

Ferency rebounds for high court

By TIM RICHARDS

Zolton Ferency sat among the delegates at the recent Democratic state convention, the collar of his sport shirt open and grinned even though he was getting beaten. Win or lose, politics is always fun for Zolton Ferency.

They're hunching toward the center, the Democratic Party believes the great struggle will be in the center, not on the fringes," he said as he watched a reporter talk the vote.

The vote showed Democratic delegates preferred to nominate Waste Circuit Judge Charles Kaufman for a two-year seat on the Michigan Supreme Court. Kaufman beat Ferency by a 31 margin. And it was clear that the effort of liberal Democrats to bring Ferency and the Human Rights Party (HRP) back into the Democratic fold was being emphatically rejected.

FERENCY WILL STILL be on the ballot for the supreme court, however. The HRP, which he helped form after splitting with the Democrats, had already nominated him for a six-year term on the high court. Ferency was a third of the Democrats' effort to get him the six-year nomination, he would take it and run as an HRP candidate for the six-year term.

When the Democrats failed to welcome him back, it meant there would be three major candidates for the six-year term: HRP's own incumbent Lawrence Lindeman, Democratic nominee Bob Moody and Ferency.

Many Democrats believe that with Moody and Ferency splitting the liberal



ZOLTON FERENCY

vote, Lindeman will be a shoo-in on the non-partisan ballot.

THE EXISTENCE of HRP is what Ferency calls "evolutionary politics—an old tradition."

By organizing on the Democrats' political left, HRP hoped to force the Democratic Party, leftward in order to win back those votes. But as Ferency noted, the Democrats are hunching toward the center.

Ferency will conduct a colorful campaign seeking a high court spot in 1982 with an HRP nomination, he had an

\$11,000 budget and picked up more than 500 votes.

He plans an even bigger budget this time. Some supporters talk in terms of \$100,000—though that figure is a goal rather than an accomplished fact.

"LINDEMER HAS been there on the court two years and he has a record," said Ferency. "His eyes light up. I've been confronting him many years. He was a former Republican Party chairman at the time I was Democratic chairman."

He'll vote for corporate interests as against popular interests. Look at the decisions on employment rights. Look at the decisions on civil rights. Freedom of speech. Constitutional questions. Personal rights like child custody. Lindemer's record is in favor of denying benefits under social legislation.

Lindemer's opinions in those cases put him squarely in the conservative camp.

MANY DEMOCRATS don't approve of Ferency's coalition politics.

Ada Vagnozzi, party and labor leader from Farmington Hills, called it "blackmail" for Ferency to run as the HRP nominee when he denied the Democratic nomination.

Other labor leaders seethed with rage at the mere mention of Ferency's name. County Commissioner Bernard Lennon said, "Everyone is entitled to one mistake. Zolton made many."

The Women's Caucus of the Democratic convention came within a few votes of endorsing Ferency. Many women believe labor punished the women for their near support of Ferency by denying women can-

didates several education board nominations.

Ferency had a fairly normal rise to power in his early years. Just doctor degree, law degree with honors from Detroit College of Law, three years of graduate study in labor law at Wayne State's law school, deputy and then director of the state workers' compensation department (1955-60), executive secretary to then-Gov. John Swainson (1961-62) and Democratic state chairman (1963-64).

But as state chairman, he began criticizing Democratic legislators for not following the party platform and he began cutting up then President Lyndon Johnson on the Vietnam war. He was forced out of the party leadership.

Today he makes a living as associate professor in Michigan State University's School of Criminal Justice. And campaigns as an HRP nominee every two years. And has fun.

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Road board backs M-59 widening

The Oakland County Road Commission will officially declare its support for the widening of the county's principal mid-county east-west traffic artery, M-59, at a public hearing on Sept. 28 at Highland Junior High School, 395 N. John Richard Township.

The road board has adopted a resolution supporting the proposed widening of M-59 from two lanes to five. It would like to see the expansion go from the proposed M-275 and I-75 to I-75.

The Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation is now widening the highway between the west limits of Pontiac and the proposed route of M-275. County road commissioners say that public safety is presently jeopardized by traffic volume far in excess of what can be safely handled by two lanes. They also cite hazards created by the present alignment of the highway.

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