

# Cooper outpolls Ternan for judgeship



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

Jessica Cooper's winning smile tells the story of her margin of victory in the circuit court race as Al Holtz, her campaign co-chairman, reads precinct results and predicts a big win.

By Jackie Klein  
and Rich Perlberg  
staff writers

The final poll, and not a controversial attorney's poll, swept Jessica Cooper onto the Oakland County Circuit Court Tuesday as the Southfield district court judge scored an impressive victory over Lawrence Ternan, her Rochester Hills opponent.

"This is the poll that counted," Cooper said Tuesday night as it became apparent that, by receiving better than 65 percent of the vote, she will become the third woman among the 13 Oakland County Circuit Court judges.

Her backers said the win could mean a new era for circuit court races.

"My opponents talked about my judicial temperament, but according to the vote and attorneys who practice in court, it can't be that bad."

A September poll by the Oakland County Bar Association heavily favored Ternan. Nearly one in five of the respondents rated Cooper as unqualified for the job. Cooper said the

results were not valid and said they were a "scurrilous" attempt by "good old boys" to discredit her.

TUESDAY, COOPER was vindicated by beating Ternan 121,872 to 73,359. Although she did extremely well in Southfield, where she defeated Ternan 14,984 to 3,410 — a nearly 5-to-1 ratio — Cooper fared well with voters across Oakland County.

"I had a bipartisan support," said Cooper. "I carried Republican areas like West Bloomfield, Bingham, Milford and Orion. I had a wide variety of people from all walks of life."

"Intelligent electorate have a sense of fair play. They understood the smokescreen put up by my opponent and my credentials and reputation for fairness exceeded all the rumors and innuendoes."

Ternan, a municipal attorney for more than 20 years for Rochester Hills, formerly Avon Township, said the "large amount of money that was spent against us," played a significant role in the outcome.

He estimated that Cooper spent twice as much as he did.

"SHE SPENT" \$113,000 in the pri-

mary and at least \$100,000 in November," said Ternan. "I would expect to spend a total of \$125,000."

Ternan, who had strong Republican backing, also suggested that Democratic Gov. James Blanchard's record landslide victory may have hurt his chances.

"The campaign did become increasingly partisan, which is unfortunate, but it did," Ternan said Tuesday from his Rochester Hills home.

Ternan also said he was dismayed with the tone of the campaign in the final weeks.

"In the heat of the campaign, Judge Cooper spoke out strongly against the bar poll and it took off from there."

He would not criticize Cooper or her campaign.

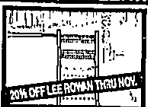
"We've been through a hard campaign and she has won," he said.

At her victory party Tuesday in Farmington Hills, Cooper suggested that the Ternan camp had set the campaign tone by filing a lawsuit because she didn't use the word "district" before "judge" in her political ads. She said Tuesday the suit was a publicity stunt. Other than that, she also was not critical of her opponent.

HER CAMPAIGN MANAGER, Barry Howard, said Cooper's election would "change the complexion of circuit court races. Unopposed circuit judges may be a thing of the past."

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