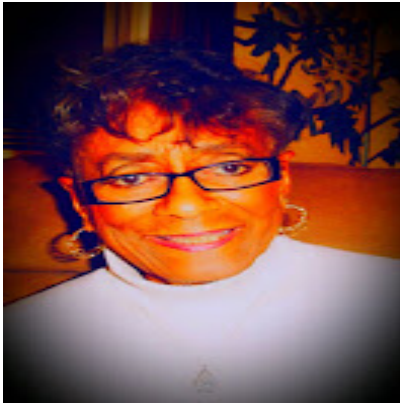


Written by Kathy

Tuesday, 01 August 2017 04:00 - Last Updated Thursday, 03 August 2017 01:10



CLEVELAND URBAN NEWS.COM-EAST CLEVELAND, Ohio-Black women educators of greater Cleveland held a fundraiser for Una H.R. Keenon, one of five declared candidates for the Sept. 12 primary election for East Cleveland mayor, at the Cleveland Heights home of David and Dr. Mary Rice on last Saturday, Rice a retired Cleveland schools principal and a member of the East Cleveland Board of Education whose home sits in the area of Cleveland Heights where the students attend East Cleveland schools.

Keenon is also endorsed by the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party its executive director, Lillian Sharpley, said in a press release to Clevelandurbannews.com and Kathywraycolemanonlinenewsblog.com

The primary election for East Cleveland mayor and select city council seats is Sept 12 and

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Keenon is among four Democrats on the ballot.

The winner will face Green Party candidate and activist Devin Branch in the Nov 7 general election, and the only woman running for mayor.

A former educator, retired East Cleveland judge, current president of the East Cleveland Board of Education and the former president and current vice president of the Black Women's PAC that she founded decades ago, Keenon told Clevelandurbannews.com and

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at Saturday's fundraiser that she has what it takes to be mayor, including "proven experience and proven leadership."

Among the dignitaries in attendance were East Cleveland City Council members Nathaniel Martin and Barbara Thomas, East Cleveland Board of Education Vice President Eve Westbrooks, East Cleveland Public Library Board of Trustee Member Zakee Ameer Rashif, former East Cleveland councilman Charles Bibb Sr., the Rev Lorenzo Norris, who is senior pastor of Concord Baptist Church in Cleveland and president of the Cleveland Clergy Alliance, and the Rev. Benjamin Gohlstin of Heritage Baptist Church in Cleveland, the husband of attendee Elaine Gohlstin, president of the Black Women's PAC, and president and CEO of the Harvard Community Services Center in Cleveland.

"We need to show up and show out," said East Cleveland Councilwoman Barbara Thomas in urging Keenon supporters to rally others to vote for Keenon.

Other educators there included former Cleveland schools chief academic officer Dr. Livesteen Carter, former Cleveland schools elementary school principal Dr. Donna Kolb, teacher Sandy

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Patterson, and Meryl Tolbert Johnson, a retired Cleveland schools teacher and current member of the state board of education.

"We need to pay attention to the cities that border Cleveland Heights like East Cleveland," said Dr. Kolb, a Cleveland Heights resident.

Some East Cleveland residents were also in attendance.

"I am glad that Una Keenon is running for East Cleveland mayor, our city needs good leadership," said Carmen Dortin, an East Cleveland resident.

It was the second fundraiser for mayor for Keenon, a former social worker and school teacher who founded the first Black female law firm in Ohio before she was ultimately elected judge, the first fundraiser of which was held this summer in East Cleveland at her and her husband Coy's home.

A Cleveland suburb, East Cleveland is roughly 99 percent Black, has a median household income of some \$20,000, and is broke.

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In addition to Keenon and Green Party candidate Devin Branch, the other mayoral candidates, all of them Black like Keenon and Branch, are former councilman Mansell Baker, Dana Hawkins Jr, and current mayor Brandon King, the former council vice president who, per the city charter, was elevated to mayor after voters last year recalled then mayor Gary Norton and then council president Thomas Wheeler.

King is a Norton and Wheeler ally.

Keenon highlighted a 10-point plan, a core aspect of her political platform that includes jobs and community development, fiscal responsibility, and housing and safety.

Lucille Short, a Cleveland schools grandmother and great grandmother who was at Saturday's fundraiser, said she did not personally know Keenon but was impressed with her demeanor when Keenon was a judge and Short accompanied her daughter to court in East Cleveland.

"How people treat you can leave an impression," said Short, 81, and once a key parental figure relative to the now defunct Cleveland schools desegregation court order

. "She [Keenon] was fair with my daughter when my daughter appeared in her courtroom, and she did not talk down to her."

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Kathy Wray Coleman, editor-in-chief, and who trained for 17 years at the Call and Post Newspaper in Cleveland, Ohio. We interviewed former president Barack Obama one-on-one

when he was campaigning for president. As to the Obama interview,

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