

Citizens testify at drug hearing

By Janice Brunson
staff writer

The latest skirmish in the war on drugs was staged Thursday when concerned citizens testified during public hearings conducted by the National Commission on Drug-Free Schools at Southfield High School.

Based on the morning's testimony, winning strategy in the complex battle remains elusive.

"This country is involved in a life or death struggle, a struggle that must be won if we are to save ourselves," said commission member U.S. Rep. Paul Henry, R-Mich., in opening statements to a scattered crowd of less than 100. Classes of Southfield High students also attended portions of testimony.

The commission, established by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, is charged with identifying strategies, programs and policies credited with contributing to drug-free schools. Members will report to the president and to Congress.

The hearing in Southfield was the fifth of 14 that are scheduled nationally through 1990.

The first person to testify was federal Judge Bernard Friedman of West Bloomfield and his testimony set the tone of Thursday's hearing. Appointed to U.S. District Court a year ago, Friedman also served in 48th District Court in Bloomfield Township for nearly seven years.

"DISTRICT COURT IS A COURT of the people, a community court. I realized that in the course of a day, 70 percent of the cases I saw were chemically related, alcohol or otherwise. And a large percentage of those cases involved youth."

Friedman is active in a community ad hoc committee that supports substance-free living accommoda-

tions in colleges and universities. Responding to pressure from the group, most of Michigan's public colleges offered such housing options for the first time last school semester. With little publicity on the issue, some 1,500 students requested substance-free accommodations at Oakland University, Eastern Michigan University and the University of Michigan, Friedman told the commission.

"I believe this is a national issue and the best way to accomplish it is through legislation. The bottom line is, if not legislated there is no way to monitor it," Friedman said, adding such a provision would result in no additional costs to schools.

Commissioner Lloyd Johnston of the Institute for Social Research at U-M expressed concern that students opting for substance-free housing might be "classified" by others. "It could carry unintended negative consequences," he said.

Johnston also said it is important to distinguish between illicit drugs, which have sharply declined in use since 1980, and alcohol, currently used as much or more than ever before by college students.

"WE HAVE DONE a decent job in educating at a younger level, but we forgot to include alcohol as a drug," Friedman said.

Karl Miller, a Southfield High honor student and athlete, said during testimony, "I don't use drugs. I don't smoke or drink. If I go to a party with drinking and smoking, I have."

Miller attributes his outlook to family guidance, health consciousness and substance abuse and human relations training provided by Southfield High. The school has been twice recognized for excellence in education and once for excellence in drug prevention.

Among programs provided by the school is an annual retreat in communications at Camp Tamarack and Positive Peer Influence, a year-around counseling program by students for students, according to Janet Holland, who coordinates substance abuse training at Southfield High.

Terry Bowers, a former Southfield High student who now attends Wayne State University, also credited the school's interdiction program with helping him to kick a drug habit. Bowers, once a failing student, now said he earns B's at WSU.

Dr. Barbara Markle of the Michigan State Board of Education testified the board provides curriculum in substance abuse training that addresses medical, emotional and social needs.

"SUBSTANCE ABUSE IS A multifaceted problem. We believe in the broad-brush approach, especially among young students destined for trouble," said Markle, adding the program is presently taught to a half-million students attending school in some 400 state districts.

Testimony by two mothers, one from the suburbs and another from the city, exemplified the difference in problems faced by parents living in different communities.

Eileen Ross of Livonia participates in Parent to Parent for Prevention, a parental education group that encourages family communication and urges such rules as forbidding teens to attend private parties.

The way to have drug-free schools is to have drug-free homes," Ross said.

In contrast, Clementine Barfield strives for city streets where children are not shot to death, either in drug-related incidents or as innocent bystanders. After the shooting of two

sons, one of whom died, Barfield founded Save Our Sons and Daughters for the families of murdered children.

"Every time a child is murdered, we lose two children, the killed and the killer, who is usually a child," Barfield said, adding most poor youth see drug involvement as their only way out of poverty.

LATER IN the day, commission members met with runaway youth at the Sanctuary in Royal Oak and with parents at the Tri-Stone Baptist Church in Detroit.

They spent all-day Friday meeting with hand-picked representatives of the community with experience in:

- Financing drug prevention and education.
- Community/school partnerships.
- Overcoming community resistance to change.

The commission's next step is in January in Florida.

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Judge says river must be cleaned

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

Communities in the Rouge River basin will have to pay more to clean up sewer discharge, according to a federal judge.

It's a matter of how much and how soon.

"We're not here to dispute the goals," U.S. District Court Judge John Feikens said repeatedly Friday during a hearing on three suits filed by federal and state environmental agencies against communities in Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties.

"We're here to find the most intelligent and fiscally responsible way of obtaining those goals," Feikens told a crowded courtroom in Federal Building in Detroit.

The hearing was the opening of what is expected to be a long and drawn-out dispute between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) against Birmingham, Farmington, Bloomfield Hills, Bloomfield Township, Beverly Hills and other communities in southeastern Michigan.

FEIKENS INVITED comments from dozens of lawyers and environmental experts saying he intended to resolve procedural questions and begin getting the involved

parties together to work out a solution.

Feikens said he will draft a written order clarifying the following issues:

- The federal district court — rather than the Michigan Water Resources Commission (WRC) — will have jurisdiction in the cases.

The EPA and DNR wanted the issue before the WRC, but Feikens said the federal courts have enforcement power and thus keeping the matter in his court would hasten any ultimate solution.

- The three cases will be consolidated.

The EPA and DNR are acting against three defendants under the 1972 Federal Clean Water Act, the City of Detroit, the Detroit Sewer System and its customers and communities within the Rouge River basin.

Combining the cases will enable the parties to expedite a solution, Feikens said.

Jonathan W. Bulkley, professor in the School of Natural Resources and Director of Civil Engineering at the University of Michigan, will be appointed to get the involved parties together to begin negotiations.

Bulkley will not be a mediator, Feikens said. But he will serve as a

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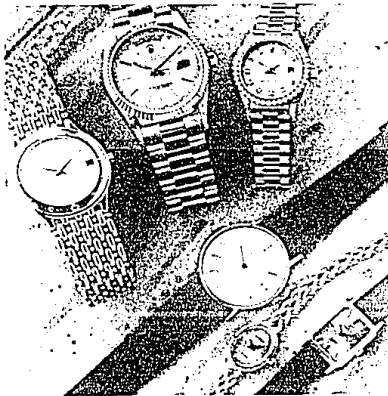
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