

State Rep.

MARGARET **Good**

**Newly Re-elected
from the 72nd
District**



Newly re-elected, she won this past Nov. 6 by running a positive-themed campaign designed to unite not divide. How did she win an area with a Republican majority? It seems that old-fashioned “shoe leather” did it. “We knocked on thousands of doors. We engaged with voters.” She recalls that people were surprised to see her. “Some said this is the first time they had met an elected official of either party.” The goals during her campaign were to be “accountable and transparent.” It seems to have worked.

I'M SITTING IN THE Stickney Point office of the newly-elected state Rep. from District 72 who won re-election this past November 6. It has been a while since I sat in an elected female Democrat's office. It goes back to when Shirley Brown was a state rep. c.1995 when we profiled her and that's a good 23 years ago.

This rare species is Margaret Good and she's just a few weeks post election, um re-election, when we meet. First to clarify, she was first elected in February 2018. Her predecessor was Alexandra Miller who served November 8, 2016 to September 1, 2017. Miller was a Republican who defeated Democrat Edward James in the 2016 general election. She (Miller) resigned to focus on her family and her business. A special election was called. Margaret faced James Buchanan and won.

This past November, Margaret defeated former GOP state Rep. Ray Pilon, who was trying to reclaim the District 72 seat. The final tally was a landslide in comparison to the squeakers Florida just endured. Margaret won 50.7 percent of the vote to Pilon's 49.3 percent—a 1,145-vote margin. Yes, it was close, but no recount was necessary. She was the only Democrat to win in Sarasota County.

How did she do it? She's humble in her reply, but it seems that old-fashioned "shoe leather" did it. "We knocked on thousands of doors. We engaged with voters." She recalls how so many people were surprised to see her. "Some said this is the first time they had met an elected official of either party." The goal during her campaign was to be "accountable and transparent." And, her message resonated.

In a Sarasota Herald-Tribune article (in which she was called a "rising star" of the Democratic Party) they noted she "raised \$669,882...that dwarfed the \$172,742 Pilon raised." The same November 6 article also mentioned that Margaret had received the endorsement of President Barack Obama.

While that helped, she adds that being "being accessible and making yourself available" were important to her. As was "focusing on the issues." Those issues she stressed were "the environment, the economy—the things that unite us." A common phrase Margaret uses is, "There are more things that unite us than divide us." It was a great strategy in these contentious times and she put it into action with six town hall meetings. Margaret stresses that she wanted to be "open and out there. I think that matters."

So how was the actual campaigning experience? Her face lights up and a broad smile appears. Really... she enjoyed it. What she found was "an overwhelming response – people want to be heard."

Saying she came from "a financially

conservative household" was another reason she ran because, "I'm not sure we're spending our Florida budget as wisely as we could." She also ran being "fed up" generally with how the FL Legislature was doing coupled with the outcome of the 2016 national election. Margaret says she is concerned that many Floridians are living with "financial stress" and wants Florida to have good public education that supports a future workforce – whether that means college or not.

Though the next session starts in March, Margaret has already been appointed Deputy Minority Leader under Minority Leader Kionne McGee. That's quite an accomplishment for someone who is technically still a freshman in the FL House.


Margaret was born in Savannah, Georgia, but lived in South Carolina and North Carolina or wherever her Episcopal priest father's work took her family. Her mother worked as a nurse. Margaret graduated from the University of South Carolina with a bachelor's degree in German language then went to the University of Washington for her master's. Then it was on to the University of Florida College of Law where she earned her JD. She still practices law at Matthews Eastmoore in Sarasota and her specialty is civil litigation.

Her dad has roots in central Florida where he was born and Margaret remembers visiting her grandparents' home in the summer and swimming in a lake or visiting and exploring Florida. Most probably that memory and experience also shaped her political views and strong concern for the environment.

Her husband, Richard, is a helicopter pilot. The couple moved to Sarasota's 72nd District after she graduated from law school.

Margaret serves on the board of directors for the Sarasota County Bar Association and is a leader in The Florida Bar. Her hobby? Well there's some irony in that she loves running – long distance running that is, and she volunteers as a board member of the Manasota Track Club.

So no scary, negative, name-calling ads in her campaign. No trigger or wedge issues either. Just reaching out to voters. Maybe there's hope for more of that in the future. Maybe she's started a trend.

Though it would be easy to say she won because she was part of the "wave" of women elected in the 2018 midterms – statewide and nationally. It's more like she got people to vote for her ideas and possibly voted for the approach she took: civility and lots of listening. Let's hope others follow her lead and stick to, well, to borrow her phrase, "what unites us." 

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