

Police chief enters race

In his first try for an elected office, a south Oakland County Republican will take on the only countywide elected Democrat, Sheriff Johannes Spreen.

James V. Stewart, Huntington Woods Director of Public Safety, announced last week he will seek the GOP nomination for the four-year post. Candidates for the fall election will be nominated at the Aug. 5 primary election.

Stewart, 54, said he hopes to overcome Spreen's "name recognition" advantage by talking issues, "and perhaps getting the incumbent to wrestle with those issues."

AMONG THE issues, according to Stewart, are Spreen's "ridicule" of local police chiefs in the county and the incumbent's refusal to cooperate with county Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson's controversial Organized Crime Strike Force.

Spreen angered a number of local police chiefs when at the height of the Oakland County child killer case three years ago, he criticized the investigation, led by state police and local departments, at a law enforcement conference in Atlanta. A suspect in the case has never been found.

"Spreen talks of cooperation in one breath and then in the next he openly ridicules the chiefs of police in Oakland County," Stewart said in a prepared statement. "He has referred to them as 'incompetent,' as 'pet rocks' and 'near-dethals'."

Spreen, 60, sheriff since 1972, called Stewart's charges "ridiculous" and said the Republican challenger "is the personally picked puppet of our prosecutor."

Stewart said, "Brooks and I are friends. That doesn't necessarily mean he's going to control me. 'Brooks and I and Dick (assistant county prosecutor Richard) Thompson have had disagreements."

"The sheriff has absolutely refused to become involved in the organized crime strike force. You don't solve any problem by sticking your head in the sand."

Spreen has been a long-time critic of the Republican Patterson's crime strike force, particularly since a strike force operation implicated top Pontiac police officials in a numbers ring. The officials were eventually cleared of obstruction of justice and perjury.

STEWART, WHO'S been Huntington Woods public safety director for nearly 17 years, is vice chairman of the organized crime strike force advisory committee and president of the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police.

He said south Oakland police chiefs have "time and again gone on record in support of an organized crime strike force."

Stewart said he didn't know if he'll have a primary opponent. There has been speculation that Leo Hazen, of



JAMES STEWART
Taking on Spreen

Walled Lake, a former county under-sheriff, may run again. Hazen lost to Spreen in 1972 and 1976.

Unions

Women want in on the action

Eula Booker thinks union members need a better deal — but this time from one another.

When it comes to holding elected offices in unions, women and minorities haven't been getting a good deal, she thinks. In many instances, women feel they will have so little influence, they don't even bother to turn out for union meetings.

As a new labor program specialist with Michigan State University, Eula Booker, a union member for 11 years, is out to change that feeling. Her job is to educate women about their unions.

"The ultimate goal is to get women elected to leadership posts in their unions," said Ms. Booker. "But we also want to get women involved, we want to show them the ways they can get involved, not only in their unions, but also in their local communities. We want to make them more politically aware of what's going on."

MS. BOOKER thinks the history of the labor movement parallels the history of the business community: Men might let women in, but they don't want them to run the place. Until Ms. Booker's election two years ago, women only held the post of recording secretary in her local, even though about 65 percent of the workers there are women.

MSU is one of six universities in the state participating in a two-year state and federally funded Leadership

Training Project for Minorities and Women. By sponsoring educational programs across the state, the project hopes to encourage more participation by these groups.

At MSU the program is sponsored by the School of Labor and Industrial Relations. Assistant Director Dale Brickner estimates that about 25 percent of the 1.3 million union workers in the state are minorities and more than a third are women. Brickner says the female membership in unions in Michigan is higher than the nationwide average because many office and professional workers have been unionized.

Ms. Booker's job at MSU is to sponsor one-day seminars and longer programs for female workers to explain some of the basics of unionism. They include learning about parliamentary procedure, union administration, grievance handling, collective bargaining, political awareness and even assertiveness training if it's necessary.

The programs usually are scheduled during evenings or weekends in the communities where the women work and child care is provided if necessary.

MANY WOMEN don't participate in union activities, because they have too many responsibilities at home.

"I can understand that," says Ms. Booker. "But, there also are many women who don't participate because they don't know how," she says.

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