

Suburbanites yearn to make Dem, GOP tickets

By TIM RICHARD

Count Alice Gilbert, Mel Larsen, James O'Neil and James Ryan in. Put a question mark by Betty Howe.

Count Phil Power out but still active.

That was the suburban lineup at mid-week as candidates lined up for Republican and Democratic nominating conventions this weekend.

JUDGE GILBERT, who won a seat on the Oakland Circuit Court bench two years ago after several years as a Birmingham district judge, said she will seek a Republican nomination to the Michigan Supreme Court.

"I believe concern for the victim as well as the accused is essential," said the graduate of Wellesley College and Northwestern University Law School.

Whether she will face a fight on the convention floor is unknown. Rarely does an incumbent get a supreme court nomination without a battle, however.

Ryan, an incumbent justice and Redford Township resident, will have no trouble getting the other GOP nomination.

Ryan was a Wayne County Circuit judge before being appointed by Gov. Milliken three years ago to the state's highest court. Ryan replaced Justice John B. Swainson and in 1976 won the remaining two years of Swainson's term when he faced the voters.

Democrats will renominate incumbent Justice G. Mennen Williams and one other person to run against Ryan and the second GOP nominee. While nominations are made by parties, the candidates run as non-partisans. The top two candidates among four will be elected Nov. 7.

Two years ago, voters split their tickets, picking incumbents Ryan and Thomas Giles Kavanagh of Troy. Kavanagh ran as an independent when he was denied renomination by the Democrats, an option allowed incumbents by the state constitution.

STATE REP. Mel Larsen of Oxford will end three terms in the legislature, pledging "to mount the most serious Republican challenge for the office of secretary of state in more than a decade."

Larsen, 41, has the backing of legislative and Oakland County Republican leaders. The former teacher and coach has a reputation as a GOP liberal who would back Milliken programs when others quaked.

The office he seeks, third highest in state government, has been held for two terms by Democrat Richard A. Austin, who will seek renomination. The post has been in Democratic hands since G. Mennen Williams, as governor, led a Democratic landslide in the recession year of 1964.

JIM O'NEIL, a Ford Motor Co. design center administrator, has tried to run for U.S. representative and senator unsuccessfully. He was successful when he sought seats on the Schoolcraft College Board of Trustees and State Board of Education.



ALICE GILBERT



JAMES RYAN



JAMES O'NEIL



BETTY HOWE



PHIL POWER

O'Neil is making a new bid for a Republican nomination to the state board. He won a post on that three-member body under the old constitution in 1963 and won another a full eight-year term on the new board in the Romney campaign of 1964. He lost in the Watergate year of 1974.

Noted for his lengthy and elaborate platforms, O'Neil this year is calling for "more emphasis on teaching citizenship in schools...not only the basic three R's but the three additional R's of rights, responsibility and respect."

UNDER CONSIDERATION for lieutenant governor is Oakland County Democratic Chairperson Betty Howe. If her name isn't a household word, consider that in 1974 she circulated letters statewide contending that Milliken's hand-picked choice for lieutenant governor, James Damman, had

been involved in Troy land dealings that constituted a conflict of interest with his Troy city offices.

Damman was cleared of any legal wrongdoing, but his political star has dimmed.

A Detroit newspaper blew the whistle on Damman, but it was Betty Howe who did the spadework.

Mrs. Howe, of Rochester, works in the Bendix Corp. executive offices in Southfield. She succeeded to the head of the Oakland Democratic party in 1975 when Morley Winograd became state chairman.

Mrs. Howe is under consideration by State Sen. William Fitzgerald, the Democratic gubernatorial nominee who is under terrific pressure from the women's caucus to select a woman as his running mate. The convention does the actual nominating, but it's habitual for the gubernatorial nominee to get his wish.

ALTHOUGH HE ran second in the five-way Democratic race for the U.S. Senate nomination, Phil Power is remaining on leave of absence as chairman of Suburban Communications Corp., parent of Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

Speculation that either he or his wife, University of Michigan Regent Sarah Goddard Power, might be tapped for Fitzgerald for lieutenant governor.

"Fitz hasn't contacted us," said Power last week as he stored away campaign materials for a future year. "Sarah and I have told Fitz we'd be happy to talk to him. But we're not campaigning. There's nothing to campaign for."

"I'll be active politically this fall. I told both Carl (Levin, who won the senate primary) and Fitz I would be happy to help in the fall campaign, to

speak on their behalfs. My intention this year is to help beat Bob Griffin and Bill Milliken."

Persons who have lost congressional campaigns have often accepted nominations for the State Board of Education.

Power ruled that out, with the words: "Not this year."

But he is saving the mailing lists, phone number lists, correspondence, brochures, buttons, bumper stickers and press releases for future use and reference.

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