

High marks

Lobbyist rates with OCC, parks officials

By Kathy Parrish
staff writer

In the state Senate, Kerry Kammer supported education and conservation.

While no longer an elected official, the former gubernatorial hopeful is still pushing those interests in Lansing.

Now a lobbyist, Kammer represents a growing number of educational institutions. Among those paying the Clarkston resident to look out for their state aid are Oakland Community College, Michigan Association of Media Education and five Oakland County K-12 districts — Berkley, Clarkston, Ferndale, Pontiac, and Waterford. Oakland Parks recently signed him to a year's contract at \$1,250 a month.

"THERE IS more and more legislation that affects Oakland County Parks," explained Lewis Winn, chairman of Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission.

"We wanted to go with someone who could best express our needs."

"I think it's important for you to have eyes and ears in Lansing," Kammer told the OCC board during a recent presentation.

"If I had \$11 million coming from a particular area, I'd like someone there watching out for it."



Kerry Kammer
senator becomes lobbyist

REPRESENTING PARTS of Oakland and Livingston counties in the Senate from 1974-1982, Kammer was known statewide for his support of education and conservation.

As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, he chaired subcommittees on school aid, the Department of Education, and Natural Resources.

He sponsored both the Wetlands Protection Act and Kammer Recreational Land Acquisition Trust Fund, which uses royalties from oil and gas drilling on state-owned lands to preserve environmentally and recreationally critical properties. In 1977, Kammer was named "legislative conservationist of the year" by the Michigan United Conservation Clubs.

But the Wayne State University grad found himself back in private life after running for higher office.

"I made the unwise choice of deciding to run for governor and got my ears trimmed," explained Kammer, who went into his family's insurance business after finishing out of the money in the 1982 Democratic primary.

AT THE REQUEST of some area K-12 school superintendents, Kammer headed back to the state capital to look out for their interests.

For a year and a half, he also has been a "legislative consultant" for Oakland Community College. Working at \$100 a day on the school's behalf, he has earned about \$15,000 lobbying for it.

Kammer takes credit for getting OCC \$1.1 million more in state aid this year. While this year's aid is \$11.6 million, last year the school received \$10.5 million.

Anthony D. Jarson, OCC's vice president for business and finance, believes Kammer was the major factor in getting the college the maximum 10.8 percent appropriations hike. The general state aid bill provided for increases ranging from 5-10.8 percent.

He said the former state senator also helped expedite an investment bill which benefits the college.

"He is effective," said Jarson. "He was very helpful in keeping that amount in the bill for us."

BEFORE THE OCC board last week to request a 24 month contract at \$2,000 a month, Kammer was backed by President Robert F. Roelofs.

"I've found him to be responsive to

or needs and effective in influencing action in Lansing," said Roelofs.

Kammer explained most of his activities on behalf of OCC are "fiscal." "It's a real problem for OCC. The perception in Lansing is that we have an affluent status," he explained.

"I have to impress upon legislators that OCC is unique and does a very good job. I just try to secure the maximum available aid in Lansing and try to protect the college's interests."

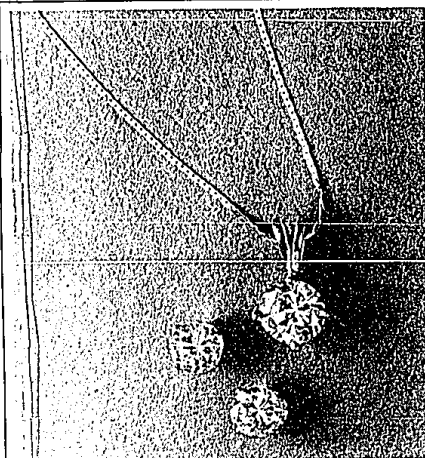
PUTTING OFF the contract request until their May meeting, board mem-

bers had varying reactions to it.

Trustee Earl Anderson, who had requested a closed session to discuss the issue, urged immediate action.

"We ought to do something tonight," he said, praising his longtime friend Kammer. "I'd rather know he's going away feeling we really care what goes on in Lansing."

But Trustee David Hackett of Rochester Hills expressed some concern. "I try to be pragmatic. But you hire people to represent you in Lansing and then hire people to tell them what you want them to represent you about."



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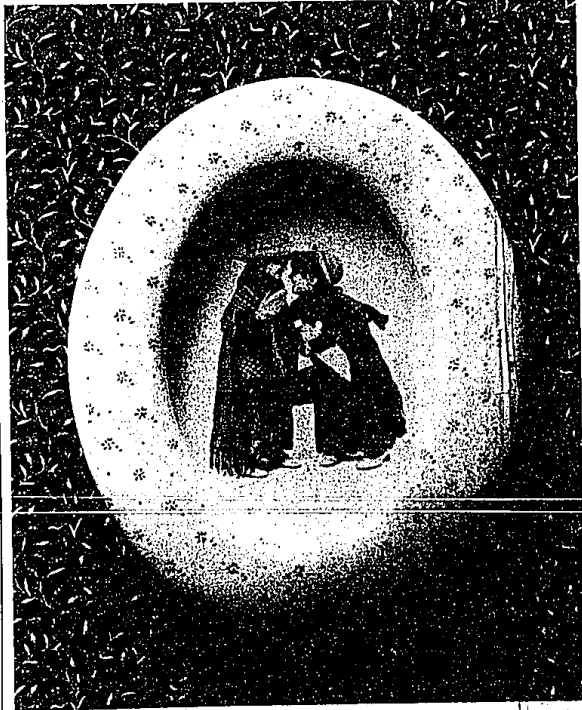
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