

## Druid Hills Luminary: Representative Becky Evans

By Fran Putney

Georgia House District 83 has a new representative and she's well known in Druid Hills. Becky Evans, who has lived in Druid Hills for 26 years where she and her husband David raised their (now grown) three children and who has served on the DHCA Board since 2007, will take her seat in the 2019 state legislative session after winning the May election.

Her victory was no small feat, considering she was running against a fellow Democrat (Howard Mosby) who had held the seat since 2002. More, the majority of the geographically long and narrow and socio-economically diverse district which stretches north from portions of Druid Hills to sections of south Decatur outside of I-285, has a large African-American population which did not know her.

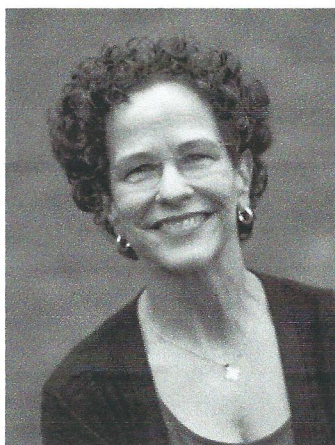
So what was it that drew Evans to this challenge? Becky had firsthand experiences with local politics, first as re-election campaign coordinator for DeKalb Commissioner Kathie Gannon in 2012 and later advising State Senator Elena Parent on local issues for three years. In that capacity Becky attended DeKalb County House delegation meetings, which she described as "very dysfunctional" and frustrating because so little was accomplished. The presidential election in 2016 motivated her to become increasingly active, including attending the Women's March on Washington in January 2017. She began to feel like she could take on more, and when someone suggested that Mosby be challenged, Becky did her research and attended leadership trainings and began to think: Why not me?

"It was a very personal decision to run, and I took it seriously," said Evans. "I had to get comfortable being uncomfortable, but I didn't have anything to lose. I figured you never know unless you try."

Having made her decision, she knew she had her work cut out for her. She assembled an enthusiastic team of volunteers and advisors. Then she put on her walking shoes and set out to introduce herself to the district.

Born and raised in Dallas, Texas, Becky's father was a Methodist minister and social justice activist. Her dad was deeply involved in working for economic equity for African Americans in their community, she said, and Becky attended church with him. "My father and those experiences were a real inspiration to me," she says.

Evans has gone on church missions to Nicaragua and Guatemala. After the earthquake in Haiti, Evans' church group partnered with an agricultural cooperative. As a result of their efforts, they built a school that serves 172 children. Now they are working with the local Haitians to make it sustainable in the community.



Out of her 18 years volunteering for public schools, one of the community projects of which Evans is most proud is her role in co-founding the nonprofit Druid Hills High School Athletic Association. DHAA provides funding so that all athletes have the opportunity to play sports, regardless of income or zip code. The organization recently celebrated its 10-year anniversary.


Evans says that her years of involvement with community organizations such as DHCA and Emory Village Alliance have given her invaluable experience with board governance and a greater understanding of how to get things done.

"I appreciate and value my experience with DHCA," said Evans. "I also learned you can't please all the people all the time, and you have to make peace with that."

Evans' vision "is for all of the neighborhoods in our community to be healthy, prosperous and thriving." She campaigned on issues such as fully funding education at the state level, increasing teacher pay, and adjusting the state funding formula to follow disadvantaged students, and to increase economic mobility and higher wages and work to end the income gap in Metro Atlanta. She won the election with 65 percent of the whole district, including sizeable percentages in areas where she was not previously known. "I feel very humbled by that," said Evans. "I feel like those statistics affirm that people are ready for change and that people are willing to support someone who looks different from them."

While she knows that much of her work in the legislature will depend on which committees she serves on, Evans hopes she'll be able to focus on her campaign issues as well as promoting safe neighborhoods. She would also like to be known as a green energy champion and advocate for changes in the juvenile justice system "so kids have a chance to turn their lives around."

Above all, Evans says she intends to be "accountable and transparent" and hopes to improve communications with her constituents. For more information or be added to her email newsletter, contact [becky@beckyevans.com](mailto:becky@beckyevans.com) or visit [beckyevans.com](http://beckyevans.com).



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