

# Champagne named president of OU

By LETHA D. WILLIAMS

Champagne's appointment ends nearly a three-month search for a new president.

Newly appointed Oakland University President Joseph Champagne's 8-year-old daughter has never seen snow. But she'll see plenty soon, the 42-year-old psychologist predicted after his appointment was announced by OU's Board of Trustees on Tuesday.

"I understand there's a sale on snowshoes in Rochester," joked Champagne, who grew up in Connecticut and comes to OU from the University of Houston.

During the selection process, OU's Board of Trustees, which comprised the selection team, interviewed more than 280 applicants and was charged with violating the state's Open Meetings Act.

"The trials and tribulations of the selection process have sometimes been difficult to endure," said attorney David Lewis who chaired the trustees' presidential selection committee.

State Attorney General Frank Kelley sued trustees Nov. 7, charging that they violated the Open Meetings Act by interviewing presidential candidates in closed meetings.

THE SEVEN-MEMBER board divided into two committees, each consisting of two members and conducted secret interviews in separate rooms, Kelley charged.

The Open Meetings Act allows closed sessions only to discuss applications of candidates who request confidentiality. Kelley's suit charged, however, that trustees also discussed other materials.

Kelley's office became involved in the suit after an OU political science instructor and the Oakland Sall, the campus student newspaper, requested an investigation.

In a hearing before Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Alice Gilbert on Nov. 17, trustees were given permission to continue their closed sessions. But they were prohibited from immediately inaugurating their final choice.

That action cannot occur until Judge Gilbert decides whether trustees or Kelley were right in their interpretation of the Open Meetings Act. That prohibition, however, expires 30

days from the date of appointment (Dec. 9) unless the judge extends her order.

Almost entirely blocked in their efforts to gain admission to the closed sessions, Oakland Sall staff members waited outside doors and stalked hotel meeting rooms to uncover information. And hours before the public announcement of Champagne's selection, the Oakland Sall published the trustees' decision in a special edition.

IN AN editorial, the Oakland Sall accused trustees of postponing a decision until busy final examination time,

and until after the paper's usual mid-year shutdown.

"They waited until the final issue of the Sall had been published for the semester to avoid any on-campus criticism of their presidential choice or process," the editorial charged.

"(Trustees) waited until the last possible minute to avoid embarrassment," it continued. "(Trustees) can't do anything with (Champagne) because of Judge Gilbert's restraining order which prevents (them) from inaugurating him."

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