

# Behind every successful man stood the Dem Women's Caucus

By SHIRLEE IDEN and TIM RICHARD

Women didn't reign at the recent Democratic state convention, but they often played political kingmakers. With three state supreme court and eight education posts to fill for the Nov. 2 ballot, the Women's Caucus backed three women candidates. Only one won. But women played important roles in pushing the candidacies of males. The only successful woman candidate was Dawn Jackson, who with incumbent George Edwards III was nominated without opposition for the Wayne State University Board of Governors.

ANNETTA MILLER of Huntington Woods said the Women's Caucus approached former U.S. Rep. Martha Griffiths, now retired in Farmington Hills, to run for the State Supreme Court. Mrs. Griffiths declined.

Marlin Jean Kelly, who at 38 is retiring from politics after two terms on the State Board of Education, gave the nominating address for Jim Watson, an English professor at Northern Michigan University running for the state House. Watson defeated Dr. Wilfred Webb, retiring superintendent of Hazel Park schools, 247 to 460 for the first state board nomination.

A TWO-BALLOT battle erupted for the second state board post. Jean Ferguson of Westland of the Eastern Michigan University staff, gave the nominating address for a male candidate, Dr. Graecinda Salas, director of music programs at Wayne State University. Mrs. Peiponen, who twice had unsuccessfully sought state educational nominations

from her party, declined to try again this year.

"The Latino minority is not represented on the Democratic ticket," Mrs. Peiponen told the delegates.

The Women's Caucus candidate was Dr. Gladys Beckwith, associate professor of American thought and language at Michigan State University.

Dr. Kalas won on the second ballot, 1,724 to 1,289. He had majorities in the suburban 2d, 12th, 15th and 17th districts. Dr. Beckwith carried the 18th and 19th.

NO WOMEN entered the race for University of Michigan regents, and incumbents Robert Niederlander and Gerald Dunn were nominated for new terms by acclamation.

Niederlander is a Birmingham attorney and Dunn is a lobbyist for Livonia and several western Wayne County school districts.

The Women's Caucus took no position on the U.M. race.

"My own commitment to open up the system for women and minorities has found a willing ally in Bob Niederlander," said incumbent U.M. Regent Sarah Power in the nominating speech she never got to deliver.

She created Niederlander with help in increase representation of women on university committees and with supporting active recruitment of women into all departments.

ANOTHER DISAPPOINTMENT to the women came when Carole Lark, a junior high teacher from the Kalamazoo suburb of Portage, was defeated by Michael Simdra, a law student from Lansing.

Hurling Mrs. Lark's effort was the campaign of another woman, Adele Gruner, recently retired as administrative assistant to the dean of instruction at Northern Michigan Community College in Traverse City.

The Women's Caucus came within five votes of endorsing Zolton Ferency for a two-year supreme court nomination. Ferency bolted the Democratic Party during the Vietnam war years to help found the Human Rights Party. Some Democrats had asked him to seek a Democratic court nomination as a method of wooing back the HRP. Ferency lost by a 34 margin to Wayne County Circuit Judge Charles Kaufman.

"That tactic may have hurt the Women's Caucus more than it helped," The Ferency's thing drove some people right up the wall," said Lu Giese, a 18th District activist and spokesperson for the caucus.

SO ANGRY were some union leaders at the teachers and women for their support of Ferency, said Mrs. Giese, that one "just went off his bean and was determined to punish us."

"This was a low point in party politics, but sometimes there has to be a setback before you break through."

The votes were unbelievably close in the Lark and Beckwith defeats, in spite of the great pressure against us.

"Our major position was to endorse one woman for each board, and this was a reasonable position."

At present, there are 32 statewide education posts in Michigan—eight each on the state board and the boards of U.M., MSU and Wayne. Of the 24 seats held by Democrats, only five are occupied by women and one of those is Ms. Kelly, who is leaving.

Some Democratic women leaders were strongly opposed to Ferency's candidacy.

Oakland County Chairperson Betty Howe of Rochester said, "Zolton was a fine candidate for governor in 1966, but that was another day. Perhaps we didn't support him well enough then, but we can't support him in his cautious politics today. It's not the quality we want on the supreme court."



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