

David J. Wright, 47, Was Local Artist; Former Bond Broker at Merrill Lynch

David John Wright, 47, of Westfield died suddenly on Tuesday, March 1, at his residence.

Kathleen O'Mara, 83

Kathleen O'Mara, 83, of Westfield died on Sunday, March 6, at Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center in Plainfield.

Born in New York City, she lived in Westfield since 1934.

Miss O'Mara retired in 1986 after 48 years as an administrative assistant for the United Screw and Bolt Co. in New York City.

She was a member of the Prayer Group and the Rosary Society at the Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church in Westfield.

She was predeceased by a sister, Mary A. O'Mara, in 1995, and by two brothers, Donald J. O'Mara, in 1981, and Arthur A. O'Mara, in 2001.

Surviving is a brother, William O'Mara.

A Funeral Mass was offered yesterday, Wednesday, March 9, at the Holy Trinity Church. Interment was at Fairview Cemetery in Westfield.

The Dooley Colonial Home, 556 Westfield Avenue in Westfield, was in charge of the arrangements.

Memorial donations may be made to the Westfield Rescue Squad, P.O. Box 356, Westfield 07091.

March 10, 2005

Theodore Wasilition, 55, Sears Employee; Past Commander of American Legion

Theodore J. Wasilition, 55, of Scotch Plains died on Sunday, March 6, at Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center in Plainfield.

Born in Summit, he was a lifelong resident of Scotch Plains.

Mr. Wasilition was employed at Sears in Watchung in a variety of positions for the past 37 years.

A United States Air Force veteran, he served in Guam and Okinawa from 1970 to 1974. He was a longtime member and past Commander of American Legion Post No. 209 in Scotch Plains.

Mr. Wasilition was a member of the Warren County Rod and Gun Club. He was predeceased by his parents, Theodore and Helen Wasilition.

Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, he grew up in South Africa. He had lived in Chicago, Ill. before relocating to Westfield in December of 1992.

Mr. Wright most recently was a self-employed artist in Westfield. Earlier, he had been a Bond Broker for Merrill Lynch in New York City. Before that, he worked for Investec Ernst in International Sales and Trading, also in New York City.

He graduated in 1988 from the University of South Africa and was a member of The Presbyterian Church in Westfield.

Surviving are his wife of 20 years, Deborah F. Wright; a son, Christopher David Wright, and a daughter, Isabelle Eastman Wright, both of Westfield; a sister, Patricia Egan of South Africa; a brother, Peter Wright of South Africa, and his mother, Joan Wright of South Africa.

A memorial service took place on Monday, March 7, in the Chapel of The Presbyterian Church in Westfield.

Arrangements were by the Gray Funeral Home, 318 East Broad Street in Westfield.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Heart Association, 208 West End Avenue, Bridgewater 08807 or to UNICEF at www.unicef.org.

March 10, 2005

Obituaries

Joseph Ruffini, 92, Owned Towne Lunch; Belonged to Brotherhood of Magicians

Joseph Ruffini, 92, of Westfield died on Friday, March 4, at Rahway Hospital.

Born in Rahway, he was a lifelong resident of Westfield.

Mr. Ruffini had been the owner of Towne Lunch in Westfield before retiring in 1975.

He was a member of the International Brotherhood of Magicians and the Senior Citizens at the Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church in Westfield.

Surviving are his wife, Rose Napolitano Ruffini; a son, Joseph

Ruffini, Jr. of Hickory, N.C.; a daughter, Pauline Roth of Westfield; five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

The funeral was held on Monday, March 7, at the Memorial Funeral Home, 155 South Avenue in Fanwood. A Funeral Mass followed at the Holy Trinity Church. Interment took place at Fairview Cemetery in Westfield.

Memorial donations may be made to the Westfield Rescue Squad, P.O. Box 356, Westfield 07091.

March 10, 2005

Board of Education Candidates' Forum

BOE Candidate Ormsby Cary Stresses the Need to Maintain Rigorous School Curriculum

Last week, the governors of 13 states, including New Jersey, announced that they were forming a coalition to improve high schools by adopting higher standards, more rigorous courses and tougher examinations. Although New Jersey is part of the coalition, Westfield parents know that we already have high standards and a rigorous curriculum.

That's why we live here!

In 2004, the Westfield high school graduation rate was 98.5 percent. And last year, 94.3 percent of our graduates continued their education. While we have much to be proud of in Westfield, I also know that we cannot afford to simply rest on our accomplishments. The world is changing quickly and dramatically.

If our schools are to meet the challenges of preparing today's young people for tomorrow's world, we need to constantly reevaluate the curriculum. In doing so, we must be committed to maintaining fundamental educational standards while being attentive to what is needed to give our children cutting-edge competencies that will help them get into the very best colleges and universities.

At the same time, when we evaluate the curriculum, we must recognize that not all students learn in

exactly the same way or benefit from taking the same coursework. Each child is unique.

The curriculum has to include skill-building coursework that prepares students for everyday life. It must have alternative educational programs for students who need more support. It must continue to offer English-as-a-Second Language programs, special resource centers, unique self-contained programs and out-of-district placements for those students who cannot be accommodated in our system.

The Board of Education oversees the review and updating of the curriculum. Every five years each curriculum is scrutinized by a team of teachers led by the subject supervisor to ensure that we are offering the most challenging courses in that subject area. Last year, 42 curricula were revised in grades K-12 and eight new courses were approved.

Ten years ago, my family moved to Westfield because of the school system. Today, I am running for the Board of Education because I want to continue to maintain a rigorous academic curriculum that prepares all of our youth to reach their highest potential and become fully productive, ethical and responsible citizens.

More Letters to the Editor

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President Bush Offering Deaf Ear To Town With Hand-Picked Audience

Editor's Note: The letter writer is a 2002 graduate of Westfield High School.

I am dismayed by your blithe statements that "and everyone seems to agree that (Social Security) needs to be fixed" and that Westfield citizens should "reflect on the President's message and to show him a warm reception."

Any reflection on the President's message and, indeed four years of miserable performance, give Westfield citizens good reason to throw President Bush out on his ear. Especially since the President is prepared to offer a deaf ear to the majority of Westfield citizens with his handpicked audience.

It seems he prefers an echo chamber. I can't blame him for avoiding Westfield's proud citizens too much. If I were determined to pass a completely unreasonable Social Security privatization plan, I would want to avoid confronting the truth. The stark reality of the President's proposal is evident and can be summed up in six points:

1. Social Security is not in need of a large overhaul at present. This is true in absolute terms and relative to the much more rapidly growing Medicare and Medicaid programs.
2. As OMB Director Joshua Bolton told the Senate Banking Committee on February 9, Social Security privatization is not an overhaul that addresses the so-called "solvency question."
3. Which is to say the President's tired solution doesn't address his lies about Social Security's health.
3. There exist no side benefits for

American citizens - like choice or increased wealth.

According to the President, the choice will be limited to "conservative mix of bonds and stock funds."

4. Editorial writer Michael Kinsley has pointed out that, mathematically, the President's plan can result in no new wealth.

5. The President's plan will require large "transition costs," aggravating the unified budget debt that his plan is supposedly meant to curtail.

6. The only reason left to eliminate one of the most popular and successful government programs in human history must therefore be ideological. And while President Bush may prefer to eliminate the government to keep faith with Ayn Rand and Ronald Reagan, I prefer to live in a world that rewards success and bases its decisions on logic and results.

Social Security is a success and will continue to be so as long as any future changes are made by honest brokers with the best interest of America in mind.

As a college student, I am glad Social Security will be there for me in retirement. The most dangerous threat to the existence of Social Security right now is the President and his Congressional lackeys like Rep. Mike Ferguson.

It would be a shame if we let the honor of the office of the Presidency overwhelm the logical and moral obligations to encourage policy that is good for our country.

Brian Levy
Westfield

John McGroarty, 55, Was State Manager For Healthcare Support Services Network

John Vincent McGroarty, 55, died on Friday, March 4, in Foley, Ala.

Born in Westfield, the son of Joseph A. and Margaret K. McGroarty, he lived in Alabama since 1976.

A 1967 graduate of Westfield Senior High School, Mr. McGroarty earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Baldwin Wallace College in Berea, Ohio.

He relocated to Alabama as a home buildings store supplies manager for Moore-Handley Homecrafters Co. Later, he was the Alabama State Manager for a healthcare support services network.

Mr. McGroarty was a lifelong member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Westfield and was Senior Warden and Building Committee Chairman

for St. Francis-at-the-Point Traditional Episcopal Church in Point Clear, Ala.

Surviving are his parents, of Westfield, and two brothers, Mark D. McGroarty of Oklahoma City, Okla. and J. Stanton McGroarty of Rockford, Ill.

A memorial service was held on Monday, March 7, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, with the Reverend Andrew Hamersley officiating. Interment will take place in The Garth at St. Paul's Church.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Diabetes Association, P.O. Box 2680, North Canton, Ohio 44720.

March 10, 2005

Gary McCready Launches Campaign for BOE Seat

WESTFIELD - Gary McCready formally announced his candidacy for the Westfield Board of Education this past week.

Mr. McCready works in Jersey City for an international bank as a technology manager, and has previously worked for Cantor Fitzgerald/eSpeed, the American Stock Exchange and TIAA-CREF. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Computer Science from Columbia College.

The candidate and his family have lived in Westfield for 10 years in both the Wilson and Franklin Elementary School districts. His son, Ben, attends Roosevelt Intermediate School, while Madeline and Charlie attend Wilson, where his wife, Jane, has been involved in many in-classroom activities.

Mr. McCready's platform will focus on a few key areas that he feels are critical to maintaining both the high educational standards of Westfield's schools and insuring that the community's tax dollars are well spent.

"Westfield's excellent educational programs must not only be maintained, but continually analyzed and improved at all levels, especially when they need to integrate new research sources such as the Internet and computer presentation technologies. The current five-year curriculum review process may not be often enough. Westfield also needs to track its achievements

against other similar districts in areas such as AP course passing rates and admission to selective colleges," he said.

"I feel the board needs to increase public involvement in the budget process, including long range planning and funding issues," he noted.

"Finally, I would bring to the board my experience as a manager of technology, which is the budget's largest area of discretionary spending. The district's technology resources cannot only be used in the classroom, but also to improve the district's website, and to allow both teachers and community members to share their expertise with the schools. I'll be focusing on those areas in more detail in future issues of *The Leader*, and on my website," Mr. McCready said.

"I would like to take a first step of using technology to encourage community participation with the School Board by asking Westfield residents to visit my Website, www.McCready.com, where I have more information about my platform and a link to a survey. The survey's goal is to collect information and ideas that I would consider if elected. If respondents leave their contact details on the survey, I may reach out to them later when I solicit the community's opinions on issues before the board," he said.

Survey results, which will be reported anonymously, will be released prior to the Tuesday, April 19 election.

Dorry Discusses Key Issues In Run For Westfield BOE

WESTFIELD - Steven Dorry, a candidate for the Westfield Board of Education, this week addressed some of his thoughts on issues impacting the local school district.

"Rising costs and decreasing state aid resulted in continued over-dependence on the local property tax levy," Mr. Dorry explained.

In addition, he said, the Budget Cap Law (S-1701) "was hastily enacted" in Trenton.

"The legislation presents an impediment to long-term planning and cash flow issues for the Westfield district and districts around the state," Mr. Dorry said.

He said that since 2001, state aid to Westfield has declined from 7.59 percent to 6.26 percent, with a budget that has increased from \$58,340,352 to a projected \$72,817,481 for this current school year.

"This leaves the local property tax levy as the only source of additional funding. Certain expenditures such as salaries and insurance continue to rise every year," he remarked.

"Enrollment in our schools is projected to rise by an additional 330 students over the next three years. Aging facilities, some in excess of 50 years old, are in need of repair. Compounding the increase in costs and decrease in state aid is the budget caps imposed by S-1701," he continued.

In addition, the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act, enacted in 2000 to provide \$8.6 billion to use over a 10-year time period to improve schools

around the state, has seen on average 45 percent construction overruns and is projected to run out of funds before the end of this year.

"All of this translates into less money for our school district and greater reliance on our local property taxes," Mr. Dorry said. "There must be accountability and tighter control of state spending in order to achieve true property tax reform and not jeopardize the excellence that our district has achieved."

Mr. Dorry pledged to work with local legislators to reform the state funding allocation to provide for more sales and income tax dollars to be returned to the district and alleviate the burden on the local property taxpayers.

He also proposes that the district invest in developing special needs programs within the district, noting that the district currently sends 52 special needs students out-of-district at a cost of over \$3,000,000, or approximately \$60,000 per student.

He supports the continued expansion of the curriculum, particularly college preparation at the high school level, and access to technology, the arts and athletics.

Mr. Dorry said the district must continue to provide a learning environment free from the distractions of drugs.

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Our President Is Full of Ideas, But Not Good Ones, Says One Protester

There were 1,500 people invited to President Bush's "town meeting" to hear his ideas on privatizing our Social Security System. Isn't it ironic that this week it was reported that the total number of United States soldiers killed so far in the Iraq War is also 1,500? I wonder if any of the 1,500 well-connected or well-heeled invitees thought of that as they filed in to hear their President present another of his grand plans for our country to implement.

His judgment has been wrong before. Engaging in an ill conceived, ill planned war to capture Saddam and locate weapons of mass destruction (which were not there) has only exacerbated the problem of terrorism in the Middle East, with over 18,000 Iraqi civilians killed.

The United States will be years paying for the messy foreign policies the Bush administration has created. He was wrong to start this war, so why would he be right now about correcting our ailing Social Security system? Granted, Social Security needs mending, but not his way. Having the government give "guidelines" on

what stocks to buy is not my idea of true capitalism. It might help out Wall Street, but could breed more corruption on a grand scale.

I gladly joined the hundreds of protesters during Friday's visit by President Bush and his entourage, including sharp shooters on the roof of the Armory. I was proud to join forces with New Jersey Citizen Action, ACORN, an Atheists group, the AFL-CIO, a Rainbow group, mothers, fathers, senior citizens, and even teenagers, as we let our voices be heard.

Unfortunately, the police and SWAT team kept us far away from Westfield's "town meeting," so the President could not hear us; not that he would listen. You see, I lived in Texas for 18 years and I learned an expression there: "You can always tell a Texan, but you can't tell him much." Unfortunately, this is how our President is, full of ideas, but not good ones.

Rachel Manning
Westfield

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BALLOONING...Ann Ormsby Cary, candidate for the Westfield Board of Education, spends time at the Rotary's Pancake Breakfast blowing up balloons with high school students. Pictured, left to right, are: Front row, William Cary, Stacey Perlman and Charles Cary, and back row, Steve Pazzdro, Sarah Gerber, Monica Sull, Ann Ormsby Cary, Becky Cass and Justin Chou.