

# Surprise! Fessler runs for prosecutor

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

State Sen. Richard Fessler pulled the surprise of the political season by filing Tuesday to run for Oakland County prosecutor. A three-way race to succeed retiring L. Brooks Patterson will turn into a four-way donnybrook.

"It's something I've contemplated for months," said Fessler from his Union Lake home. He quietly paid his filing fee at the county clerk's elections office without a word of announcement or speculation leaking out that he might seek to be the county's top law enforcement officer.

"I'm asking people to look at the good I've done in my 14 years," said the second-term senator who earlier served four terms in the House. An attorney with a still-active practice,

Fessler had been an assistant prosecutor under Patterson in his early years and later did work for Waterford Township.

FESSLER, 45, has seen his share of personal trouble in the last year, with a driving while impaired conviction and a protracted divorce suit which saw him spend a night in jail for failure to make mortgage payments.

The four-way Republican race for prosecutor is likely to be the center of political attention in the Aug. 2 primary campaign. Already announced for the GOP nomination are Jack McDonald, county commissioner from the Farmington area; Richard Thompson, Patterson's chief assistant; and Jeffrey Leib, West Bloomfield Township lawyer with a practice in Southfield.

"I'm not the first person to get a

divorce," said Fessler, adding he had "put those problems behind me."

HERE'S HOW other major races shape up in Oakland:

• Executive — Daniel T. Murphy, 14-year Republican incumbent, will face Democrat William C. Wolfram of Birmingham in November; no primary contest.

• Prosecutor — Barry Kraemer, an Oak Park public safety officer, is unopposed in the Democratic primary.

• Sheriff — John Nichols, one-term Republican incumbent, will meet Democrat Tommy Lyle Dizott of Pontiac in November; no primary contest.

• Clerk-register — Lynn D. Allen, longtime Republican incumbent, will take on the winner of a Democratic primary between Diana L. Trivax of Birmingham and Philip R. Marcuse of Huntington Woods.

• Treasurer — C. Hugh Dobany, longtime Republican incumbent, will face Democrat Steve Allen of Orionville in November; no primary contest.

• Drain commissioner — Republican incumbent George W. Kuhn has

a primary challenge from former employee William N. Eckstein of Troy. Democratic candidate will be Douglas E. Kuthy of Southfield.

IN NON-PARTISAN races:

• Incumbent circuit judges David F. Breck, Alice L. Gilbert and Francis X. O'Brien will apparently be unopposed for new eight-year terms.

• Edward Sosnick, 48th District Judge (Birmingham-Bloomfield-West Bloomfield) was the only announced candidate for a fourth circuit judge slot to replace retiring Judge James Thornburn.

• Five candidates crowded into the race for probate judge to succeed retiring Norman Barnard, assuring a primary to winnow the field to two. They are: Thomas M. Brennan of Troy; Joan Young, circuit court administrator from Birmingham; James P. Delaney, assistant attorney general from Beverly Hills; David T. Kaufman of Huntington Woods; and Hugh Dean, probate court administrator from Bloomfield Hills.

• Sandra G. Silver, recently appointed to the probate bench to succeed the convicted and departed



Richard Fessler  
his skeletons are out

John J. O'Brien, will be challenged by George J. Fulkerson of Birmingham.

FESSLER SAID he made no public announcement of his intention to run for prosecutor in order to focus on several projects in his Senate committee.

These include truck safety, fire-

fighters' training, road funding and marine safety bills. He said he didn't want to appear to be using the issues to run for prosecutor.

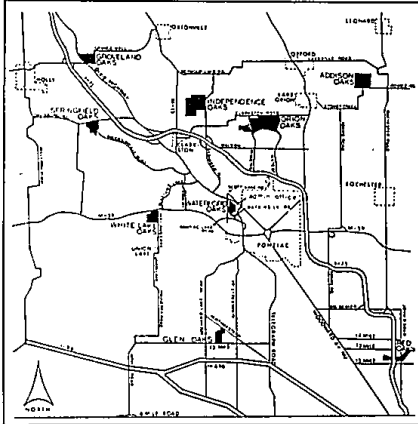
"I've been in office 14 years. I don't have to start as early as the others," he said. "I have some money lined up to come in. I've made ample preparations."

Other candidates are talking of spending \$50,000 to \$250,000 to run for prosecutor.

Fessler said his personal problems are "90 percent behind me." Of the impaired driving conviction, he said, "It's something I have to live with. I've always supported stiffer penalties for drunk driving."

"I made a mistake. It was an isolated episode. I'm not an alcoholic," he said, referring to tests he underwent during his legal troubles. "You know that about me. You don't know that about any of the others, though I'm not saying any one is."

"All the skeletons I have, have been put on parade. Take a look at what I've done for government, for my district of 280,000 people, for Oakland County. It's a 14-year record. I'm asking people to look at the good."



Of Oakland's nine county parks, Orion Oaks, five miles north of Pontiac, is the only one still undeveloped — and one of the largest.

## Orion Oaks will serve 'special populations'

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

To the untrained eye, it's an old farm meadow, a couple of swamps, hills and a shallow lake.

To the imaginative eye, Orion Oaks Park will serve "special populations" — the elderly, physically and mentally impaired, special interest and school groups.

"You have the opportunity, with this blank piece of property, to do something for everyone . . . for those who can smell, feel and hear as well as see," consultant Patricia Stevens told the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission last week.

For one dramatic example, she cited all-terrain wheelchairs that could traverse the park's hills with their "fairly dramatic views."

THE ENTHUSIASTIC parks board agreed, adopting the master plan for Oakland's ninth and most unusual county park.

"Fantastic potential. Great appeal," said George Kuhn, the county's elected drain commissioner who sits on the parks panel.

"Some call it an engineering team. I call it an imagination team," said Ralph Richard, manager of the parks system.

"An absolutely wonderful thing to be involved in," said Joan Fox, Farmington Hills councilmember, adding that many small school districts who can't afford their own outdoor facilities could use Orion Oaks' group camp sites.

"Church groups tell us they need a place," Richard added.

Development will take \$12 million, at current prices, and about 15 years, said Stevens, of the Cleveland firm of Schmidt-Copeland & Associates. She and principal Greg Copeland have met with parks and Orion Township officials a dozen times over the last year.

OAKLAND HAS eight developed county parks, including four with golf courses, for day use or camping parks and two with wave pools.

Orion alone is undeveloped. With 927 acres, it has nearly one-fourth of Oakland's 4,000 acres of county parks.

Once a farm and later owned by Chrysler Corp., the park five miles north of Pontiac was part of a 2,400-acre state acquisition several years ago.

Its chief water feature is the 92-acre Lake St. Clair, on the southeast side. Entrance is off Clarkston Road. The master plan provides for limited public day use — picnicking, fishing, ball fields, cross-country skiing.

THE MEADOW, said Stevens, would be the traffic loop for three activities areas:

• West pod — gym, indoor pool with open wall activity courts for games like tennis.

• South pod — dining area for 80, suites, conference area, outdoor amphitheater.

• East pod — cabins in a fan shape sheltering up to 140, backing up to the woods.

The meadow overlooks the lake with its fishing piers and boat docks. A key feature would be a boardwalk to the marsh that is now inaccessible to the able and handicapped alike.

"Trails, in my book, are a key element. They heighten sensitivity to the environment," she said.

"SEASONAL villages" on the west of the property would be close to the "adventure area" with its orienteering, ropes course and cross-country skiing trails, Stevens said.

Old farm fields contain a treasure of plants. "People with limited sensory ability could smell the plantings and hear the distinctive sounds of grasses," she said.

## Volunteers are needed

Judson Center, 4410 W. 13 Mile, Royal Oak, is looking for volunteers who are seeking a flexible schedule to work as auction committee volunteers. Duties will include assisting in acquisition of gifts, planning, administration and advertising ticket sales for the annual Auction for Children. Call Laurie Smith, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays, at 549-4339, for information.

Community Services of Oakland, 27301 Dequindre, Madison Heights, is seeking telephone reassurance callers and friendly visitors to call

or visit seniors who may not have other social and emotional support. If you have good listening skills, concern for seniors, and want a flexible schedule, call Angie Battani from Monday-Wednesday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Thursday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 542-5860.

For information on other opportunities or if your organization needs volunteers, call The Center for Volunteerism, United Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit, 226-9429 weekdays, 2212 Griswold, Detroit 48226-1899.



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