

In prosecutor's race

Challenger faces uphill battle against 'media star'

By TOM LONERGAN

There will be an election for Oakland County prosecutor Nov. 4, although Democratic candidate Martin Krohner thinks the news media has done most of the talking in letting people know about it.

Krohner, of Farmington Hills, faces the uphill task of unseating two-term Republican incumbent L. Brooks Patterson, who is known statewide in the Aug. 5 primary. Patterson received more than 45,000 votes running unopposed. Krohner, who placed on the Democratic side, tallied 17,121 votes.

Patterson says his campaign time has been largely spent slumping for this presidential candidate Ronald Reagan and plugging his political drive to put a capital punishment referendum before voters in 1982.

"We're not going out to pick any fights," said Patterson in a recent interview. "We're not going to give our opponent any exposure by picking a fight with him."

KROHNER, an assistant prosecutor in Wayne County, is making his first bid for public office. Asked recently what lessons he was taking to the campaign, Krohner responded, "How many lessons do you have?"

Krohner calls Patterson a full-time media star. Referring to the frequent press conference he called by the prosecutor on welfare fraud cases, Krohner brought up the controversial Oakland County Police Force and other issues, Krohner asked, "Is he doing it merely to promote himself or to inform the public?"

The prosecutor's office, says Krohner, has been busy in enforcing the state's mandatory gun law, which carries a minimum two-year jail sentence for those using a weapon in committing a crime. And Krohner is critical of a Patterson policy change regarding those charged with carrying a concealed weapon.

Patterson CALLED the criticism, particularly regarding the county's crime rate, "slightly off." He said Oakland has maintained a lower rate of major crimes than neighboring Wayne or Macomb County.

His office doesn't place baggage gun handling on gun sale cases, said Patterson. Those charged in drug, armed robbery, breaking and entering, involuntary manslaughter and repeat offenders "must be treated as a special category," Patterson said. He said a policy of no plea bargaining on carry concealed weapons charges was changed last year because some arrested "did not deserve a five-year felony sentence."

"What I was getting was college kids with a mother's pistol under the seat," said Patterson. "That's not what I was going after."

KROHNER SAYS the media has created a misconception that Patterson's office doesn't plea bargain sentences, which he calls a "misconception."

He said enough judges and prosecutors in Michigan would have to do it. Krohner said.

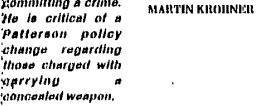
Regarding the death penalty, Krohner said, "I just think it's a deterrent. It hasn't stopped the drug-dealer with a gun. It's not a deterrent."

Basically, it's a deterrence thing. The appeals for death penalty sentences and the appeals for life sentences are not appeals for life. It would probably be cheaper to keep them in jail the rest of their lives. Krohner is referring to Patterson's promotion of the death penalty referendum, Krohner asked, "What does that have to do with the job of the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office?"

Patterson, who started the capital punishment battle three years ago, said he "never intended to get involved" in the issue, but changed his mind after several violent murders in the county, including what he described as a "thrill killing" of a 20-year-old Clarkson woman a year ago.

KROHNER SAID he would keep the prosecutor's organized crime strike force that Patterson set up. But the Democratic challenger said the contro-

Krohner charges the prosecutor's office has been lax in enforcing the state's mandatory gun law, which carries a minimum two-year jail sentence for those using a weapon in committing a crime. He is critical of a Patterson policy change regarding those charged with carrying a concealed weapon.



MARTIN KROHNER

Patterson countered, saying his office doesn't place bargain gun handling or gun sale cases. Those charged in drug, armed robbery, breaking and entering, involuntary manslaughter and repeat offenders "must go on trial or plead guilty." He said a policy of no plea bargaining on carrying concealed weapons charges was changed last year because some arrested "did not deserve a five-year felony sentence."

L. BROOKS PATTERSON

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versal three-year-old special investigation unit has become a police force under Patterson, a charge often leveled by Sheriff Johannes Spreen, the only countywide elected Democrat.

The strike force's first investigation of a man here racket in Pontiac killed Spreen and former Pontiac Police Chief William Hanger against Patterson. They said Patterson was using the strike force for political purposes.

Patterson said the strike force has critics "because we're doing something." He said the 12-man unit, which includes seven county investigators and four state police detectives, is supported by "most local police departments who don't have the

time or skills" to investigate like the strike force. "Really, the open critic is the sheriff," said Patterson.

PATTERSON has a much larger campaign treasury than Krohner.

According to campaign finance reports filed with the county clerk after the Aug. 5 primary, Patterson's committee reported a balance of \$15,787, to Krohner's \$776.

As of early September, Krohner had raised \$1,811 for the election, compared with Patterson's \$67,207.

Krohner's main contributors have been the United

Auto Workers (\$1,500) and the county Democratic party which made an "in-kind" contribution of \$613 by printing literature cards and bumper stickers.

Patterson reported cumulative campaign expenses totaling \$43,792 following the Aug. 5 primary. He also reported a campaign debt of \$10,000.

Major contributors during the current election year, according to Patterson's latest campaign finance report, include Walt Baumgartner, a Southfield attorney, \$1,000; Richard Bohan, attorney, 50 Clair Shores, \$700; Gary Crabe, owner of the 300 Bowl in Pontiac, \$700; Emmet Deane, a Warren supermarket owner, \$500; Neil Pink, a Detroit attorney, \$1,720.

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L. Brooks Patterson

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