

Oakland Dems still drumming up a slate

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Disappointed and frustrated, Oakland Democratic officials this week were scrambling to find candidates for the 1988 county ticket.

"We're disappointed we haven't come up with candidates," said Louis L. Miller, party chairman. "One of the first things I said I'd do when I took office is try to put together a heckuva slate."

"There are a couple of prosecutor candidates we want to talk to," said the Farmington Hills businessman who himself was the 1984 county treasurer candidate.

DEMOCRATIC HOPES of a comeback were dealt a blow last week when Michael Alan Schwartz backed away from a race for prosecutor after feeding the rumor mill for weeks.

"I choose to leave those reasons private," said Schwartz of West

Bloomfield, who acknowledged that he would have to take a leave of absence from his job as head of the State Bar Attorney Grievance Commission to run.

Earlier, former parks director R. Eric Reickel backed away from a race for county executive because he couldn't afford to leave his post as Wayne County parks chief and move back to Oakland while still supporting his family.

On paper, Oakland is a "marginally Republican" county, meaning the GOP's advantage is less than 5 percent and could evaporate if a sufficiently potent Democrat runs.

From 1972 to '80 Democrats held only the sheriff's office. From 1988 to '92 they held the prosecutor's office.

THIS WAS supposed to be The Year for a Democratic comeback.

Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson, who led the Republican ticket, is retiring, so no incumbent will be running.

Democrats generally see county executive Daniel Murphy as no household word, despite his 14 years in office. President Reagan will be succeeded at the top of the ticket by the less colorful George Bush.

Republicans face a potentially divisive campaign for prosecutor. County commissioner John McDonald of Farmington and chief assistant prosecutor Richard Thompson of Clarkston have announced. Jeffrey Leib had planned to announce April 13, the day Patterson bowed out, but has delayed it until next week. Facing a recall as West Bloomfield Township trustee, Leib resigned Monday. Ironically, a leader

of the recall movement was Michael Schwartz.

Democrats have until May 31 to put together their ticket. Filing deadline is 4 p.m. that day. "We're gonna make deadline," Miller vowed.

A committee of party officers is recruiting and interviewing candidates. This includes Miller, president of Financial Data Systems Inc.; Darlene Berent, executive director; John Dewan, UAW official from Madison Heights; and Barry Howard, attorney from West Bloomfield.

"We're open," said Miller, meaning anyone can make a suggestion.

ANYONE COULD file as a Democrat for a county office. But it helps to have party backing, approval and sources.

Miller said a candidate needs two qualities: "First, appeal to a cross-section of the Oakland constituency. Second, have the capacity for raising funds."

The 1984 slate was: Sheriff Johannes Spreen for county executive; Troy attorney Robert W. Gagnik for prosecutor; Sheriff's Lt. Henry I. Hansen of Pontiac for sheriff; Miller for treasurer; Berent for drain commissioner; and Linda Lash for clerk-register.

Republicans set fund-raising events

Republicans in Oakland County have scheduled a series of fund-raisers, which chairman Larry Dickerson said are "necessary in order to fulfill the party's candidate support commitment."

Tickets for any of the events are available from county GOP headquarters in Pontiac at 338-1133. The lineup and prices:

- Spring Event — Friday, May 20, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in Roma's of Bloomfield, \$50. Co-chairs are County Executive Dan Murphy and U.S. Rep. William Broomfield.

Speaker is U.S. Rep. Robert K. Dornan of California.

- First Ladies Tea — Thursday, June 2, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., \$50, in a private home. Speaker: Barbara Hackman Franklin, a Bush presidential campaign strategist.
- Salute to Justice — Wednesday, June 22, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Roma's of Bloomfield, \$50. Speaker: Michigan Supreme Court Justice James Brickley.
- 300 Club breakfasts at 7:30 a.m. Wednesdays, May 18 and June 15.

37 new cops on roads

The Oakland Police Academy, based on the Auburn Hills Campus of Oakland Community College, has graduated 37 new officers into law enforcement.

Graduates are police officer candidates in Auburn Hills, Berkley, Dearborn, Farmington Hills, Hazel Park, Livonia, Southfield, Troy, Waterford Township, West Bloomfield, the OCC

Department of Public Safety, and the Oakland County Sheriff's Department.

One graduate was an independent student deemed certifiable by the Police Academy for employment in the field.

Students generally enter the Police Academy after applying to a law enforcement agency, which refers them to the academy for study.

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