

Time for political change

By Jennifer Lord/ Daily News Staff

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Lt. Gov. Kerry Healey should cut her hair and play up her smile.

Christy Mihos' wardrobe is more suited to a dapper businessman than a politician.

Grace Ross needs to get new glasses and spend a few hours shopping for clothes.

And Deval Patrick? The man just looks fabulous.

Fashion experts asked to make over the candidates for governor all had their own ideas about the four candidates' sartorial choices to date. They were all in agreement on one item: The state has never seen a field of such diverse politicians.

"He's not in the running anymore, but Tom Reilly is just typical of what we see in our politicians, -- neat, tidy, nothing too great or too bad," said Julie Foley, an image consultant and Framingham State College graduate who is based in Hingham.

Patrick, the man who beat him for the Democratic nomination, is considerably more polished. The first African-American nominee from a major party, Patrick favors dark, well-cut suits.

"He's extremely appealing," said Rhona George, a Framingham-based Mary Kay independent sales representative who is now driving her fifth pink Cadillac. "He's captivating. He has charisma -- he's just got it."

"What can you say? The guy is a classy guy," Foley said. "His suits are clearly expensive, and expensive usually means 'I'm a smart person.' This is a guy who knows what works for him."

Foley said Patrick should stick to non-traditional ties and perhaps add more color to his wardrobe.

"Deval Patrick, if the dress code was business casual, he'd look very sharp in a dark dress shirt with one button open," Foley said. "He's very chic and I can't make fun of it. He's definitely easy on the eyes."

Yolanda Cellucci, owner of Yolanda's in Waltham, said Patrick could easily carry off what she termed a "Regis Philbin look," with a colored shirt and matching tie.

"I love pencil stripe suits," Cellucci said. "I would love to see him in a dark suit with a silver pencil stripe. He could easily carry it off."

Bob Yesue, owner of Roc's Salon in Marlborough, openly said he's backing Healey, the Republican nominee for governor. He was impressed, however, by Patrick's recent appearance in Marlborough.

"He looks great," Yesue said. "To me, he should do nothing, because what he's doing is working for him."

For Healey, Yesue would suggest an update to her current blond shoulder-length bob.

"She's a little '50-ish and '60-ish for me when it comes to her hair," Yesue said. "She needs something a little more creative -- but that's her."

Foley agreed, calling Healey's hair "classic, but dated."

"If she hired me, I'd say 'Kerry. What's with the hair?'" Foley said. "It's beautiful, but the message is 'I'm sexy and alluring,' especially when it covers part of her face. The effect is 'I could be a little mysterious without a lot of trouble,' and that's not the message she should be sending."

Foley would recommend an entirely new hairstyle for Healey -- shorter and definitely not parted down the middle. She also suggested that Healey should add more color to her wardrobe and consider sticking to suits with pants rather than skirts.

"I always recommend pants to businesswomen," Foley said. "It's definitely an equalizer. Kerry Healey is a beautiful woman, very poised. Her height is to her advantage -- on average, we vote for taller people to represent us."

Cellucci believes Healey's classic look works for her but she would add some dark greens or winter white to her overall palette.

"I could see her going a little Jackie O. in some looks, maybe an updated Jackie O.," Cellucci said. "She's not a frilly type, that's for sure. I might change her blouses, add an ascot tie or maybe a soft ruffle, nothing too frilly. She does look good in anything straight and sleek."

George said Healey should be using a darker tone around her eyebone to call attention to her eyes and a brighter lipstick to show off her smile.

"Her best feature is her smile. She's got a dynamite smile," George said.

"I think she needs to smile more," Foley agreed. "Politicians are charming people and part of that is that big toothy smile. Otherwise, she looks great. She's an attractive woman, she dresses well -- she's conservative to a fault."

Mihos, who is running as an independent, has a style that suits his dark horse candidacy.

"He's a character, and his clothes say that as well," Foley said. At a recent debate, he wore a navy suit with a bold pinstripe with a neat pattern tie that suited him well, she noted.

"He's dapper. He has style," Foley said. "You know it before he opens his mouth. Of all of them, he looks the least like a politician -- but he's a businessman, that's where he comes from."

Mihos would be able to get away with what Foley termed a "Johnny Cochran look," with colored shirts offset by white collars and cuffs.

"It's not a look I would usually recommend for a politician, but he pulls it off," Foley said.

Cellucci said Mihos has the personality to carry off bold accessories.

"I'd like to just see him in a black suit with a hot pink tie or a turquoise tie to make it look exciting," Cellucci said.

Grace Ross, the Green/Rainbow Party candidate, needs a complete change, the stylists agreed.

"She really needs a total makeover," Cellucci said. "The little I've seen of her, it's like, oh my God. I wouldn't fuss her up too much, because that wouldn't be her. But I would suggest some navy, red and ivory blazers, which she could mix up with tops and scarves and pants or skirts -- whatever she's most comfortable with. That would get her through a whole campaign."

Foley said she would need two days to give Ross a complete makeover, from a new hairstyle to a completely new wardrobe.

"The message (she sends with her clothes) is 'I don't care what I look like' and the subliminal message is 'I don't care how I would represent you,'" Foley said. "Look the part. She's a bright woman, she's fairly articulate and she just looks poor. She looks like an unhappy person who just got lucky enough to get on the stage. She's happy with the way she looks, and that's disappointing."

George would like to see Ross eliminate her glasses -- or at least get a smaller pair -- and shape her eyebrows. She needs to use a soft colored lipstick to not draw attention away from her eyes, she said.

"Her best feature is her eyes, but the glasses she has are too large and can be a barrier between her and her audience," George said. "The biggest trick is to get people to look at your best feature."

"It's OK to be pretty and political," George added. "We are a visual society. People who are very bright and care a lot, they think, 'I don't have to fuss with my appearance.' But it is important."

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