

Assembly Candidate Chloe Ann O'Neil

Hopkinton's Chloe Ann O'Neil sees her ascendancy to the 112th District's Assembly seat in Albany as the "next natural step".

Mrs. O'Neil, a Republican, has taken an unpaid leave of absence from her teaching position at Parishville-Hopkinton Central School to seek election to the assembly seat left vacant by the recent death of her husband, John O'Neil, in an automobile accident.

Having shared her husband's duties, met with his constituents and played an active role in helping to solve their problems for 12 years, she feels uniquely qualified to carry on in his job.

"I became involved with the political process many, many years ago when John first became Faculty Representative for all SUNY campuses," she said. "I have spent all the years since, not only involved with the political process and politicians but with the people, my husband's constituents.

"During John's time as an Assemblyman, we would try to visit every town in his district every two or three weeks. We made it open and apparent that we were there - for everybody. There are a lot of people, people with real problems, who either can't call you on the phone or won't call you on the phone. A lot of people see government as the enemy, basically. They think that 'government' means somebody who's out to get them. But if they see you on the street or in a store and you're actively asking their opinions, they'll talk.

"That is one thing I want to make very clear. I'm an advocate, not only for the North Country, but for every single individual in the North Country. Nothing makes you feel better than when you 'win' for somebody.

"I'm just amazed at the number of people who've come out to volunteer for this campaign. A lot of them are people we've helped over the years. Now, they're helping us. It's heartwarming."

Mrs. O'Neil has kept her husband's office functioning since his death, insuring that the people of his district have representation. Again, it seemed to her to be a 'natural step'.

"After my husband's death, I said to myself, 'You've got problems now, but so does everybody else.' I contacted Albany about keeping John's office open and I received their assurance that I could legally continue to do the job I've done for the last 12 years, that of volunteer worker," she said.

"When you marry somebody who goes into politics, you either have to stay completely away from his job or become a partner. I chose to become his partner. We felt the same way about things.

"Once when the kids were little, we were sitting around the dinner table and one of them asked John what a legislator was. John just said, 'A legislator is a public servant with the accent on the second word.' Over the years, we couldn't solve everybody's problems, but we did our best.

"No matter how the opposition may portray me, I am no stranger to political life."

In terms of the larger issues affecting her constituents, Mrs. O'Neil feels very strongly about the Adirondack Park Agency's attempts to legislate taxpayers who live within the 'Blue Line' and deplores the treatment that small business has received from Albany.

"The Adirondack Park needs to be regulated on a local level," she said. "There is a bill in the Assembly that would give the A.P.A. full control of everything that happens in the park. They would supersede the Department of Transportation (DOT) in



Chloe Ann O'Neil

matters like signage. They're going to charge fees based on the size of your dock, if you happen to live on a lake and the number of boats you have tied up to it.

"And this bill is sponsored by 18 New York City Assemblymen. I just think it's an outrage. They're allowing members of local boards to sit on the APA boards, but they won't be allowed any voting rights. That's a unique situation, wouldn't you say?"

"I think we've got to keep on screaming. Being in the minority in the Assembly is not that bad a thing because you don't owe anything to anybody. Your only allegiance, my only allegiance, is to the North Country.

"In terms of small business, there is nothing to encourage people to go into business in this state. Nothing. Taxes, fines and fees are driving people out. Government has just gotten too involved in people's lives.

Cuomo Snubs Lewis County

When Governor Cuomo issued his official proclamation setting February 16th as the date for the special election in the 112th Assembly District, he failed to cite the fact that part of Lewis County is included in the Assembly District, according to Randall Schell, the Republican Chairman of Lewis County.

The special election is required to fill the vacancy created by the death of Assemblyman John O'Neil.

Assemblyman O'Neil's widow, Chloe Ann, is the Republican - Conservative candidate in the special election. She is an educator and a community leader who "worked side-by-side with Assemblyman O'Neil to serve the people of the North Country," Schell noted.

"If Governor Cuomo can forget Lewis County so easily, how can we count on his hand-picked candidate to represent us," Schell questioned, referring to the Democratic candidate in the race, June O'Neill.

Mrs. O'Neill was the Governor's North Country representative and now serves as the Director Designate of his Office of Rural Affairs.

"The citizens of Lewis County deserve a representative who knows and understands our interests," said Schell. "That's why they should support Chloe Ann O'Neil. Unlike Governor Cuomo and his allies, Chloe Ann O'Neil will never forget us."

"I dealt with workman's compensation cases just about every day last month. I talked to one poor guy, a roofer, and he's paying 37% of his payroll into workman's comp.

"Anybody who's elected to this position has a moral obligation to help - to cut the red tape and the paperwork for the average citizen. A state agency can come into a small business and accuse them of wrong doing and it may only be a question of mistaken paperwork.

"That small businessperson will pay just to get them off of his back. We've helped a lot of people who've come to us, but I can't help but wonder how many people out there just gave up."

Mrs. O'Neil, if elected, would also call for major changes in the state's budget, specifically with regard to state aid for education.

"We've got to get our schools off the school aid roller coaster," she said. They get record increases one year and mid-year aid cuts the next. We need to adopt a multi-year commitment to school aid, one that gives our schools the ability to plan for the future. Local taxpayers have had to pick up an increasingly larger share of the costs of education."

Mrs. O'Neil feels that her record as a 12 year 'volunteer worker', her commitment to the community formerly served by her husband and her familiarity with his constituents make her the best qualified candidate for the 112th District seat.

"If being on the state's payroll is proof that you've been there, then I'm not on it," she said. "More importantly, I've been out on the street with the men, women and children of this district. When I say I'll help, they know I mean it. They know I'll work for them."

"I don't think people are interested in how professional a politician you are. People want people who care. It's time to humanize government."

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