



Retired PFRS members applaud Polkowitz as the best man to give them a voice in new pension system

■ BY MITCHELL KRUGEL

■ PHOTO BY ED CARATTINI JR.

At a recent meeting of New Jersey Retired Police and Firemen's Association Local 3 of Union County, retired law enforcement officers and firefighters gave a standing ovation to the man who appeared that night. Chants of "Bruuuuce...Bruuuuce" could be heard vibrating amidst the applause.

No, not that Bruce, but for these retired members, this Bruce is becoming a bit of a rock star. This Bruce is Bruce Polkowitz, a candidate for PFRS Trustee representing retired members whose fan base continues to skyrocket. He has impressed audiences throughout the state, not as somebody who will represent retired PBA members or retired FMBA members or retired members of any other public safety labor union.

Polkowitz has become the guy who will represent retired members of the Police and Firemen's Retirement System (PFRS).

"Finally, I think we have somebody who will represent the retired guys and not just the union guys," Local 3 President Dennis Farrell declares. "There is no question Bruce is a guy who can give a voice to the retired PFRS members."

Polkowitz has been on tour visiting NJ Retired Police and Firemen's Association Local meetings throughout the state and getting rave reviews. State President Joe Valdora invited him to speak to Mercer County Local 12 members, who also gave him a standing ovation.

Middlesex/Monmouth County Local 9 has endorsed Polkowitz for PFRS Trustee, just like Local 3. That, of course, is in addition to the endorsements he had already procured from NJ State PBA Retired Officers Local 600 and the NJ State PBA. They have all seen that Polkowitz has the most impressive record of any candidate running in this election, which begins when ballots become available to retired PFRS members on or about Dec. 5.

"Local 9 thinks Bruce Polkowitz is the most qualified person for this position," Local 9 President Mike Burns asserts. "He came across as the person who would represent the best interests of the retired police and fire members because of his credentials."

Polkowitz's credentials — going back to his days as a State Delegate for Edison Township Local 75 and president of the Edison Township Superior Officers Association — make him born to run for PFRS Trustee. He has had those successful runs as mayor of Franklin Township in Hunterdon County and president of the Ed-

ison Township School Board.

Farrell noted that Polkowitz's experience managing money in those positions impressed his members. But there is a common denominator in all his leadership forays that makes Polkowitz more than a one-hit wonder.

"During the course of my career, I have made a commitment to the community I serve to make the environment where I live better," he explains. "The environment where I live now is with retired members of PFRS."

The command performance requested of Polkowitz at every venue he has played on his campaign tour is about COLA. He has not answered with that same old song of "I will bring back your COLA" some trustee candidates reportedly are singing.

He has been hit with many ideas about how to bring back COLA, and Polkowitz confirms that there are many good ideas. He is not committing to one way; only to bring it back in a fair and equitable manner when the time is right.

But before that can even be entertained, Polkowitz prioritizes an objective that led to the creation of the new, independent PFRS to be governed by a new board of trustees.

"Before we address COLA, we have to make sure the pension system is solvent. That's the first objective for this board in the new system," Polkowitz reasons. "We're not going to quit until we meet that goal, and the trustees who we entrust this to have to bring a passion to the job."

After staying to answer the last of a plethora of questions from NJ Retired Police and Firemen's Association Local 12 members in Mercer County, Polkowitz spent some time re-reading Chapter 55, the new law establishing the independent PFRS that Governor Murphy signed in July. He continues to highlight sections of Chapter 55 and share those highlights with retirees as a reinforcement that the right man for this job is somebody who would take the time to study the law rather than somebody who has never believed in the new system and actually fought against it.

"Even though he has won many elections, Bruce did not come across as a politician when he spoke to our members," Burns notes. "We saw him as a guy who is sincere and will be devoted to representing retired law enforcement officers and firefighters."

Clearly Polkowitz's hungry heart can lead PFRS to Independence Day. For, as Farrell proclaims:

"He's a breath of fresh air who will lead us to a new beginning."

Bruce Polkowitz, Retired Members Local 600 and NJSPBA-endorsed candidate for Police and Fire Retirement System Retired Members Trustee

Ballots will be available on or about Dec. 5

Bruce will be listed in the No. 2 position on the ballot

Bruce Polkowitz

- 29 years of service to the Edison Police Department
- Edison Local 75 State Delegate, 1990-1993
- Edison PBA Superior Officers Association President, 2008-2015
- Mayor of Franklin Township, Hunterdon County, 2012-2014
- President, Edison Board of Education, 1997-2000

Endorsed for PFRS Trustee by:

- New Jersey Retired Police and Firemen's Association Local 3 - Union County
- New Jersey Retired Police and Firemen's Association Local 9 - Middlesex/Monmouth Counties



Why Bruce Polkowitz is the best candidate to represent retired members on the PFRS Trustee Board

"Of all the applicants from Local 600, Bruce is the most qualified. He has a great ability to communicate with members, politicians and state officials."

LOCAL 600 PRESIDENT TOM LOMBARDI

"He is the guy who has the best interests of retired police and firefighters."

NJ RETIRED POLICE AND FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION LOCAL 3 PRESIDENT

DENNIS FARRELL

"Bruce will not be afraid to stand up among the 12 members of that trustee board and be the leader. This is a guy we can trust with our pensions."

LOCAL 600 STATE DELEGATE JIM TOMA