



LEADING LADY

NEW CITY
COUNCILWOMAN
NANCY PYLE
STRESSES IDEAS,
ACCOUNTABILITY,
AND FISCAL
RESPONSIBILITY

Personal mementos in Nancy Pyle's office atop City Hall provide valuable insight into the mind and character of San Jose's new District 10 councilwoman. Children's photos share space with cards from well-wishers and a plaque that reads "Friendship isn't a big thing—it's a million little things."

Displayed prominently on one shelf is a framed photo of Seabiscuit. The photograph, a gift from her husband, Roger, shows the 1938 race that made the small, mixed-breed horse famous and forever changed America's perception of what it takes to be a winner. Pyle loves the photo, as well as the movie *Seabiscuit*, which she has seen four times.

"Every time I see it, I find it extremely inspiring," she says. "I'm a sucker for the underdog."

Tucked into another shelf is a book entitled *Lincoln on Leadership*. It is no coincidence that Pyle admires this self-made man. Like Abraham Lincoln, she came from a humble background, overcame great odds to get an education, and endured several failed attempts before gaining public office.

Pyle's victory in last November's run-off race against Rich De La Rosa was her third try at gaining the seat held for 10 years by Pat Dando, who left office due to term limits. The first two campaigns taught Pyle a few things.

"My third campaign was not only hard-fought, but more reflective than the previous two," she says. "We used more strategy, and we attracted exceptional people. We also did outreach on a consistent basis—I knocked on a lot of doors. This approach is very inefficient, but very rewarding."

Petite, impeccably dressed, well-spoken, and warm, this 67-year-old retired schoolteacher now looks and feels right at home in the office once occupied by her predecessor. But getting to this point in her life has not been easy.

Pyle is no stranger to hard times or hard work. She is the oldest of four children, all of whom were required to help out on the family farm outside Syracuse, New York.

"One day I looked out the kitchen window and saw our entire crop of sugar beets wash away in a rainstorm," she says. "Back then, that was our cash crop—I could see little dollar bills going down that hill."

At age 11, to help her family make ends meet, Pyle took a job as a cleaning girl for a local storekeeper. From age 16 through high school, she worked six days a week at a Syracuse department store, riding the bus an hour each way, every day.

BY FRANCINE
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