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## Responses from Ward 3 candidates (in alphabetical order, by party)

### Sam Brooks (Democrat) <http://brooks2006.com>

#### 1. Name the two biggest challenges facing your Ward, and briefly explain how you would work to solve them. (Maximum 100 words)

The biggest challenge is facing our Ward is undoubtedly our failing school system. In order to make the necessary changes, we must move beyond the status quo and embrace new ideas and new leadership. I will fight to give principals more autonomy and control over their budgets and I will seek to create an independent school construction authority to more effectively manage school modernization efforts. Another critical issue is the need for hands-on, active leadership to provide first-rate constituent services. That's why I've pledged to be a full-time Councilmember and to hold Saturday Office Hours 50 weeks a year.

#### 2. How has your Ward changed since you moved into it (or in the past 10 years)? Explain whether you feel the change has been good or bad for the community, and why. (Maximum 100 words)

Over the last decade, our Ward (and our City) has seen significant improvement in a number of areas. Many basic city services, for instance, have improved significantly under Mayor Anthony Williams – from a more efficient DMV to regular trash collection. Yet the condition of our public school system continues to be incredibly poor – an issue that impacts so many city issues – and the DC Council, the legislative body that appropriates the budget of DC Public Schools, continues to take a hands-off approach to school policy. I believe that needs to change.

#### 3. Name two specific skills or experiences that make you uniquely qualified to represent your Ward on the City Council. (Maximum 100 words)

As the only lifelong Washingtonian in the race for Ward 3 Council, a veteran of Democratic politics, and a former Council staffer, I bring an in-depth knowledge of the city – and its political environment – to the job.

My experience working as a staffer for Councilmembers Adrian Fenty and Jim Graham has given me a tremendous understanding of what it takes to deliver top-notch constituent services – from repaving broken streets to fixing broken street lamps. My service on the DC Democratic



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State Committee has also helped me develop citywide relationships that will serve my constituents well when I'm on the Council.

**4. Name a political figure (either local or national) who you greatly admire and explain why. (Maximum 100 words)**

Bill Bradley, a former US Senator, Presidential candidate, and my former boss (I worked for his campaign from 1999-2000), has always been someone I greatly admire. Bill Bradley tackled the big issues -- particularly problems others thought were too tough or too complex. He was a tireless public servant -- from long hours in his Senate office to traveling his state by foot each summer. And he wasn't afraid to break from the status quo -- even if it meant taking a risk and bucking the conventional wisdom.

**5. Fill in the following blanks (no more than two sentences):**

**a) The most recent book I read and enjoyed was** Ask Not: The Inauguration of John F. Kennedy and the Speech That Changed America (by Thurston Clarke).

**b) My favorite television show/movie is** Entourage.

**c) In my spare time I love to** play golf.



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**Mary Cheh (Democrat) <http://www.marycheh2006.com>**

**1. Name the two biggest challenges facing your Ward, and briefly explain how you would work to solve them. (Maximum 100 words)**

The biggest challenges facing the Ward are working to fix our neglected and degraded infrastructure---our schools, libraries, community centers, and recreational facilities---and insuring the delivery of high quality services including education, emergency services, and environmental protection. To meet these challenges, we need to put our finances in order---working to have the federal government treat us fairly, properly collecting taxes, entering into advantageous public/private partnerships, and ending our sloppy contracting and procurement practices. And the Council must exercise vigorous oversight over all agencies to see that they are adhering to high performance based standards.

**2. How has your Ward changed since you moved into it (or in the past 10 years)? Explain whether you feel the change has been good or bad for the community, and why. (Maximum 100 words)**

I have lived in the Ward over 26 years. In the last ten years, we have emerged from a very bleak period when the City was near bankruptcy and services were abysmal. This affected the Ward, as parents fled the public schools and others moved out entirely. To the good, we have greatly improved our economic standing and some, but only some, of our services have improved. But we have a long way to go. Moreover the Ward has not profited from the energy and smart growth/environmental possibilities of redevelopment and investment in the City.

**3. Name two specific skills or experiences that make you uniquely qualified to represent your Ward on the City Council. (Maximum 100 words)**

I have a lifetime of experience as an educator, lawyer, prosecutor, and mediator and have deep roots in my community. The hallmark of my career is my law reform work. I've served as special counsel to a major Council investigation of police and helped produce model legislation that protects citizens' rights and gives police clear guidance. I'm the only candidate who has actually exercised legislative oversight of a DC Department. I've written laws to protect the District's animal populations, strengthened civil rights laws here and abroad, enlisted students in many public interest projects, and authored proposals for criminal justice reforms.



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**4. Name a political figure (either local or national) who you greatly admire and explain why. (Maximum 100 words)**

My favorite political figure, in the modern era, is Robert Kennedy. He was a crusading Attorney General, a fierce defender of civil rights, and someone who understood human frailty and suffering. He fired my interest in politics when I was in high school and, after traveling hours on a bus to go to my first political rally, I knew I had found a hero.

**5. Fill in the following blanks (no more than two sentences):**

**a) The most recent book I read and enjoyed was:** "Guns, Germs, and Steel," by Jared Diamond.

**b) My favorite television show/movie is:** "Glory"

**c. In my spare time, I love to:** spend time with my family including my cats, run or bike, and read the paper from one end to the other without a family member making off with some of the sections.



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**Erik Gaull (Democrat) <http://www.Gaull2006.com>**

**1. Name the two biggest challenges facing your Ward, and briefly explain how you would work to solve them. (Maximum 100 words)**

Education and public safety are the two biggest challenges in Ward 3.

We need to fix the schools in all eight Wards of this city so they offer our kids an education in which parents, colleges, and employers believe. My four-point plan calls for giving the Mayor control of DCPS, creating a special education infrastructure, improving principal recruitment and giving principals more control of their schools, and implementing best practices from urban school systems that work.

I will use my substantial expertise in public safety to ensure our fire, police, and EMS are nothing less than top-notch.

**2. How has your Ward changed since you moved into it (or in the past 10 years)? Explain whether you feel the change has been good or bad for the community, and why. (Maximum 100 words)**

The proliferation of “McMansions” is the most notable change and concern in Ward 3 since I bought my house. I believe the McMansions have disrupted the aesthetic appeal of many residential neighborhoods and have unnecessarily driven up the tax assessments of nearby properties. Part of the problem is a zoning code that has been interpreted in varying ways. We need a zoning code that is not as open to subjective interpretation and which ensures that new development takes into account the size and scale of existing structures while allowing property owners to maximize their ability to develop their land.

**3. Name two specific skills or experiences that make you uniquely qualified to represent your Ward on the City Council. (Maximum 100 words)**

I have 26 years of public service which includes not only senior positions in local, state, and federal government, but also “dirt-under-the-fingernails” positions as a paramedic, firefighter, police officer, park ranger, and citizens’ association president. I have delivered services on the front lines in all eight Wards of this city, and I have a District-wide vision as a result. I will put my senior-level and front-line experience to work on the D.C. Council to provide a “reality check” on the D.C. Government.



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**4. Name a political figure (either local or national) who you greatly admire and explain why. (Maximum 100 words)**

I greatly admire Tom Daschle. He is a committed, populist Democrat who has consistently advanced the causes of those least able to fight for themselves. He is intelligent and caring, and he understands how to get things done (even when he was in the minority party in the U.S. Senate).

**5. Fill in the following blanks (no more than two sentences):**

a) The most recent book I read and enjoyed was 1000 Years for Revenge by Peter Lance.

b) My favorite television show/movie is "Rescue Me."

c) In my spare time I love to be with my two-month-old son, Ian, and my wife Karen.



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**Robert Gordon (Democrat) <http://www.gordon2006.org>**

**1. Name the two biggest challenges facing your Ward, and briefly explain how you would work to solve them. (Maximum 100 words)**

The public schools and libraries are decrepit and must be fixed. As Councilmember, I will ensure a business-like approach to facilities modernization. I will work to see that:

- Bonds are issued to ensure that funds are secure for the entire reconstruction period;
- The contracting process is fair, open and competitive;
- Funds are used wisely, professionally and accountably;
- Appropriate oversight and management practices are put in place;
- Schools include facilities for special needs students and vocational education.

Second, I would ensure that any benefits to Ward 3 are also shared across all wards in the city.

**2. How has your Ward changed since you moved into it (or in the past 10 years)? Explain whether you feel the change has been good or bad for the community, and why. (Maximum 100 words)**

For the past 30 years, DC has been a wonderful place to live, work, and raise my family. While there are many positive aspects of Ward 3, traffic congestion has gotten worse. Automobile traffic is intolerable, drivers are less courteous and drive faster, and pollution from cars is degrading the environment. This has become a quality of life and safety issue. As a Councilmember, I will promote better maintained streets, more reliable alternative transportation options, and ensure that better traffic control measures are installed and enforced. My ANC, which I chair, has had tremendous success in neighborhood traffic calming.

**3. Name two specific skills or experiences that make you uniquely qualified to represent your Ward on the City Council. (Maximum 100 words)**

I am a business leader and international development expert. I have managed large companies and multi-million dollar budgets. My expertise is in providing corporate oversight and ensuring accountable results. Recently, I supervised a 150-person team of educators in Iraq. We surveyed 4,000 looted schools and re-supplied and refurbished about 1,000 schools -- on time and on budget.



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As Chair of my ANC, I have successfully demonstrated leadership in building community consensus on diverse issues. We worked with PEPCO to change pruning strategies and with the community to save the Avalon Theatre. All of my fellow ANC Commissioners support my campaign.

**4. Name a political figure (either local or national) who you greatly admire and explain why. (Maximum 100 words)**

I admire Cory Booker, the new mayor of Newark, New Jersey, an articulate, well-educated young leader who challenged the established political system and gave up many lucrative business opportunities to take a leadership role in helping to improve the lives of the people in his city. I look to him as an example of the new Democratic Party leadership, as a force for change in a city facing many challenges, and as a positive role model for young people.

**5. Fill in the following blanks (no more than two sentences):**

**a) The most recent book I read and enjoyed was** The Assassins Gate – America in Iraq by George Packer.

**b) My favorite television show/movie is** The Fugitive.

**c) In my spare time I love to** garden and play golf.



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**Eric Goulet (Democrat) <http://www.goulet2006.com>**

**1. Name the two biggest challenges facing your Ward, and briefly explain how you would work to solve them. (Maximum 100 words)**

The largest problem facing Ward 3 residents is that rising property taxes are forcing many middle-income and retired homeowners to sell their homes. To keep our residents in the city, we need to cap the growth rate of property taxes at the rate of inflation. The second greatest challenge facing Ward 3 is improving both the facilities and curriculum in our Ward 3 public schools. I will introduce legislation setting deadlines to use the \$200 million annual allotment in the school modernization account and to establish a citywide curriculum that includes more Advanced Placement courses.

**2. How has the Ward changed since you moved into it (or in the past 10 years)? Explain whether you feel that the change has been good or bad for the community, and why. (Maximum 100 words)**

The greatest change that has occurred in Ward 3 over the past ten years is the increase in property assessments and rent. In this case, Ward 3 has become the victim of its own success. As Councilmember, I will work with residents and the Office of Tax and Revenue to ensure that the property assessment process is fair and uniform. I will introduce legislation to reduce the property tax cap from a 10% annual increase to an inflationary increase. I will also work with renters to increase the standard deduction and preserve our stock of affordable rental housing.

**3. Name two specific skills or experiences that make you uniquely qualified to represent your Ward on the City Council. (Maximum 100 words)**

The two skills that make me significantly more qualified than any other candidate are my abilities to effectively draft legislation and provide first-rate constituent services. I developed these skills during my years of experience on the Council through my work as the legislative director of the Committee on Finance and Revenue and my work as a legislative counsel for health care issues. My background as a lawyer with a juris doctor from the University of Notre Dame provides the analytical skills necessary to draft thoughtful legislation, and my Council experience ensures that I will deliver results for Ward 3.



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**4. Name a political figure (either local or national) who you greatly admire and explain why. (Maximum 100 words)**

On the national level, I respect the economic policies pursued by Bill Clinton during his presidency. Clinton was able to maintain a growing economy by using budget surpluses to pay down the national debt. As a result, interest rates were lower, leading to stronger investment and growth. This policy needs to be replicated in the District of Columbia, and I have made it the central focus of my campaign. We need to cap the growth of the District government at 5% and use surplus revenues to pay down the District's high per capita debt and to provide progressive tax relief.

**5. Fill in the following blanks (no more than two sentences):**

**a. The most recent book I read and enjoyed was** Title 47 of the District of Columbia Official Code.

**b. My favorite television show is** Twenty Four. My favorite movies are Rocky movies I-IV...not V.

**c. In my spare time I love to** jog, lift weights, and take walks with my dog, Wilson, in Melvin Hazen Park.



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**Bill Rice (Democrat) <http://www.billrice2006.com>**

**1. Name the two biggest challenges facing your Ward, and briefly explain how you would work to solve them. (Maximum 100 words).**

The biggest challenges facing Ward 3, and the city, are fixing our public schools, followed by public safety. I quit my job to be a fulltime councilmember to make sure that our schools are modernized and that our academic goals achieved. Fixing our schools will help control crime. I am the only candidate who has helped to turn around a DC agency, the DC Department of Transportation

**2. How has your Ward changed since you moved into it (or in the past 10 years)? Explain whether you feel the change has been good or bad for the community, and why. (Maximum 100 words)**

The increase in residents is positive; however, the rising price of housing and the problems with our public schools are tempting families to move to other jurisdictions. This is why I will be a fulltime councilmember who will fix our our public schools to keep families in Ward 3.

**3. Name two specific skills or experiences that make you uniquely qualified to represent your Ward on the City Council. (Maximum 100 words)**

Ever since I came to Washington over 30 years ago, I have been fighting to improve our city. I have been an activist for rent control and affordable housing, a reporter and commentator for Washington City Paper and the Current Newspapers, as well a contributor to The Washington Post and for the last six years I helped fix the DC Department of Transportation. As a fulltime councilmember I will bring this unique combination of outside advocacy and inside how-to-fix-it knowledge to the Council and to fixing our schools.

**4. Name a political figure (either local or national) who you greatly admire and explain why. (Maximum 100 words)**

Mary McLeod Bethune: fighter against racism, educator, colleague of Eleanor Roosevelt and founder of the National Council of Negro Women. Her statue graces Lincoln Park and her house is a National Historic Site on Vermont Avenue, NW, just north of Thomas Circle



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**5. Fill in the following blanks (no more than two sentences):**

**a) The most recent book I read and enjoyed was “All the King’s Men.”**

**b) My favorite television show/movie is “The Wire.”**

**c) In my spare time I love to: go to community meetings.**



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**Paul Strauss (Democrat) <http://www.paulstrauss.org>**

**1. Name the two biggest challenges facing your Ward, and briefly explain how you would work to solve them. (Maximum 100 words)**

The two biggest challenges facing my Ward are public school education and public safety.

I have a personal stake in the education issue as the only candidate with a child in public school. My plan includes protecting Ward 3 schools from closure, increasing their autonomy, creating a better management of the DCPS budget and creating an elected school board.

With public safety, the emergency services should be better trained, we should appoint a Medical Director in charge of DC's Emergency Medical Services, and that an automated external defibrillator (AED) is installed in every building.

**2. How has the Ward changed since you moved into it (or in the past 10 years)? Explain whether you feel that the change has been good or bad for the community, and why. (Maximum 100 words)**

The dramatic escalation of real estate prices has made the Ward more expensive to live in. There have been losses of affordable rental housing due to weakening rent control law enforcement, and many long-term homeowners have seen dramatic increases in their real property tax bills. I have also noticed an increase in vacant retail stores along the Wisconsin Avenue corridor. Sadly, the change has not been good for the public schools. Over the years they have deteriorated and the reason for this is that there has been no meaningful investment in them.

**3. Name two specific skills or experiences that make you uniquely qualified to represent your Ward on the City Council. (Maximum 100 words)**

The two experiences that make me uniquely qualified to represent Ward 3 are my positions of U.S. Shadow Senator and Chairperson of the District's Board of Real Property Assessments and Appeals (DBRPAA).

In 1996 I was elected as the District's Shadow Senator. I lobby on behalf of DC for full representation. I successfully fought Republican efforts to repeal DC's gun safety laws and right-wing policy experiments opposed by Ward 3 residents.



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As Chairperson of the DBRPAA I helped pass legislation requiring the city to provide more information to homeowners about property tax bills, enabling them to challenge unfair assessments.

**4. Name a political figure (either local or national) who you greatly admire and explain why. (Maximum 100 words)**

The political figure that I greatly admire is John Wilson, because he was able to contribute so much, in spite of the disability.

**5. Fill in the following blanks (no more than two sentences):**

**a. The most recent book I read and enjoyed was** Robert A. Caro – Master of the Senate

**b.) My favorite television show/movie is** 24

**c.) In my spare time I love to** spend time with the children and take them to the baseball.



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**Cathy Wiss (Democrat) <http://www.cathywiss06.com>**

**1. Name the two biggest challenges facing your Ward, and briefly explain how you would work to solve them. (Maximum 100 words)**

I fully support the city's plans to rebuild city schools and libraries after years of neglect, yet modernization will require close monitoring from the Council. I will work closely with the local school and library communities to make sure that the work is accomplished in an effective and timely manner.

Government agencies like DDOT, DCRA, and the Office of Planning should be more transparent and responsive to residents. I will meet with agencies regularly to resolve communications issues and ways to make their work in Ward 3 more systematic.

**2. How has your Ward changed since you moved into it (or in the past 10 years)? Explain whether you feel the change has been good or bad for the community, and why. (Maximum 100 words)**

During the last ten years, Ward 3 has experienced considerable pressure to develop, not only along major corridors like Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues, but also in the neighborhoods with mansionization. Some projects, like the mixed-use Cityline condominiums over Best Buy, have brought added vitality to the commercial corridor while fitting in with the scale of the surrounding area. Others threaten to overwhelm nearby single family residences. Growth must be accomplished sensitively and carefully. Our schools and roads show signs of being close to capacity. We must be mindful of the amount of new development our infrastructure can absorb.

**3. Name two specific skills or experiences that make you uniquely qualified to represent your Ward on the City Council. (Maximum 100 words)**

From my work in the community as an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner and current chair of ANC 3F, as a founder of the Tenleytown Neighbors Association, as a PTA volunteer in the DC schools, as a library activist, and as an environmentalist, I have gained invaluable insights into issues facing our community and how government agencies respond to them.

I have a law degree and enjoy researching issues thoroughly. Often I find that when residents come down on different sides of an issue, in depth research will point to a solution. This depth of inquiry is critical for crafting good legislation.



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**4. Name a political figure (either local or national) whom you greatly admire and explain why. (Maximum 100 words)**

The public figure I admire most is Jimmy Carter. He faced enormous challenges as President, and since then has been caricatured by the Right as epitomizing the failings of the Left. The truth is that, both as President and since, he accomplished great things for the nation and the world. He has worked tirelessly to promote human rights, help the poor, protect the environment, and settle conflicts. His labors were recognized when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002. Jimmy Carter is a great figure because he has put deeply spiritual personal values to work in public service.

**5. Fill in the following blanks (no more than two sentences):**

**a) The most recent book I read and enjoyed was** Mayflower by Nathaniel Philbrick. Not only does it give a fuller and more subtle account of the early settlement of New England, I personally enjoyed learning the history of places where my extended family lives.

**b) My favorite television show/movie is** the news. I have too many evening meetings to watch much television!

**c) In my spare time I love to** read and garden.



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**Theresa Conroy (Republican) <http://www.conroyforcouncil.org>**

**1. Name the two biggest challenges facing your Ward, and briefly explain how you would work to solve them. (Maximum 100 words)**

High, and unfair, taxes and public safety.

The property tax assessment system has been flawed for many years and so far there has been little relief available for Ward 3 homeowners. Many homeowners on limited incomes can't afford a substantial tax increase each year simply because there is a hot housing market in the city. The City Council needs to take appropriate steps to lower the property tax rate so that overall homeowners get some relief.

There are also significant public safety issues in the Ward above and beyond the current crime emergency the city has experienced this year. **(Additional text cut due to word limit)**

**2. How has your Ward changed since you moved into it (or in the past 10 years)? Explain whether you feel the change has been good or bad for the community, and why. (Maximum 100 words)**

Property taxes have skyrocketed with the yearly increases in assessed values. The residents of Ward 3 are suffering under the increased burden and are frustrated with the flawed assessment process the District has used. Traffic congestion and parking problems have also increased and solutions are desperately needed. We have also lost some of that "small neighborhood" feel, as many independent businesses have pulled up stakes and left the Ward, forced out by higher rents and regulatory red tape.

**3. Name two specific skills or experiences that make you uniquely qualified to represent your Ward on the City Council. (Maximum 100 words)**

I lived through the period when the District was the murder capital of the nation. As a crime victim myself, I know the anxiety a community feels when residents fear for their property and their persons. I will support strong measures to see that the District takes the steps necessary to prevent crime, whether it means putting more officers on the streets or placing cameras in high-crime areas.

I also offer an alternative to the failed one-party rule that has dominated the District since the Marion Barry era began. As an outsider, I can bring a fresh perspective to solving **(Additional text cut due to word limit)**



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**4. Name a political figure (either local or national) who you greatly admire and explain why. (Maximum 100 words)**

Carol Schwartz on the Council is a great role model for me. She is an elected Republican in DC who has used her considerable talents and skills to improve the quality of life here and is one of the few Council members trying to make the DC government be more fiscally responsible.

**5. Fill in the following blanks (no more than two sentences):**

**a) The most recent book I read and enjoyed was** The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseinin (If the District government runs true to form, it won't be available at the Tenleytown branch library for several more years).

**b) My favorite television show/movie is** just about any of the old "black and white" films on Turner Classic Movies.

**c) In my spare time I love to** swim.



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**Also running (did not submit answers to questionnaire):**

**Jonathan Rees (Democrat) [www.dc2006.net](http://www.dc2006.net)**