

Wednesday, August 26, 2020

Allegany County attorney Ross Scott running for 148th Assembly seat

By Rick Miller

INDEPENDENCE — W. Ross Scott had thought of running for the New York State Assembly, but not this year.

Democrats in the 148th Assembly District had already nominated Great Valley Supervisor Daniel Brown to run against Assemblyman Joseph Giglio, R-Gowanda.

However Brown, who ran unsuccessfully in 2012, decided against a new run and declined the nomination. The committee to fill vacancies nominated Scott to run on the line.

Scott, an attorney who specializes in environmental and property rights cases, previously ran for Allegany County district attorney against then-incumbent Terrence Parker in 2009. Parker won the race.

Scott, 80, is a member of the Allegany County Democratic Committee, the New York State Democratic Committee and an alternate delegate to the Eighth Judicial District Nominating Committee. Scott was recruited by the chairmen of the Cattaraugus and Allegany Democratic chairmen after Brown dropped out.

“I’d always wanted to run,” Scott told the Times Herald. “I wasn’t planning to run this year.”

How do you campaign during a pandemic? Scott said he is largely planning to campaign electronically.

“I’m planning a website, a Facebook page and a podcast” to inform voters about the Assembly election,” he noted.

Scott said major issues he would advocate for in the Assembly include protecting the environment, property rights and having a well-run government. He also vows to amend the Highway Law to make it clear that all town roads in the state are not “three-rod roads,” 49-foot wide.

Scott and his wife Gudrun moved to Allegany County from Seattle in 1968. He had been a systems programmer at the University of Washington. They were driving through Wellsville when he spotted political signs in a Main Street storefront. Looking for inexpensive property, he and his wife purchased a farm in the town of Independence which “has been home base ever since.”

There was little work in the Wellsville area, so Scott headed to Boston for six months. He returned home and worked as an independent contractor.

“I had the first modem in Western New York,” he said.

As a software developer, he worked for Graphic Controls in Buffalo as their chief programmer.

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He graduated from the University at Buffalo Law School in 1997. He currently operated the Ross Scott Law Firm out of his home.

He moved to Washington, D.C. in 1980 where he worked for the U.S. Department of Energy. He helped then-Rep. Stan Lundine of Jamestown write the **West Valley Demonstration Project Act** which got the U.S. government involved in the cleanup of the Cattaraugus County plant where spent nuclear fuel had been reclaimed.

Later he worked at a Washington think tank until he and his wife moved back to their farm in Allegany County in 1992. He also worked as an engineer at Morrison-Knudsen in Wellsville.

Scott's fascination with politics stemmed from when his policeman father would take him to political gatherings in Seattle. His father was a chauffeur for the city's mayor. He recalls stuffing envelopes for Richard Nixon against John F. Kennedy in 1960. His politics changed as he grew older and Scott ran as an alternate delegate for Eugene McCarthy in the anti-war days of 1968.