusing on the Fresh Value space at Lake Anne. Combining the skills of a financial lawyer and artist, she served as RCC's Treasurer and chaired its Finance Committee.

But her advocacy for RCC expansion met bitter obstruction from naysayers who sought to cut back rather than expand RCC's programs, even favoring the abolition of RCC entirely. She was personally attacked on reports of RCC accounts, which had been approved by Fairfax County, and viciously accused of a disqualifying conflict of interest in supporting activities involving the arts simply because she was an artist.

Ms. Rose suffers from incurable cancer and is resigning from the RCC Board to spend her time in less stressful pursuits. Without family prompting, her daughter, Karen Loehr, has stepped forward to carry on her mother's commitment to community service. Ms. Loehr is a professional graphic artist who, like her mother, understands both the arts and business. She is one of a slate of four candidates, dedicated to RCC outreach, who are running in the preference poll for RCC Governors this Saturday, September 17.

Others associated with Karen Loehr on the slate are: Terry Smith, a 15-year veteran of the Board of Governors and its former Chairman; Cathy Vivona, a successful business woman chosen as a Governor in last year's preference poll which unseated one of Ms. Rose's principal detractors; and Ruth Toxopeus, a highly regarded management consultant who has served with distinction on the board of the Reston Environmental Education Fund.

This slate has the publicly announced support of Virginia Senator Janet Howell, Delegate Ken Plum, former chair of the Fairfax County School Board Kohann Whitney, RCC Governors Ann Barbieri, Jan Bradshaw, Bob Kleinfeld, Jodie Gray and Chair Ruth Overton, Former RCC Chair Willie Hudgins, Reston Association President and former RCC Chair David Haas, Reston Association Vice President John Lovass, Reston Association directors Mary Ellen Craig and Reston founder Bob Simon, former Reston Association Presidents Joe Caravella, Tom Hartnett, and Suzi Jones, Reston Citizen's Association directors David Bobbitt, Courtney Park, Linda Pfof and James Traylor, Reston Chamber of Commerce President Phil Tobey, former Chamber of Commerce President Ann Rodriguez, former President of Reston Land Jim Cleveland and Reston activists Priscilla Ames, Susann Gerstein, Bonnie Whyte and Jane Wilhelm.

What is unprecedented in this roster of endorsements is the willingness of current RCC Governors to announce public support for a slate that includes two incumbent Governors and the

daughter of another against a slate that includes another incumbent, Vera Hannigan, who has consistently fought Jo Ann Rose on all issues. The RCC Governors, who best understand RCC's programs and potential, are sending the electorate a message: vote for Terry Smith, Cathy Vivona, Karen Loehr and Ruth Toxopeus. But the outcome is in doubt. The opposition slate has purchased a flock of television ads which may yet carry the day.

The issue will be decided on September 17th from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at RCC polling places established in all Reston village centers and at the Reston Regional Library.

William Nicoson is a former publisher of Connection Newspapers.