

Ex-Reagan aide likes Murphy's 'quiet image'

By Tim Richard
staff writer

"A quiet image. Not someone who blows his own horn."
Professional campaign consultant Edward J. Rollins applies that description to two men. One is California Gov. George Deukmejian, whom Rollins helped elect in 1982.

The other is Oakland County Executive Daniel T. Murphy, who plans to seek the Michigan governorship in 1988.

"The key thing is to get Dan around the state," said Rollins, who left the Reagan White House political staff several weeks ago to become a managing partner in a political consulting firm.

Rollins, a 42-year-old Californian, has been retained by Murphy to guide his bid for the Republican gubernatorial nomination.

PERHAPS SIGNIFICANTLY, Rollins said he recently turned down an offer to work for Wayne County Executive William Lucas, who also is gearing up a 1988 bid for the GOP gubernatorial nod.

Rollins called Lucas "a fine man," took some credit for wooing the lifelong Democrat into the Republican fold last year, and conced-

ed Lucas currently is the "front runner" in any GOP contest.

But that doesn't make Lucas the best bet to topple Democratic Gov. James J. Blanchard next year, Rollins said, because:

- Lucas' lead is based "only on name identification."
- As a Republican for less than a year, Lucas can't "automatically jump to the head of the line."

- After an early effort to "coronate" Lucas, his campaign has lost momentum and is "falling apart" due to legal and personality controversies surrounding his chief of staff, Dennis Nystrum.

- Lucas has weak spots on his public record — he supported Blanchard's 1983 income tax increase, borrowed money from the state to balance the county's budget and supported Democratic U.S. Sen. Carl Levin in the 1984 campaign.

MURPHY THIS week began a statewide swing in which he will appear before the 6th Congressional District Republican Committee in Brighton, the Kalamazoo County Republican Committee, monthly luncheon and the Monroe County Republican Women's dinner.

Rollins' strongest advice to Murphy: "Focus



'A quiet image. Not someone who blows his own horn.'
Consultant Edward Rollins talking about county executive Dan Murphy (left)

on accomplishments."
One ace card: With one-ninth of Michigan's population, Oakland County has secured one-third of all new jobs in the state.

Another ace: Oakland's county tax rate has been shaved down while state taxes have been raised.

Murphy likes that advice. Clearly uncomfortable with newsmen's questions about Lucas' staff problems, the Oakland executive happily rattled off figures on Oakland's role in bringing the northern suburbs into the high-tech "information economy."

"We've seen 15,000 to 20,000 new jobs in the last three or four years, and by 1990 we'll have

30,000 new jobs," he said. While population in most of the state is stagnant, Murphy sees Oakland rising from the one-million level of 1980 to 1.3 million by 1990.

MURPHY HAS a ho-hum image, according to political columnists. Although he has headed the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments and has cordial working relationships with Lucas and Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, the Oakland executive is little known outside.

That's a challenge to Rollins. "George Deukmejian was similar," he said. "He was an effective attorney general but had a quiet image — a man of accomplishment with a quiet style, not someone who blew his own horn."

Deukmejian defeated Democratic nominee Tom Bradley, mayor of Los Angeles, in 1982.

WHAT IS the significance of Murphy's landing Ed Rollins as a consultant?

Rollins said it doesn't constitute a Reagan endorsement because the White House keeps hands off state primaries.

Joe Koolenberg, Oakland County GOP chairman, said, "Ed Rollins, a former campaign adviser for Ronald Reagan, is working for Murphy. There will be an association."

Koolenberg himself is endorsing Murphy. Rollins is a partner in a firm called Russo-Watts & Rollins, Inc., with offices in Washington, D.C. and Sacramento. He will work on about a half-dozen campaigns across the nation.

Patrick News, Murphy's assistant executive and political right arm, learned weeks ago that Rollins was leaving the White House and called John Grist, the Bloomfield Township businessman and a top GOP money-raiser. Grist put Rollins in touch with the Murphy people.

ROLLINS' OWN role will be to spend two to three days a month "keeping my thumb on the pulse" of the Murphy campaign and "reading trouble spots."

An associate, Anne Stanley, will spend one to two days a week in Michigan working on organization.

The campaign will be handicapped by the \$1 million lid set by state law, Rollins said.

Besides collecting a consulting fee that wasn't revealed, Rollins will take a percentage of the \$600,000 to \$700,000 that will go into broadcast advertising.

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