Detroit foe pushed for control of water board

By TOM LONERGAN and TIM RICHARD

George Kuhn says he doesn't want to "build an empire." But the Oakland County drain commissioner would like to leave a monument.

The monument he has in mind is re-The monument he has in mind is regional control of the water and sewerage department that serves some 100 southeastern Michigan communities. Since it was founded, the department has been under the total control of the city of Detroit. The board members and director are all appointees of the Detroit mayor. Tuesday morning Kuhn and his political friends in the suburbs will launch a petition drive to regionalize the water board on a one-person, one vote basis. Detroit would have three of the nine seats.

FOR MUCH of his political career, Kuhn has been at odds with Detroit, the city where he was born and grew up. As mayor of Berkley in the early 1960s, he led a group of suburban mayors opposed to a city income tax on non-residents working in Detroit.

As a Republican state seasor from 1967-70, he was at odds with leading Detroit black politicians over civil disturbance-related laws in response to the 1967 riot.

been a persitent critic of the Detroit sewer and water system management and rate hikes. He is aiming for a re-ferendum on the November 1980 ballot. Both critics and allies of George Kuhn on the Oakland County Board of Commissioners consider him a very adept politician.

KUHN, 54, was born in the Trumbull

KUHN, \$4, was born in the Trumbull and Grand River area. His father, a doctor, was once president of the Detroit Board of Education.

Kuhn grew up in the Boston-Chicago Boulevard area. During the 1930s, it was "considered one of the nicer spots," he said. Now a historical district, the area has been referred to as the "Bloomfleid Hills of the "30s."

His paper route customers along Boston Boulevard included such prominent names as the Fishers and Briggs.

In the 1940s, Kuhn's service in the Navy during World War II was sandwiched between college. He graduated from Central Michigan University in 1947 in business administration. His naval training as a fiscal officer included courses at Harvard.

The post-war years saw Kuhn join Ford Motor Co. management. From supervisor of manufacuturing and assembly coordination at the Highland Park plant, he was promoted to the production development staff under Ford's then-vice president Robert S. McNamara, who was later company



GEORGE KUHN

IN THE 1950s, Kuhn, a life-long Republican, was part of the beginning white exodus from Detroit for the northern and western suburbs. In Berkley Charles of the property of the provided of th

city have the right to call in the National Guard to quell any disturbance.

KUIN'S POLITICAL battles haven't always been with Detroit Democrats. For the past five years, he and Oak-land County Executive Daniel Murphy, also a Republican, have been at odds over the merger of the drain commission with the county's department of public works.

Both agree they should be merged departments under his administration as part of unifying county government under the executive.

Kuhn maintains both departments

the issue since 1975, But the issue won't likely be resolved until the Michigan Legislature strengthens Public het 139, which allows counties to adopt the county executive form of government. Since the only executive of a large Michigan county is a Republican, the Democratic-controlled legislature has kept the county executive law relatively weak.

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public works.

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Kuhn maintains both departments should be under a separately electrophile works commissioner.

Current state law doesn' give a county Board of Public Works, under the executive, the power to issue bonds or build new sewer systems. That authority is under the drain commissioner.

Both sides have been in court over

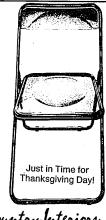






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