

ON the MOVE

CATHOLIC COURIER

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, NY

NOVEMBER 2, 2000

PAGE 5



When he was a young boy, Garrett Lovejoy recalled, his parents would bring him into the voting booth while they pulled the levers on Election Day.

But on Nov. 7, Garrett will be alone when he draws the voting-booth curtain. The McQuaid Jesuit High School senior said he's grateful for the chance to finally vote.

"I'm happy I turned 18 in a presidential election year," remarked Garrett, whose birthday was Sept. 8.

Yet Garrett also has friends who are at least 18 years old but won't be voting. And that doesn't make him happy.

"I think it's stupid, because it's important to vote," he said.

Garrett currently takes a U.S. government class for seniors at McQuaid. Taught by Walt Gordinier, the class contains mostly 17-year-olds. As part of their curriculum, students are encouraged to track current politics and political figures.

A significant majority of the class members said they would have voted this year if they were eligible. Key issues voiced by some of the students include tax credits for college tuition; Social Security; the environment; alternative energy resources; and national defense spending.

As a Catholic, Mark Perkowski said that abortion and the death penalty — two subjects that have surfaced frequently during the current presidential race — are important issues. But he also said that

STORY BY MIKE LATONA

those issues alone don't determine the moral makeup of a candidate.

"I would also rank dishonesty up there," he said, referring to President Bill Clinton's initial denial of his extramarital involvement with Monica Lewinsky.

Jay Reisinger and Pat Freytag, both 17, remarked that any adult's view on political candidates doesn't count unless that opinion is expressed in a voting booth.

"If you don't vote, why would (candidates) feel compelled to do anything to help you out?" said Jay, 17.

"I feel you should vote because it's your patriotic duty," added Justin Secora, 17.

Apparently that sense of duty isn't shared by all young adults. According to a recent article in Rochester's *Democrat and Chronicle*, during the last presidential year only 51 percent of all registered voters ages 18 to 24 went to the polls. For ages 25 to 34, it was 64 percent in 1996. Both those figures were significantly below the 78-percent ratio for all registered voters, meaning that older adults seemingly place a higher priority on voting.

Why do so many young-adult Americans stay away from the polls? Perhaps, Garrett ventured, politicians don't pay enough attention to their needs.

"I'm going to vote, but there are very few issues that directly affect me right now," he stated.

Some students in the McQuaid class said that politicians seemingly overlook young voters' needs.

But Mike Regan, 17, said that perhaps politicians act this way because they sense the voter apathy in that age range.

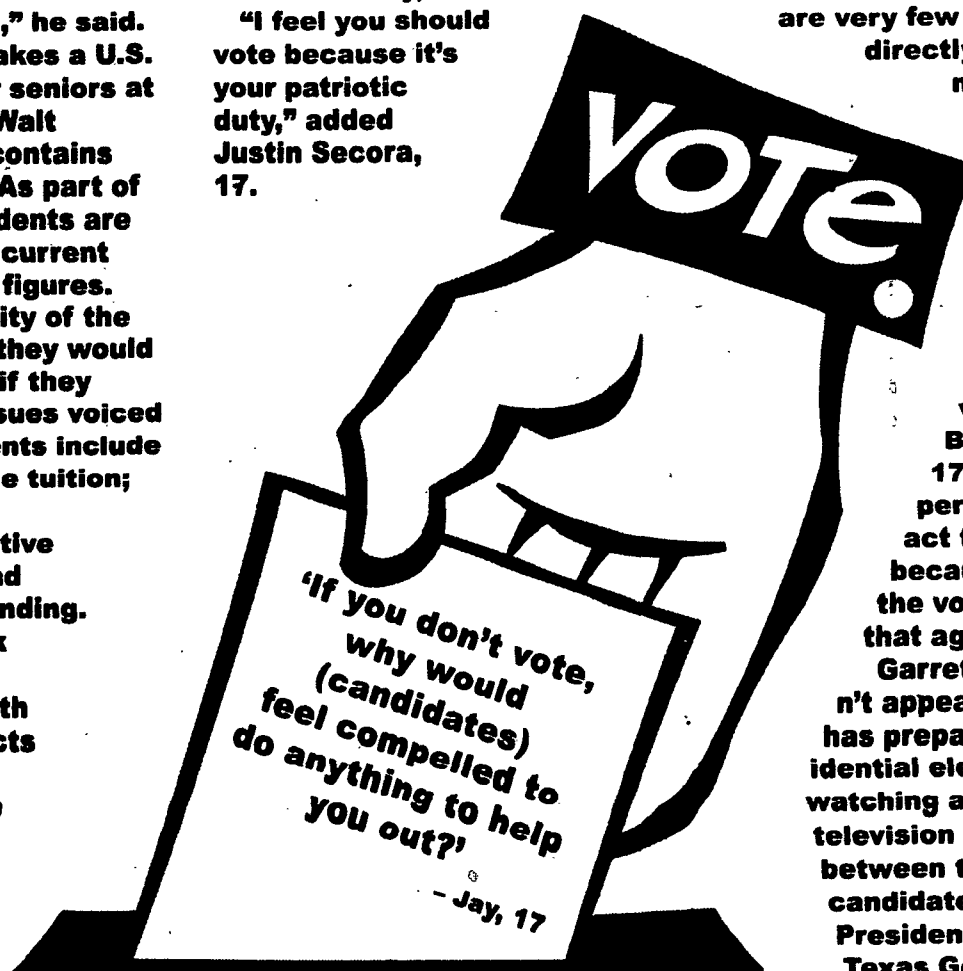
Garrett, for one, doesn't appear apathetic. He has prepared for the presidential election by watching all three television debates between the two leading candidates, Vice President Al Gore and Texas Gov. George Bush.

He also reads the front page occasionally, confers with his parents, and gleans information from the government class. He added that he planned to research state and local political races closer to election time.

About half of the McQuaid class said they regularly read the front page of the daily newspapers. Less than one-third said they watch the national evening news. Some felt that they didn't have the time nor the desire to follow politics closely.

"I don't have time with school and extracurricular activities," Mark said.

"If I could vote, I would, but right now (Oct. 25) I'm more concerned about the Yankees-Mets game," said Kevin Sullivan, 16.



THE TEMPTATIONS

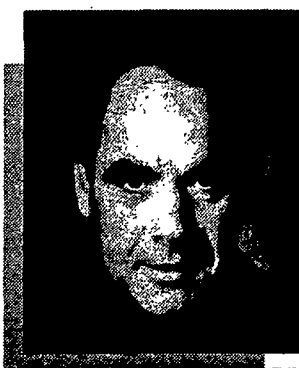
with special guest: star comedian

ROBERT KLEIN

Celebrate with

Dr. Ruth Lawrence

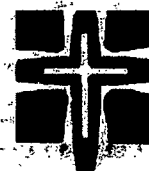
Our 2nd Annual Founder Award Recipient
Sunday, December 3, 2000 • 3:00 PM
Eastman Theatre



Tickets 716.288.2710 x122
Box Office Hours: Mon.-Fri. 8:30 am - 4:30 pm



Presented by the
Founders Club
to Benefit the
Sisters of Mercy



COMING NEXT WEEK:
Catholicism in cinema