

# Sharpe joins library board

By Chris Sykes  
Staff Writer

Mayor Eldridge Hawkins Jr. last week announced an appointment to fill a vacancy on the Orange Public Library board.

Hawkins said the decision to select Esney M. Sharpe for the board was easy. He said he believed her fundraising ability and management skills will be valuable in transforming the city's "troubled" historic library.

"Esney M. Sharpe is an exceptionally well-qualified longtime Orange resident who will be a leader in our communitywide effort to transform the library," said Hawkins. "She has extensive management and fundraising experience for nonprofit organizations. Her skills are extremely valuable as we seek funds to restore the library."

In filling vacancies on Orange's unpaid boards, Hawkins said his "Call to Service" program has allowed him to find what he believed were the most dedicated, best informed and highly experienced city residents through an application process.

"We will continue to actively recruit citizens to participate in the leadership of our city," said Hawkins. "The library is heavily used by Orange residents of every age, and the building itself is one of the treasures of our city. It is a registered national historic site built in 1901 and designed in classic Greek style by Stanford White, one of America's greatest architects at the turn of the 20th century. That's why preservation of the library building is central to our city's plans for redevelopment."

Sharpe has served as manager of facilities services and executive assistant to the president of Newark Community Health Centers and as a trustee of the 100 Legacy Academy Charter School in Newark.

Sharpe has a master's degree in theology from the International School of the Apostles in Newark in addition to a bachelor's from the Provision of Promise International Bible Training School of Ministry in Newark. There, she was a theology major and had a minor in business administration.

"My plans are to work with my fellow board members to improve the library's service, funding and infrastructure," Sharpe said. "Residents want a clean, safe and friendly place conducive to learning, reading and studying. I understand business and will work to help the library become financially strong."

Sharpe said while the library exists to serve the public with knowledge, the fiscal realities of managing and maintaining it cannot be overlooked. She said that is where her fundraising and management skills will be put to use.

"In today's economy, our libraries are faced with the challenge of trying to provide excellence on a very limited budget," said Sharpe.