

Bingle wants to make impact across city

By JENNIFER WRAY

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As a social worker, Paul Bingle was "convinced that I could save the world," he said.

Now, Bingle is looking to help the city of Columbus.

A Fostoria native, Bingle graduated from Capital University in 1972 with a bachelor's degree in social work.

He chose to remain in Columbus post-graduation both for the experience of living in a larger city than the one he grew up in, and because of "the sense of op-

timism in this community," he said.

"You really do get the feeling, 'I can make a difference,'" said Bingle.

In 1979, Bingle moved to Clintonville, which has become home to him and his wife, Linda Paul, and to much of his volunteer service.

During the 1980s, President Ronald Regan's cuts to social services resulted in Bingle losing his job with the Franklin County Welfare Department. He would go on to a short stint running a hardware store, before becoming a real estate

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agent, then a mortgage broker and, now, executive director of Earth Share of Ohio, an organization that raises funds for environmental causes.

Throughout the changes in his professional life, Bingle – a Republican – has remained involved in the community.

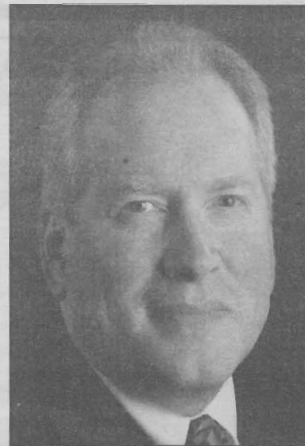
He first began his participation in Clintonville civic efforts after "I mouthed off about something, and somebody grabbed me by the shoulders and said, 'Why don't you do something about it,'" said Bingle.

"From there, it just grew from one project to two projects to three projects," he said.

Bingle began participating in the Clintonville Area Commission in the late 1980s and was appointed to a position on the commission in 1992. He served as a commissioner until 1999, holding the positions of chairman, secretary, physical services committee chairman and archivist.

Bingle counts his efforts to convince the city to change its streetlighting as one of his greatest accomplishments on the CAC.

"That makes me proud, because I know I did a project that benefited specifically my community, but it benefitted the whole city, too," he said.



Paul Bingle

During the years since he left the elected position, Bingle has continued to participate in the commission's task forces and committees.

Bingle also co-founded Strategic Clintonville-Clintonville Community Fund, which awards grants to groups serving the neighborhood, and the Clintonville July 4th Celebration Committee.

This year, with his second-youngest son a college graduate and a number of council seats up for grabs, Bingle decided the time was right to run for City Council.

Bingle, a 54-year-old father of three, said he doesn't plan on making a career of the position, and is frustrated by the actions of those who have.

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"You need to get engaged ... I'm not afraid of taking difficult or controversial positions on issues," he said.

For Bingle, that means discussing discussing the city's finances and the possible needs for either a tax increase or service cuts, as well as addressing crime, economic development and education.

"I just want to be direct and honest, even when people don't want to hear it," he said.

Bingle faces fellow Re-

publicans Bill Brownson, Jim O'Grady and Larry Thomas, as well as the Democrat incumbents Hearcel Craig, Andrew Ginther, Michael Mentel and Charleta Tavares in the Nov. 6 general elections. Of the eight candidates vying for office, the top four vote-getters will receive a four-year seat on council.

Another pair of candidates, incumbent Democrat Priscilla Tyson and GOP challenger Heidi Samuel, will face each other in a separate head-to-head contest.