

# Mullery tackles crime, neighborhood livability, jobs

Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-Mpls) may be a newcomer to the Minnesota Legislature, but he is not new to Minnesota politics. The Minneapolis native has worked on about 100 DFL campaigns over the past 20 years.



Rep. Joe Mullery

All that experience paid off when former District 58A Rep. Jim Rice decided not to seek re-election last year. Mullery campaigned for the DFL primary election with Rice's endorsement. Rice, however, passed away before the November general election after serving in the Legislature for 26 years. "People are constantly asking me what it is like to be filling Jim Rice's shoes," Mullery said. "It's impossible. I don't think anybody could do that."

Mullery's district is an area of mostly working class neighborhoods in the northwestern corner of Minneapolis. There, Mullery grew up in the Victory neighborhood where he still lives. His parents were both school teachers. His father taught at Henry High School for 39 years. A scholarship helped Mullery attend St. Thomas Academy. From there, he went on to the University of Minnesota for his undergraduate and law degrees.

After working a few years with a law firm, Mullery set up his own practice in downtown Minneapolis. He handles a wide range

of civil law cases with a specialty in real estate law. He has served as chair of the Civil Litigation Section of the Hennepin County Bar Association.

Since becoming involved in DFL politics in 1974, Mullery said he "served as district chair a couple of times and on the state DFL Central Committee for 16 years." One of the campaigns Mullery led was for the Quality Education Coalition, a group of reform-minded DFL candidates that took over the Minneapolis School Board a few years ago.

Mullery said that he had not intended to seek office last year. "When he [Rice] announced that he wouldn't run, I had to make a decision quickly because I wasn't planning on it. I went to the DFL convention along with three other candidates, but nobody was endorsed," he said.

The campaign set in motion a flurry of activity for the busy lawyer. "For the next few months I was campaigning and, at the same time, trying to finish as many of my legal cases as possible," he said.

Mullery won the DFL primary in September and went on to take 74 percent of the vote in the general election.

He said that even though his district has not seen a lot of violence, the top five issues during the campaign were "Crime, crime, crime, crime, and crime. In some areas there are a lot of drug houses and noisy parties. Two years ago there were a number of car arsons in one area."

Senior issues and education are two other concerns important to District 58A voters, Mullery added. "I ran into a number of people who said they would be moving when their kids got to junior high. Minneapolis grade schools still have a pretty good reputation but not the junior highs."

Welfare also comes up as an issue in the district. "There is a pretty widespread feeling that the present system encourages anti-social behavior," Mullery said. "The people most strongly against welfare are those working two jobs to make ends meet. Overall, most people feel that they could go along with welfare reform if there also is money for child care and training."

Mullery also said he would like to see neighborhoods get more power to deal with problem properties, landlords, and tenants, and is working on legislation to that effect.

— Steve Compton

## District 58A

**Population:** 32,114

**Largest city:** Minneapolis

**Counties:** Hennepin

**Location:** northwestern Minneapolis

**Top concern:** "In addition to crime, there are still a lot of working people and union concerns in my district—concerns about jobs, pensions, livable wage, minimum wage, retraining programs, workplace safety, and replacement workers."

— Rep. Joe Mullery

### Continued from page 16

Snowmobile registration fees would increase from \$30 to \$45 for three years and temporarily increase the amount of state gas tax revenues designated for snowmobile-related purposes. During fiscal year 1998, 1 percent — up from the current 0.75 percent — of gas tax revenues would be earmarked for snowmobile trails and enforcement.

Also, the bill would appropriate \$1 million annually in 1997, 1998, and 1999 for grants to improve snowmobile trails across the state.

Both bills now move to the Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance Committee.

## Hauling sports toys

Outdoor enthusiasts would be able to haul a bit more on the highway, under a bill approved March 24 by the House Transportation and Transit Committee.

HF1111, sponsored by Rep. Charlie Weaver (R-Anoka), would allow a trailer carrying a motorcycle, snowmobile, or all-

terrain vehicle to be pulled at the back of a three-vehicle combination.

Current law allows such combinations only when the front vehicle is a pickup truck, the second is a camper, and the third is a boat trailer. The combination cannot exceed 60 feet in length.

Weaver's bill would simply expand the limits on what can be carried on the trailer at the back of the combination. The bill would make Minnesota's law more consistent with those in neighboring states.

The bill now moves to the House floor.