England ready to meet challenges

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When Doug England was growing up in Owensboro, Ky., the farthest thing from his mind was politics, let alone becoming the mayor of New Albany, Ind.

And yet, that is exactly what he became. Not once, but three times. He was first elected in 1991 and then re-elected in 1995. Most recently, England was inaugurated as mayor of New Albany on Jan. 1.

England's family had no involvement in politics. His father was a warehouse foreman for a distillery, and his mother was a housewife. England, one of seven children, said it took everything they had in time and money to meet the needs of the family, and there was none left to get involved in politics.

As a child, England participated in sports. During grade school and junior high school he was on the baseball and football teams. He played second base in baseball and was an end in football.

When he was in high school, he took a job in order to have spending money.

"To make extra money, I bagged groceries for 50 cents an hour, working 28 hours a week," England said.

He also enjoyed going to school.

"My favorite subjects in high school were math and history, but I didn't do as well with English class. I had great ideas but had a problem expressing them," England said.

After graduating from high school, he joined the United States Air Force and gained experience as an air traffic controller.

That prepared him to become an air traffic controller in 1968 for the Federal Aviation Administration at Standiford Field in Louisville.

England met his wife, Michelle Kesler of Floyds Knobs, Ind., in Louisville in 1966 while both were working part-time summer jobs.

They have been married since 1967 and have one son who lives in Chicago with his wife and three sons.

Photo by Myra Hotze Carpenter

Steve Bush, president of the Floyd County Commissioners, looks on as Mayor Doug England makes a presentation Thursday, Jan. 17, to fourth grader Emily Keenan of Georgetown. Keenan, daughter of Teresa and Rick Keenan, was the first-place winner of the New Albany Floyd County Animal Control and Shelter's annual poster contest.

Even with having a family and while working full-time, he pursued a degree in business at IU Southeast, which he attained in 1977.

Kesler is also an IU Southeast graduate and is in her 39th year of teaching third grade at Lanesville Elementary.

"I couldn't do what I do without her understanding and support," England said.

England enjoys reading about history and politics, going to the theater and cooking.

England and his wife enjoy the theater and try to fit it into their schedules whenever possible. They are hoping to see "Phantom of the Opera" during its current run.

"We've seen it before," he said, "but we're looking forward to seeing it again."

He said they also take great pleasure in having friends and acquaintances come to their home for dinner.

Each year, the Englands donate a dinner for eight at their home to be auctioned at Magnifico, The Arts Council of Southern Indiana fund raiser. The funds raised support art education programs.

England and his wife enjoy traveling and like to stay at bed and breakfasts whenever possible.

Their love of bed and breakfasts prompted them to open their home in New Albany as one. They named it Rabbit Ridge and have entertained numerous guests there for five years. They closed it, however, when England became mayor.

He is a great admirer of John F. Kennedy and has taken to heart the quote from JFK's 1961 inaugural address, "Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country."

"I believe in giving back to the community and have served on a number of boards in an effort to do that," England said.

In 1984 his path took a definite turn toward a future in politics. Mayor Charles Hunter asked England to be the building commissioner and assistant to the mayor during his four-year term beginning in 1984.

Following his tenure with the Hunter administration, England worked in private industry until 1991 when he ran for mayor of New Albany and took office Jan. 1, 1992.

After completion of his second term in 1999, he returned to private industry until running for the office of mayor of New Albany in 2007.

"I decided to run again because the city wasn't progressing in the direction I thought it should," England said. "Even though I will be 64 on Feb. 13, I knew that I still had time to work to make things better."

He also said that his experiences in the Air Force as an air traffic controller, in private industry and being active in many community organizations, have provided him with insight into the problems and the potential for the city. He believes he is ready and able to meet the inevitable challenges.

England has several goals for his current administration. One project high on his list is to finish renovating the sewer system in New Albany. Another is to improve the streets in New Albany.

He also wants to renovate and attract new business to the downtown area.

"The new [YMCA] will serve as an anchor for growth downtown," he said. "Just as in a residential area, when a neighbor starts taking care of his property, the idea spreads to another and then another."

He does not intend to neglect New Albany's current industries while courting new business.

"I also want to work with current industries to determine their needs," England said. "Sometimes they seem to be forgotten, and I do not want to do that."

England also promotes citizen involvement.

"We must get more people in the community involved in government," he said. "The city is not going to get cleaned up, nor will it be improved, if the citizens do not help us."

"I encourage the establishment of neighborhood associations. People in an area know what is going on. They can report problems and have cleanup days and block watches. We have a couple of neighborhood associations that are doing great jobs, but we need more," he said.

A new administrative assistant, Cheryl Cotner, has been hired to help the mayor manage his busy calendar and accomplish his goals.

"I am very excited to be a part of Mayor England's administration and look forward to assisting him with his aggressive agenda over the next four years," Cotner said.

Cotner is a life-long resident of New Albany and a 2006 graduate of IU Southeast with a bachelor's degree in psychology.

One person in the business community who has an interest in England's new administration and the direction it will be taking is Randy Smith, co-owner of Destinations Booksellers in New Albany.

"I was a James Garner supporter, and it has taken me a long time to be persuaded to believe in Doug England," Smith said.

Smith has been observing England's words and actions. He has come to the conclusion that England is truly listening to what those who are interested in and believe in the community are saying is needed to move New Albany in a positive direction.

"I think he's going to do a great job," Smith said.

What's My Professor Reading?

Fran Squires
associate professor
education

"Murder Among the Owls"
By Bill Crider

'Show me a sane man and I will cure him for you.'

– C. G. Jung

Caple leads on and off court

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'She had definitely stepped up as a senior leader.'

Andrea Chambers
junior forward
IUS women's basketball

Brittany Caple, elementary education senior, is the lone senior on this year's women's basketball team, but this is not an unfamiliar position for her to be in.

"I was the only senior on my high school team," Caple said.

Maybe the familiarity of the position is the reason Caple has excelled as a leader for the Grenadiers. Her teammate Andrea Chambers, finance and economics junior, said Caple is doing a good job of leading this team.

"She had definitely stepped up as a senior leader," Chambers said. "She leads the team on and off the court."

Chambers said Caple is usually funny and happy-go-lucky and is often able to lighten the mood when tension arises on the team, but she knows there are times that do not call for pleasantry.

"She keeps it serious when it needs to be," Chambers said.

As Caple's career as a collegiate athlete comes to an end, she said she has enjoyed her time at IU Southeast.

"Overall it's been great," she said.

Caple said she has made a lot of great friends here and has been fortunate to be able to play alongside some gifted athletes.

"I've got to play with a lot of great players," she said.

Caple said it is hard to balance the duties of being a student athlete, but she manages to find time to work on her studies through a lot of late nights. She said sometimes she must do homework on the team bus on long road trips which is not the easiest of tasks.

"It's kind of hard to concentrate in a bus full of girls," Caple said.

The team has the full support of Robin Farris, Grenadiers' head coach, when it comes to academics.

"Coach is concerned about grades," Caple said.

Caple said her busy schedule does not allow much spare time, but she enjoys working with children. This past summer she worked for Greater South YMCA in Clarksville, Ind. as a counselor at their sports camp, teaching various sports to children.

The women's basketball team has struggled at times this season, but Caple said a tough schedule has prepared the team for KIAC and post-season play.

"We played a tough schedule," she said. "That was a good thing to get ready for the conference."

Caple said she really thinks her team has a chance to make some noise in the KIAC Tournament.

Caple is averaging 6.2 points per game and she leads the team in 3-point percentage for players with more than 10 attempts at 39.5 percent. As of Jan. 22, she is the 27th all-time leading scorer in IU Southeast women's basketball history with 745 career points.