



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

NOW president Molly Yard's passion was evident to the more than 300 people who gave her two standing ovations at Birmingham Temple Monday night.

NOW leader urges women into politics

By Judith Doner Berno
staff writer

Will Livonia resident Marilyn Rowens run for office? What about Linda McCabe of Canton Township?

The two were among the more than 300 people who turned out to hear Molly Yard, president of the National Organization for Women, urge more women to run for public office in a speech at Birmingham Temple in Farmington Hills Monday night.

The unanimously supportive, largely female audience gave Yard a standing ovation as she walked to the podium and another as she finished.

"Women have got to be in public policy-making positions in this country," the imposing, gray-haired Yard implored. "You're needed in the legislative halls of this country. I urge each of you to see where you could fit in."

"We're more than half the population. We should share the privilege of directing this country. Until we do we won't get the public policy we're looking for."

Yard was matter of fact: "I have no faith in the courts. Three members of the Supreme Court were appointed by President Reagan and I have no faith in President Bush."

Of Bush's veto last fall of an amendment to ease restrictions on Medicaid abortions, she said: "How any man can expect a poor woman to carry a pregnancy to term as the result of incest and rape. I find it totally obscene."

SHE CALLED THESE both the best and the worst of times for women.

"It's the worst of times because we are in danger of losing the ability to determine whether or not we want to bear a child. It's the best of times because we have the opportunity to make changes greater than in the last 30 years."

In fact, since the Supreme Court's Webster decision, upstart legislation in states which would re-criminalize abortion has mainly been killed in committee, Yard said.

As for Michigan, "Thank goodness you have a good governor."

"The voters are way ahead of the political leaders of this country," she maintained.

"What's happening is that since the Webster case the women and men of this country are very angry," Yard described. "We are remembering what happened before 1973 — and we're saying not for my daughter, not for my granddaughter."

But what happens here has even greater ramifications, she said.

"We bear a lot of responsibility in

'We are looked to around the world to build a world where women are treated as human beings and first-class citizens.'

— Molly Yard
NOW president

this country for what is happening to women around the world." She used examples of Algerian women being beaten for uncovering their faces and others in Mexico being denied birth control information in clinics which fear losing U.S. financial aid.

"We are looked to around the world to build a world where women are treated as human beings and first-class citizens."

CLOSING OUT the right of a woman to determine her own child-bearing destiny and passing the equal rights amendment which will put the burden of proof on the discriminator are Yard's main agenda. But other areas also need attention:

• Child care: "We still need to get a good child care bill — it's as important to men as to women."

• Family medical leave: A bill to allow either parent to take an unpaid leave but keep their job in case of an ill child, adoption or birth is languishing, and now has been whittled down from 28 to 10 weeks.

• Pay equity: "We got it through the House twice — can't get it through the Senate."

• Sex education: "I can't tell you how angry I am about the way we treat our teenagers. Why wouldn't we do everything we can to keep them from getting pregnant?"

ROWENS WAS one who took seriously Yard's message to run for office, musing whether or not she herself was too old.

"She had a lot of spirit, a lot of strength," Rowens said. "It just makes you feel good that she's saying those things for us."

"I was very impressed," said Bob Roether of West Bloomfield. "She has a message for everyone."

"I think it's interesting that a woman her age was so involved," said Barbara Roether.

"She was saying a lot of things I've heard lately," said McCabe, a member of Western Wayne County NOW.

McCabe was also there to plug a demonstration at 3 p.m. Saturday on the University of Michigan-Dearborn campus, where a memorial service will be held for "women who lost their lives through back alley abortions."

Volunteer Recruitment Fair set for Tel-Twelve

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program of Oakland County is sponsoring a Volunteer Recruitment Fair called "Shop for your Spot in the Community" this week.

The fair will be 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday and 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, April 27 and 28, at Tel-Twelve Mall, 12 Mile and Telegraph in Southfield.

More than 30 non-profit and public agencies in the Metro Detroit area that rely on volunteers will have exhibits showing the wide range of spots within their organizations for which volunteers are needed.

For more information, call Susan Hitchuk at 333-3716 or Marilyn Zobel at 333-3712.

Victims' rights Tarr trial illustrates how state laws work

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

When James Tarr glared at two teenagers convicted of killing his parents and said he wished they were dead, he was doing more than expressing an opinion.

The 22-year-old son of Glenn and Wanda Tarr was exercising his right under Michigan laws on victims' rights.

Those laws — and public understanding of them — are important because of a growing awareness that victims have rights, too, three Oakland County officials said.

State Sen. Doug Cruse, R-Troy, Oakland County Sheriff John F. Nichols and Oakland County prosecutor Richard Thompson touted Michigan's law during a press conference Monday marking National Victims' Rights Week.

The Tarr case was cited by Thompson as a concrete example of how things have changed since the Michigan law was enacted in 1985 and amended in 1988.

The law specifies that victims of crimes — including the son of Wanda and Glenn Tarr of Rochester Hills, who were murdered in November — have the right to express their opinion when the person convicted of inflicting the harm is brought to justice.

THIS IS BY no means the only benefit of Michigan's law — touted as one of the nation's most comprehensive. But it's one of the more visible results.

Other provisions of the law, as amended in 1988, include:

- The right of the victim to be informed of progress as the crime is investigated.
- The right of the victim to be

kept abreast of the prosecution, once an arrest is made.

- The right to have the court order compensation for physical, financial or emotional harm — as much as \$15,000 in extreme cases.

- The right for protection against discipline by the victim's employer for time off necessitated by court action.

Thompson said he is unaware of any objective study made to assess the impact of Michigan victims' rights legislation.

BASED ON his personal experience, however, Thompson said the law has made a significant difference, including the pressuring of the legal system to assure "criminals are dealt with swiftly and harshly."

Public indignation — and watchful involvement — puts pressure on judges to impose punishment

that more appropriately fits the crime, he said.

Prior to victims' rights legislation, the legal system paid too much attention to the rights of the accused, Thompson said.

"Crimes were considered an offense against the state."

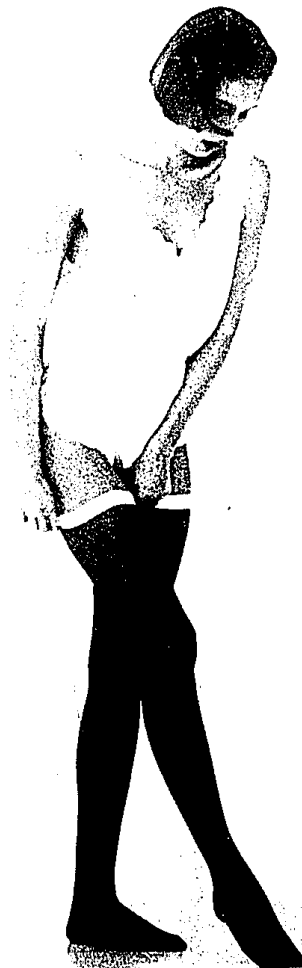
WHILE THE emphasis has changed, Thompson said the public must continue to demand equal treatment for victims.

"We have made tremendous progress since 1985, and we are dedicated to ensure that the progress continues. It is time for society to make the protection of victims the priority of the criminal justice system."

As an example of how the prosecutor's office has moved to implement the Michigan law, Thompson said his office has three paralegals to implement its provisions.

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