

Friends, leaders celebrate Toni Carter

Written by Lydia Schwartz Contributing Writer
Monday, 28 June 2010 13:16



Friends and family gathered at a barbeque on Father's Day to wish Ramsey County Commissioner Toni Carter (District 4) a happy birthday and to begin fundraising for her reelection campaign.

Rory Koch, Legislative Assistant to State Rep. Joyce Peppin (R-32A), has recently filed to challenge Commissioner Carter for her seat in the November 2nd elections.

In attendance at the barbeque were Lt. Gov. candidate Robyn Robinson, former FOX 9 news anchor; DFL-endorsed candidate for MN House of Representatives District 65A, Jeremiah Ellis; and Commissioner Carter's son, St. Paul City Councilmember Melvin Carter III (Ward 1). "People often ask me if seeing my mother achieve so many great things has inspired me, that I could do the same. But in fact, it had quite the opposite effect. [Working so close with her] has made me realize that I could never do all of the things she has done," Councilmember Carter said.

Toni Carter was born in Birmingham, AL, but grew up in Cleveland, OH, before moving to Minnesota in 1971 to attend Carleton College. She is married to retired St. Paul Police Sergeant, and Save Our Sons co-founder, Melvin W. Carter, Jr. Prior to her election to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners, Commissioner Carter served as a member and chair of the St. Paul Board of Education.

First elected in 2005, she is the first African American ever to serve on a county board in Minnesota. Commissioner Carter currently serves as chair of the Association of Minnesota Human Services Policy Committee; of the Ramsey County's Legislative, Human Services, and Workforce Committee; and the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Stakeholder Committee. She also serves on the leadership teams of Ramsey County's Workforce Investment Board and the Ramsey County Children's Mental Health Collaborative.

A priority of Commissioner Carter has been the creation of new living-wage jobs with building

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projects such as restoring St. Paul's historic Union Depot and expanding the Roseville Library. She works as a local elected official to ensure that Ramsey County residents and businesses benefit from these opportunities.

Being active in community building for over thirty years, Toni has served on numerous community boards including the St. Paul Planning Commission, the Metropolitan Area Library Service Agency, the Walker West Music Academy, the West Side Community Health Center, the St. Paul YWCA, and the Jeremiah Program. She has received numerous awards for her work in the community, and in the arts and arts education, including an Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters from Concordia University-St. Paul.

Commissioner Carter has been working to implement strategic school, community, and intergovernmental partnerships for child safety and student achievement through the St. Paul Children's Collaborative and by advancing the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). As the JDAI co-chair, she has led the process to reduce the number of youth detained while maintaining public safety and is working to spread the initiative statewide. She is a long-time education activist and a co-founder of the Grandparent Volunteer Program at Benjamin Mays School. She also supports other community partnerships, such as Heading Home Minnesota/Ramsey, that keep county departments connected to our community and build capacity to support children and families. "By supporting community partnerships [and working] with our Ramsey County departments, I'm working to build capacity in neighborhoods to cost-effectively sustain the supports our children and families need," Commissioner Carter said.

Commissioner Carter has also been heavily involved in advocating and in the building of the Central Corridor Light Rail Line as a member of the Central Corridor Management Committee. She was able to successfully secure additional stations at Western, Victoria, and Hamline Avenues. Commissioner Carter has been working with residents, businesses, and jurisdictions along the corridor to give rise to a shared vision for the Central Corridor. She wants to create a service plan that enhances transit and light rail access for everyone, parking solutions that work, an integrated and comprehensive streetscape and public art design and planning, and construction and development to increase opportunity and prosperity for residents and businesses within the corridor area. Commissioner Carter has also been working to create quality affordable rental and owner-occupied housing in the area.

"I'll continue to focus on support for our businesses and neighborhoods while construction proceeds, and on resolving the remaining issues, such as parking, together... This endeavor must integrate a holistic, community-generated vision of a transit system and surrounding development that helps people—especially those currently in the corridor—get to good jobs, access the resources they need, explore new avenues, and remain connected to each other," she said.

Commissioner Carter is also a co-chair of the MN Human Services Performance & Outcomes Reform Steering Committee, which works to redesign critical services to achieve real results for real people: sustainability and the best value for property taxpayers. "I'll continue my work to redesign and support our strained Human Services system to achieve the results we want," she said.

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Commissioner Carter is committed to the delivery of efficient and effective county services, eliminating disparities in county services and systems, and to raising grassroots awareness of the county decision-making processes and its systems. She hopes to continue “to steward the resources [District 4 receives] from local property taxpayers and to maximize support from our state and federal government.”

You can contact District 4 Ramsey County Commissioner Toni Carter at (651) 266-8366 or at Toni.Carter@Co.Ramsey.MN.US.