

Sanders Proclaims '87 Race Will Be His Last Mayoral Bid

By CHARLES FINNIE

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Mayor Bernard Sanders, unanimously nominated by the Progressive Coalition Saturday as its 1987 mayoral candidate, said this race for mayor — win or lose — will be his last.

"Eight years is enough and I think it is time for new leadership, which does exist within the coalition, to come up," Sanders said, following a speech accepting the nomination from the coalition at its first political caucus.

Sanders said the decision that this would be his last bid for mayor was a difficult one to make, and one he had not finalized until Friday afternoon. He declined to comment on what he would do instead.

Alderman Terrill Bouricius, PC-Ward 2, said the three-term mayor's announcement marks a period of necessary growth for the coalition. "It's time to show this is a movement with an ideological base. He is the leader of the movement, but he is not the movement itself."

Alderman Gene Bergman, PC-Ward 2, also described Sanders' decision in terms of its positive effects on the coalition. "It lets people plan for the future and it gets rid of a lot of doubt," he said.

Sanders said the 1987 election might "perhaps be the hardest" mayoral race for the Progressives since their first victory in 1981, because they may have to face an essentially unified opposition.

"It appears that the Democrats and Republicans are finally wising up and understanding that they may as well get rid of the myth that there is a difference between the two parties and will be rallying around one candidate," he said.

If that occurs, Sanders said, "We are going to be in for the fight of our lives."

So far, Democrats Paul Lafayette, a Burlington alderman, and Caryl Stewart, a former city Democratic chairman, have announced they will attempt to unseat Sanders, and they will face off for the Democratic nomination.

The mayor's acceptance speech was interrupted frequently by cheers and applause, as he described the importance of the coalition and its work.

"What we are doing in the city of Burlington which is unique in the United States of America ... is to take on the Democratic Party, the Republican Party and the big-money interests in our community and have built an independent progressive movement which is fighting as hard as it can for peace and for social justice," Sanders said.

The mayor cited what he feels are the achievements of his administration, including: protecting the financial interests of the poor and working people of the city without raising property taxes in five years; creating "hundreds of new jobs"; the "revitalization of the Old North End"; rebuilding the streets and sidewalks of the city; and maintaining access to the waterfront.