



1. How long have you lived in the ward?

I've lived in the 5th ward for 3 years. I've worked, organized, and associated with the 5th Ward for 23 years. And I'm a lifelong Evanston resident. Go Kits.

2. Take us on a tour of your ward that includes its top three assets and its top three challenges.

I'd love to. Let's start with the assets: our (1) natural environment (e.g., Twiggs, Butler, Becks, and Ingram Park; and the Mayfair line cutoff and Fleetwood Field); (2) community institutions (e.g., Fleetwood- Jourdain Center, Family Focus, Lorraine Morton Civic Center, and Gibbs-Morrison); and--most important--(3) our people, who carry our ward's rich history, run its block clubs, and give Evanston much of the diversity on which we pride ourselves.

Now let's go to **Fireman's Park**, which is dedicated to brave firefighters who gave their lives saving others and sits between single family homeowners, renters, and Northwestern University students who rent off campus. The students energize the area which helps to support nearby businesses, but the mix of families, seniors, and students creates unique challenges that likely led to a recent proposal by an alderman to ban games involving alcoholic beverages on front lawns. There's also a concern about general upkeep of property by out-of-town landlords.

Next let's Divvy to **Smith Park**, where you have a tight-knit group of families coexisting downwind from a factory that manufactures coatings for oil pipelines. The factory emits odors. Organizers from the community have noticed improvements after working with local officials to communicate their concerns to the company, but the situation is ongoing and requires close monitoring and further air quality testing.

From there, it's a short ride to **West Evanston**, where we have distinct 2-3 flats that were converted from single family homes to accommodate an influx in the area's population around 1910. Discriminatory zoning policy, racial steering, restrictive covenants, and informal adherences of "Jim Crow" policies forced African Americans living in Evanston into the West End area. The 2008 market crash devastated the community. Supported by federal funding, the city took action through the Live Evanston housing program to purchase foreclosed homes and put them back on the market at affordable rates. Today permissive zoning and the availability of land and property has made this area a desirable place, but also an area vulnerable to gentrification.

Last stop: the neighborhood around **ETHS football field** is a quiet neighborhood and home to newer families and longtime homeowners. In 2017, a proposal to install a Water Pump Station on the 1700 block of McDaniel Ave. became a contentious issue. The city needed a pumping facility to satisfy its water supply agreement with Morton Grove and Niles, and the neighbors were concerned about the impact it may have on property value and quality of life. The facility has since been constructed, and now requires monitoring for property damage and noise pollution.

3. Why do you want to be an alderman? What particular expertise and/or experience would you bring to the position? What are your top priorities?

I want to protect the health and character of the 5th Ward and its residents, and to ensure that our children can learn, grow, and prosper. 5th Warders deserve a full-time advocate who has the experience and background to ensure that City policies protect and grow our community. That's consistent with my upbringing (as the son of Martha Burns, and product of Dist. 65 and 202 schools) and with my work organizing black Evanston families, on the board of a fair housing organization, and as Deputy City Clerk.

As a political campaign manager, I've travelled across Cook County partnering with community members to improve their quality of life through elections and direct policy advocacy. Before COVID, I managed Daniel Epstein's campaign for Illinois Supreme Court in a crowded race. We campaigned from Bloom to Barrington, educating people about the importance of ending cash bail. Daniel and I described the current reality of some Evanstonians: they are presumed innocent and have been deemed safe to return to the community yet languish in jail because they can't afford bail. Although the election didn't turn out as we hoped, our efforts paid off. Daniel and I were elated that Illinois lawmakers recently voted to end cash bail. This experience reinforced my belief in the power of grassroots organizing for a just cause.

Endorsements: Ald. Rue-Simmons (5th Ward), Ald. Delores Holmes (5th Ward, Rety.), the Evanston Firefighters Union, North Side Democracy for America.

Priorities

1. **Address the lingering effects of redlining:** In 1930, much of the 5th ward was redlined, strangling economic growth in our predominantly black community, and we're still suffering the effects. I'm proud to have co-authored the City of Evanston's first memo making a case for reparations, which supported Ald. Rue-Simmons push to adopt a resolution. Her work must

continue: home rehabs, business district revitalization, and job creation.

2. **Diversifying community voices:** Policies are too often written without the guidance of the people they impact the most. That needs to change. For housing policies, we need to consult our unhoused. For policing issues, we need to hear from our young black men who have unique insight on what it means to be policed. For elderly care we need to bring in our seniors. My decades living, working, and organizing in the community will allow me to bring those voices to bear.
3. **Equitable delivery of public services:** A recent article by the Daily Northwestern revealed how Evanston's lead testing locations over the last two decades were concentrated in NW and NE Evanston, with less than 2% in the 5th ward. We will identify all current systems and practices that are causing harm and perpetuating the inequitable delivery of public services. Other ward concerns: property standards enforcement, lack of urban planning, lack of translation services, garbage pickup, tree maintenance.

4. What do you think the duties and responsibilities of an alderman are? How much time do you expect to spend on aldermanic business?

I will be a 24/7 on-call Alderman. Over the years, I've arranged my life to ensure my work schedule was flexible enough to take on demanding volunteer roles within the community. I will continue to host monthly ward meetings, support our block clubs, and work to expand festivals. You can count on me to read my board packet, attend committee meetings, and be prepared to ask probing questions at council.

Learn more: www.burnsfor5.com

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