

# Big pay hike

## Judges' law clerks now research attorneys

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

A bare majority of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners saved a 45-48-percent pay hike for circuit court research attorneys.

"Attorneys are no better, no worse than the rest of us," said commissioner Marilyn Gosling, R-Bloomfield Hills, who offered a more modest 4-28-percent pay increase. "What does it say to them (other county employees) if we single out one group?"

She said she wasn't intimidated by the six circuit judges who marched into the auditorium as debate started and left after the pay hike passed 17-7.

THE GOSLING amendment lost with 11 in favor and 14 against. Two members were absent.

Area commissioners supporting the lower rate were Republicans G. William Caddell of Walled Lake, Nancy McConnell of Bloomfield Hills and John Papageorge of Troy.

Opposed to the smaller increase were Republicans Mark Chester of Troy, Don Jensen of Birmingham, Susan Kuhn of Clawson, Thomas Law of West Bloomfield, David Moffitt of Farmington Hills, John Olsen of Huntington Woods, Roy Revold of Rochester Hills and Donn Wolf of

Farmington Hills, and Democrats Lillian Jaffe Oaks and Larry Pernick, both of Southfield.

"We're not living in rural Michigan," said Oaks, who supported the larger increase. "If we want competent attorneys, we have to pay the salary."

"We can ignore their need or respond to it," Jensen said.

NOW CALLED law clerks and paid a flat \$25,070, the 14 aides to the circuit judges will become "research attorneys" and start at \$31,532.

They will be raised to \$32,571 after one year, \$34,482 after two and \$36,393 after three.

Like members of the president's cabinet, research attorneys serve at

the pleasure of the judge.

Oakland judges said in committee hearings that the staff turnover was high; that top law school graduates were shunning the jobs while C students were applying; and that the complexity of modern malpractice and other liability cases warranted retaining better staff longer.

"I have a sincere concern for these employees," Gosling replied. "But we have budget responsibilities. The judges do not have, and responsibilities to other employees and unions . . . The problems are universal."

After the meeting, she said she had "heard from" two county unions about inequitable treatment.

IN OTHER business last week, the county board:

• Delayed action on a plan to abolish the airport committee and give its responsibilities to the government and transportation committee. Commissioner Larry Pernick, D-Southfield, asked a legal opinion on the airport committee's existence. Commissioner Anne Hobart, R-White Lake, supported the plan, saying "this board doesn't know what goes on at the airports."

• Approved, 23-0, the setting up of a victims' rights unit in Probate Court, where juvenile cases are handled. The two-person unit will send victims of juvenile crimes information about court appearances and their right to be heard at sentencing.

## Irish art is talk topic

Art from a 5,000-year-old tomb in Newgrange, Ireland, will draw the Irish American Cultural Institute to a meeting at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, March 5, in the Southfield Parks and Recreation Building, 26000 Evergreen.

Artist Martin Cullen will show color slides of his etchings, taken from carvings on the tomb, and discuss the civilization which made them.

Admission is \$5, and the talk is open to the public.

Cullen said the tomb is a 62-foot-long passage ending in a chamber. He said it probably was used for religious ritual.

The stone walls and ceilings are carved in patterns of circles, spirals and triangles. The Irish monument is older than either Stonehenge or the Great Pyramids.

The Irish-American Cultural Institute is a non-profit foundation. The metro Detroit chapter is headquartered in Wayne.

## Genealogists meet March 7

James N. Jackson will speak on "Genealogical Indexes and How to Use Them" when the Oakland County Genealogical Society meets at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 7.

Place is the Rotary Room of

Baldwin Public Library, 300 W. Merrill south of Maple, Birmingham.

The meeting is open to the public. Information on the group is available from Lois Ellis at 751-5204.

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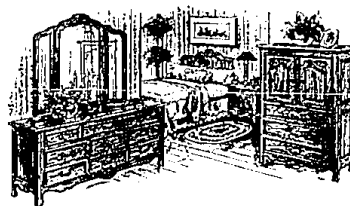
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