Ballard enters race for Kansas House

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Barbara Ballard, associate dean of student life and director of the Emily Taylor Women's Resource Center at Kansas University, has announced that she is a Democratic candidate for the House of Representatives in the 44th District.

Ballard, a member of the Lawrence School Board who also is an assistant professor in the department of counseling psychology in the School of Education at KU, is the second Democrat seeking the House seat being vacated by Rep. Jessie Branson, D-Lawrence.

Joe Gilman, a software engineer in Lawrence, previously filed for the race and will face Ballard in the Aug. 7 primary.

Sandy Praeger, former Lawrence mayor and city commissioner, filed for the seat as a Republican.

The 44th House District covers areas of northwest Lawrence.

IN A WRITTEN statement announcing her candidacy, Ballard, who has been a member of the school board since 1985 and was president of the board in 1987, said she wants to continue the work Branson has done in the House for the past 10 years. Ballard was unavailable for comment this morning.

"I intend to serve with that same commitment to the people that has been the mark of Jessie's tenure," she wrote. "First and foremost, I will be responsive and work hard for the concerns of the 44th District."

Ballard also wrote that she will work for the state's schools and universities, drawing on her experience as a school board member.

Barbara Ballard

"THE PUBLIC school finance laws will be rewritten in the 1991 Legislature, and will focus on how to fairly divide the largest piece of the state budget between competing interests of the state's local school districts," she wrote. "I know the process, and can be our best advocate for fairness in the new law."

Ballard, whose age was unavailable, also commented in her written announcement on cuts in state funding to KU and other Board of Regents schools, which occurred during the 1990 session.

"The cut to the Regents budget imposed by the Governor and the Legislature at the end of the last legislative session has caused a serious and adverse impact on our University and hampers our ability to recruit and retain top-notch faculty and staff. I will support to the fullest extent and fight vigorously for the restoration of that reduction and for funding of the third year of the Margin of Excellence." The Margin was a three-year program to provide additional funding for state universities to benefit academic programs and improve faculty salaries. Funding for the final year was not passed in the legislative session this spring.

BALLARD, who said health care issues would be of special concern to her, also commented on the effects of reappraisal and classification on property taxes. She said "dramatic tax increases" that hit some Lawrence businesses remain a top issue.

"This inequity must be addressed as well as our heavy reliance on the property tax to pay for local schools and other local programs," she wrote.

Ballard and her husband Albert have a son, Greg, who is a sophomore at Southern Methodist University in Dallas.