

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Sonya Healy
240-777-7970

Nancy Floreen Elected as New Montgomery County Council President Valerie Ervin Elected as Council Vice President, Giving Council Two Female Officers for First Time in 14 Years



Friends of Valerie Ervin
P.O. Box 7338
Silver Spring, MD 20907
301-466-3988 phone
www.ValerieErvin.com

ROCKVILLE, Md., December 1, 2009—The Montgomery County Council on Tuesday, Dec. 1, elected Nancy Floreen (D-At large) to a one-year term as Council president. Councilmember Valerie Ervin (D-District 5) was elected to a one-year term as vice president. They combine to give Montgomery's Council two female officers for the first time since the 1995-96 term.

Council President Floreen, who was first elected to the Council in 2002 and now chairs the Council's Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment Committee, succeeds Phil Andrews as president. Council Vice President Ervin, the first African American female elected to the Council, was elected in 2006 and now chairs the Council's Education Committee.

Council President Floreen also is a member of the Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee. She is vice chair for Transit of the National Association of Counties Transportation Steering Committee, and previously chaired the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' Climate Change Steering Committee and its Air Quality Committee. She also serves on the Maryland Department of Environment's Air Quality Control Advisory Council. She is on the board of directors of the Jewish Council on Aging, Habitat for Humanity and the Strathmore Hall Foundation.

Council President Floreen served as Mayor of Garrett Park and as a member of the Montgomery County Planning Board.

The Councilwoman is a longtime champion of transportation and transit. In 2004, she co-sponsored a \$150 million transportation package to accelerate several state transportation and transit projects. In addition, she pushed to buy more buses, add new bus routes, extend bus hours and reduce fares to encourage transit use. She led the charge to build a new garage at the Glenmont Metro and to accelerate planning for several new County roads.

Councilmember Floreen also is an advocate for affordable and workforce housing. She authored significant Council legislation enhancing Montgomery County's nationally recognized moderately priced dwelling unit (MPDU) housing program. She co-sponsored the development of the workforce housing initiative and the creation of a dedicated fund for housing initiatives.

Council President Floreen has advocated for education and literacy. She chaired the Girls in Technology Task Force, which identified approaches for closing the gender gap in technology education in Montgomery County. She was a leader in the expansion of all-day kindergarten to all County schools and co-sponsored the legislation to require that a portion of the recordation tax be reserved for school capital projects and educational technology for Montgomery College. She advocated moving up the construction schedule of the flagship Rockville Library and expanding the scope of the Gaithersburg Library. In 2005, she called for the addition of \$2 million to the library system's operating budget for more books on the shelves and improved services.

Council President Floreen identified the economy as the top priority for her presidency.

“This County is facing a reality check,” she said. “Our unemployment rate is higher than it has been in our recorded history. Our citizens have less with which to pay their bills, so we have less revenue to pay the County’s bills. Anybody who balances a checkbook knows that we must make sacrifices and tighten our belts. Our challenges are big this year, but they aren’t bigger than our commitment and our ability to solve them.

“This Council will be making important decisions over the next year that will define this County’s economic future. We must make sure that master plans we approve for the Gaithersburg West and White Flint areas fit with what Montgomery County has long been about—being the economic engine of Maryland while also making sure that the residents who already live and work here still are able to maintain the quality of life that makes Montgomery County such a great place. We need to have schools beyond compare, outstanding transportation options and a sense of place that will make current and future generations feel that there are few better choices when it comes to finding a place to live, or finding a place to establish a business, than Montgomery County.”

Councilmember Ervin’s District 5 includes Kensington, Silver Spring, Takoma Park and Wheaton. In addition to chairing the Education Committee, she serves on the Council’s Management and Fiscal Policy Committee, which conducts budget reviews and program oversight for various county departments and offices.

“As a single mother who has raised two sons, I know what it is like to balance competing priorities during difficult times,” said Councilmember Ervin, who represents District 5, which includes Kensington, Silver Spring, Takoma Park and Wheaton. “While we all must tighten our belts during this unprecedented financial downturn, I am certain that we will continue to provide our residents with the essential services that make Montgomery County a magnificent place to call home.

“I am confident that this Council will continue to provide resources for education, public safety and safety net services that our residents rely on each day. I will work with Council President Nancy Floreen to rise to the challenge and work to provide a force of stability on the County Council. I know that by working together we can continue to achieve great things.”

A former member of the Montgomery County Board of Education, Councilmember Ervin has continued to be an advocate for the interests of working families and improving the lives of children. As a result of her work, the Council created the Universal Preschool Implementation Work Group to determine how the County will implement the state’s recommendation that universal preschool should be provided to all 4-year-old children by 2014. In addition, she has advanced additional funding for preschool programs to increase the number of children served in community-based programs.

Councilmember Ervin has worked to make sure that children have proper nutrition by promoting the County’s summer food program and expanding access to universal breakfast. Her leadership on this issue resulted in a 30 percent increase in the number of needy children eating lunch during the summer months.

Councilmember Ervin has spearheaded cross-cutting efforts to close the achievement gap by working with the county executive, president of the school board and the superintendent of schools to create the Kennedy Cluster Project. The goal of this project is to identify and address the underlying causes of the achievement gap and to get government departments and schools to work collaboratively to provide a safety net for children.

Councilmember Ervin was the lead sponsor of the County's Prevailing Wage Law that requires contractors and subcontractors to pay prevailing wages to workers on County construction projects. Over the past two years, she has taken the lead in working to find a long-term solution for the future of Sligo Creek Golf Course.

The last time the Council had two female officers was for its 1995-96 term when Marilyn Praisner was president and Gail Ewing was vice-president. The only other term in which both officers were female was 1980-81 when Ruth Spector was president and Elizabeth Scull was vice president.

###