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Donaldson Announces, Democratic Candidates for County Executive and Comptroller Speak at Ulster County Democratic Women Annual Meeting

(Kingston, NY – April 15, 2008) The campaign for Ulster County Executive and Comptroller began Monday night at the annual meeting of Ulster County Democratic Women. www.UCDW.org David Donaldson, Chairman of the UC Legislature, officially announced his candidacy for Comptroller. County Administrator Mike Hein and Legislator Susan Zimet were both on hand to speak about their bids for the County Executive position. Comptroller candidate Elliott Auerbach, though unable to attend due to a budget hearing, sent a message outlining his qualifications and vision for the position.

"I will assure an open, honest government that is accountable to its citizens. That's what a Comptroller should do and that is what I will do," said Legislature Chairman David B. Donaldson. "As the county's first Comptroller I intend to work collaboratively and cooperatively with the County Executive and the Legislature. As an independent taxpayer advocate I will put the interest of the taxpayer first and foremost."

"This venue is the most fitting I could possibly find to announce my candidacy," said Donaldson. "As I've said before, Ulster County Democratic Women are the conscience of the Democratic Party."

"UCDW members are honored that Chairman Donaldson made his official announcement here," said UCDW president Julie McQuain of Hardenburgh. "The first people to hold these positions under the new charter will define them. We're very proud of all the Democrats running in this historic election and look forward to sponsoring Democratic candidates' nights for both new offices."

"If people with skill don't get involved in the process we run the risk of losing control of the situation. The jail fiasco is the true cost of mismanagement," said Mike Hein, Ulster County Administrator and candidate for County Executive. "The people of Ulster County want better for their children. With your help we can make Ulster County the best place to live and work for your family."

"It's a rare opportunity when you have the chance to impact the beginning of a new government," said Susan Zimet, UC Legislator from New Paltz who will formally announce her campaign for Ulster County Executive on April 21. "We need to create a government based on integrity, intelligence, compassion, experience and the courage of convictions," she said. "UCDW has been in the forefront of fiscal responsibility, transparent government, healthcare. Your voice is my voice. Your vision is my vision."

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Ulster County Democratic Women
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"Reforming taxes will be the cornerstone of my candidacy, along with education and the environment," said Frank Skartados, who will announce his run for the 100th Assembly seat currently held by Republican Tom Kirwan on April 27 at his farm in Milton. "Fiscal responsibility must be the primary duty of all elected officials," he said.

Cheers and applause for all the candidates, including Assemblymember Kevin Cahill and U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey who are running for reelection but were in session and unable to attend, enlivened the annual event held Monday evening at Rive Gauche, half a block from UC Democratic Headquarters on Fair St., setting an exciting and positive tone for the election.

"Tonight we see how great candidates can inspire and excite," said Karen Markisenis, Ulster County Democratic Committee Vice Chair. "As we go into the primary contests, Ulster County voters will greatly benefit from the positive exchange of ideas and vision that we heard tonight."

In the other business of the evening Vice President Theresa Regan of Marbletown, Secretary Jo Ann Chamberlain of Woodstock and Member-at-large Meryl Kramer-Harrison of Olive were each reelected for a two-year term. The nominating committee was led by Leadership Development chair Elizabeth Murphy of Saugerties and included Issues chair JoAnne Myers, PhD, of Kingston and Susan Zimet of New Paltz. Rounding out the current Executive Committee are Treasurer Jane Ann Williams of New Paltz and Outreach/Membership chair Gail Kniceley of Rosendale.

McQuain reported to the members on the events and activities of the previous year, including:

- Sponsoring Democratic District Attorney candidates' night;
- Hosting brunch with special guest Democratic State Chair June O'Neill;
- Working with Town Chairs and Ulster County Democratic Committee on reforms;
- Participating with Healthcare STAT and others on hospital merger issues;
- Contributing to Young Dems, UCDC and Dem HQ;
- Sponsoring members to attend campaign events;
- Raising and contributing thousands of dollars to help elect Democrats

Ulster County Democratic Women (UCDW) is an independent, grassroots organization devoted to bringing more Ulster County Democratic women into the political process and electing well-qualified Democrats to public office at every level. Women and men are welcome as members. UCDW does not endorse candidates during primaries.

For more information about UCDW see the website at www.UCDW.org or attend one of UCDW's meetings held at 7 pm on the second Monday of each month at 292 C Fair Street in Kingston.

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Interviews, photos available, contact Julie McQuain, UCDW President and spokesperson 586-4425 or Theresa Regan, UCDW Vice President 914-466-1994.