

LOCAL / REGIONAL

Marie Mott seeks City Council Seat to Bring a New Vision to District 8

Marie Mott brings to the table what every city council needs, a visionary.

Community Activist Marie Mott, a resident of District 8, is seeking the vacant Chattanooga City Council seat. Her platform is designed to address neighborhood infrastructure, housing disparities, public safety, and economic opportunities across District 8.

Recently chosen by Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government as an Emerging Leader for 2022, Mott is optimistic about her ability to address long-standing issues plaguing District 8 effectively. She is excited to have an opportunity to collaborate with residents to bring lasting change.

"I want us all to experience the tangible results of a new vision where your zip code and wages don't determine your level of success. Electing leadership that will be responsive and accountable to every constituent must be our highest priority," said Marie. "As a community activist, I desire to take District 8 into a future filled with abundance and equal opportunity for everyone."

Mott's top priority is increasing access to affordable housing in her district.

"The cost of housing has put a strain on so many residents, and the end seems nowhere in sight. With many households spending more than one-third of income towards rent: saving to buy a home, sending your child to college,

or investing in your dreams feels nearly impossible," she said. "I join many residents who are highly concerned about this issue, and I intend to bring solutions to the council that won't require raising taxes."

In a recent announcement, Mott also highlighted the need to provide transparent and accountable public safety that includes care.

Mott believes and states, "Gun violence, domestic violence, and drug overdoses have increased since the pandemic. Opioid-related drug overdoses have skyrocketed during the pandemic."

Mott reminds us that a recent shooting on Milne Street at a club resulted in a father losing his life.

"It's not normal for parents to bury their children or for children to be raised without their parents," she said.

She visions the police focusing on violent crime and adopting a community-oriented approach. At the same time, other department resources should be allocated to address drug abuse, homelessness, and mental health crisis calls to 911.

She is definite that she will work to stop the hurting, stress, and survival mode in which families live without hope under her watch. Her work centers on all people having the opportunity to live in safe and decent communities.

Mott believes that ensuring better

economic opportunity can help reduce crime and allow District 8 constituents to break cycles of poverty.

"Now is the time to invest in our community by providing funding to small businesses and training to increase skills in residents," Mott said. "There is so much untapped talent within our district. Often, people lack the education, access, or financial resources to succeed. We must be dedicated to breaking down barriers for minorities and those who have historically experienced discrimination. The local economy is strengthened when our small businesses thrive, and households gain higher incomes."

In the months following last year's election, Mott never stopped running for the job. As we've seen, she continued to address the needs of her district. Last year, the Civic Engagement Committee of the NAACP organized to bring transparency about the allocation of American Rescue Plan Dollars for the black



community under Mott's leadership. She also highlighted her voter engagement efforts and advocacy to ensure a fair redistricting process at the city and county levels.

Mott knows that District 8 needs a progressive and energetic leader who will keep residents informed and make them a legitimate part of the decision-making process.

"I want to create a transparent office that seeks to meet the needs of over 20,000 constituents and not just a privileged few. I look forward to bringing forth a vision and igniting the dreams and talents of the next generation in District 8," she said.

Big 9 Roots Festival To Be Held April 9 & 10, 2022

Chattanooga, Tenn. -- The Big 9 Roots Festival is expanding to a two-day event!

On Saturday, April 9 and Sunday, April 10, the Bessie Smith Cultural Center will host the Big 9 Roots Festival. On Saturday, April 9 the event will take place from 2:00 pm until 11:00 pm on East ML King Boulevard between Lindsay Street and University Street. Musical artists will be performing throughout the day on the BlueCross BlueShield of TN Community Foundation Stage located at the Bessie Smith Cultural Center.

Closing out the night will be Sam Sims & Friends, featuring Kipper Jones. Sam Sims was born and raised in Chattanooga and has been a staple in R & B, Pop, Rock, & Jazz for over 25 years. Known for being one of the most versatile bassists in today's music, he has worked with musical giants such as

Michael Jackson, Mariah Carey, Justin Timberlake, Janet Jackson, Backstreet Boys, Whitney Houston, and many more. All along East MLK will be food and merchandise vendors selling great food, beer, local art, and various products while local musicians perform. The great merchants that are located on what once was known as "The Big 9" will be open and offering their various services and merchandise.

Sunday, April 10 from 2:00 pm – 7:00 pm will be Gospel on the Lawn at the Bessie Smith Cultural Center. Local gospel groups, quartets, and choirs will perform on the BlueCross BlueShield of TN Community Foundation Stage. MLK Boulevard will be closed between Lindsay Street and Houston Street and there will be food trucks selling food and drinks. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets and enjoy some great gospel music on the lawn of the Bessie.



This two-day event is presented by the Bessie Smith Cultural Center and has been developed to highlight and preserve Chattanooga's rich African American history, and to honor those who have made history and are continuing to make history.

Both days are FREE to attend and are family friendly. The Bessie Smith Cultural Center will have an art gallery on the lawn on Saturday, featuring art from local student who submitted their work for the Bessie Smith Cultural Center Art Contest.

There is still availability to be a sponsor or vendor for the Big 9 Roots

Festival. For more information contact the Bessie Smith Cultural Center at (423) 266-8658 or email pwilkes@bessiesmithcc.org.

Sponsors for the Big 9 Roots Festival include:

Platinum Sponsors – City of Chattanooga, G93, & Power 94

Elite Sponsor – EPB Fiber Optics, Lyndhurst Foundation, Benwood Foundation, & Coca Cola

Premier Sponsor – Tennessee Valley Federal Credit Union, Chattanooga Tourism Company, & Mary Walker

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RODDY: from front

and appointed to two terms on the Tennessee Board of Regents by Governors Bredesen and Haslam.

Howard was an active founding member, Trustee, and Treasurer of Transforming Faith Baptist Church. He was also a former member of Orchard Knob Missionary Baptist Church as Trustee and Chair of housing development corporation to construct a senior citizen apartment complex.

Howard was also a member of Omega Psi Phi and charter member of Gamma Pi Boule of Sigma Pi Phi.

Howard enjoyed playing tennis for over 50 years, as well as traveling and playing cards.

He was preceded in death by his parents Howard and Marie Roddy.

Howard leaves to cherish his memories, his beloved and devoted wife of nearly 50 years, Donna; sons, Howard of Nashville and John of Miami, FL; grandchildren, Dean Roddy, Honolulu Hawaii; Grant Roddy, Atlanta, Ga; and Kayli Roddy, Chattanooga; sister, Karen Roddy, Chattanooga; brother-in-law, Thomas Norwood, Chattanooga; sisters-in law, Marva (Richard) Campbell and Jeri Norwood, Franklin, TN; and special cousins, Jo Anne Collins, East Lansing, MI; and Earl Morton, Huntsville, AL; along with a host of other relatives and friends.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to the Howard Roddy Memorial Fund at the Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga, 1400 Williams St. Chattanooga, TN 37408/ cfcg.fcsuite.com; and Manker Patten Tennis Club, 100 Douglas St. Chattanooga, TN 37403, Attn: chatt_tennis_foundation (Howard Roddy Memorial) to provide tennis lessons for inner city children; and Transforming Faith Baptist Church, (Howard Roddy Memorial), PO Box 16543, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37416.

Mr. Roddy will lie in-state on April 15 at John P. Franklin Funeral Home. Visitation will be April 16,

12-1 pm at Phillips Temple CME Church, 1321 N Moore Rd Chattanooga, TN and a Celebration of Life Service to follow at 1:00pm. Interment in Hamilton Memorial Gardens, 5351 Highway 153 in Hixson.

Arrangements by John P. Franklin Funeral Home, 1101 Dodds Ave. 423-622-9995

GRAHAM: from front

success in my life, career-wise and personally."

BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee has partnered with East Tennessee State University to create BlueSky Tennessee. The collaboration will provide qualified Tennessee students the opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree in computing in just 27 months.

These students will also gain hands-on, real-world experience by learning and working at the BlueCross headquarters in downtown Chattanooga, progressing to paid internships and potential job offers as they develop their skills.

BlueCross and ETSU are placing a special focus on identifying and recruiting high-potential students from Hamilton County's most challenged high schools.

Tennessee has roughly 4,100 technology job postings per year and only 1,000 qualified graduates to fill them.

As student success manager of BlueSky Tennessee, Graham will develop, implement and coordinate support services and resources for the program.

Graham and BlueSky Executive Director Bradley Leon visited seniors at Chattanooga-area high schools this past December to notify them of their acceptance to the program's inaugural class of around 15 students this coming August.

As a child growing up in the inner city of Memphis, Graham knew she wanted to apply her talent for connecting with people, but wasn't quite sure what that looked like. After graduating high school, she took a leap, moving five hours away to attend the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga on an academic scholarship. There, her commitment to counseling students developed.

After graduate school at UTC, Graham spent 12 years working with Hamilton County Schools in counseling and student support roles, and eventually served as coordinator of community schools. She also worked with a nonprofit organization to mentor young mothers as they navigated parenting and high school.

She currently serves as a United Way Volunteer Advocate, a member of the Girls Leadership Summit steering committee, and sits on the board of the nonprofit GirlScout.

Graham says part of her life's assignment is planting seeds for student success.

"I have to be intentional in planting those seeds, watering them and helping

them grow into confident young adults," she says. "I see the amazing characteristics in others, and I want them to see their potential, as well. Working with that has put me in a place where, as long as I can continue to plant and water those seeds, I'm where I'm supposed to be."

WILLIE: from front

icle Media Group's Entertainment team.

Kitchens' show at 6 p.m. is a highlight of a packed slate of musical performances, which will kick off at 11 a.m. at the Aquarium's free all-day riverfront celebration.

Other musicians slated to perform include: Jasmine LaShea; soul artist and The Voice winner Chris Blue of Knoxville; Nashville-based pop singer Jonny Lucas; Robin Baker; Tiffany Coleman; Sydney and Brayden Guerrette; Sera Hill and Stephy J Moore.

With its opening on May 1, 1992, the Aquarium was the epicenter of a civic turnaround that transformed Chattanooga from a struggling, polluted manufacturing town into a bustling, tech-friendly hub of Southeastern tourism and outdoor recreation.

On April 30, the day before its official 30th anniversary, the Aquarium's celebration will honor the importance of public partnerships to its creation and continuing success.

The event will take place from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. on the Aquarium plaza and on the Chattanooga Green across Chestnut Street from the River Journey building.

"The Aquarium would not exist today without the vision and support of our community," said Aquarium President and CEO Keith Sanford. "Thanks to this city's belief in itself and willingness to dream big, the Aquarium has attracted millions of people to Chattanooga who can now appreciate how special our home really is."

In partnership with the Walk Run Pedal Jamz Festival, the celebration will commence at 8 a.m. with a 30-minute walk, followed by a 30-minute run and then a 30-kilometer bike ride along the riverfront.

At 10 a.m., the Chattanooga River Market will open. In addition to perusing stalls stocked with locally produced products and treats, attendees can participate in family activities and snack on offerings from various food trucks.

The evening will conclude with a fireworks display at 9 p.m.

In December 1999, Willie Kitchens

joined Samuel Gooden, Fred Cash and Vandy Hampton in the Impressions, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame rhythm and blues group that launched Curtis Mayfield's career.

Kitchens left the Impressions in 2002, and went on to work for Chattanooga's Bethlehem Center, where he served as the executive director of the Bethlehem Center Mass Choir and minister of music to the Bethlehem-Wiley United Methodist Church.

For more details on the Tennessee Aquarium's 30th anniversary Celebration, visit tnaqua.org/events/30th-anniversary-community-celebration/.

MARINE: from front

this joyous occasion was conducted at Coolidge Park in the Walker Pavilion.

Tyrone is a 1996 graduate of The Howard High School. In 1997, he enlisted in the Marine Corps and began his journey to forge his own path. Always rooted in family and community, he looks forward to establishing a non-profit organization to teach life skills, provide counseling and mentorship as well as provide scholarships and grants for college and skilled trades certifications for children and young adults in low-income families. "Sometimes, these kids just need hope and an opportunity. I get it. I was no different," says Hunt.

The newly retired Master Gunnery Sergeant Hunt added: "The lessons I've learned in the communities of Chattanooga, coupled with the skills I have learned as a Marine, have given me a well-rounded viewpoint of what is necessary to take control of challenging circumstances and become a valuable member to your family, community, and society. I look forward to giving back and sharing the skills and lessons I've learned."

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