County is seat of debate on assisted suicide

| See related story, page 9a

By Pal Murphy staff writer

In the developing legal and philosophical battle over assisted sulcides, Oakland County is likely to
play a highly visible role – on both
sides.
"I expect very heated debate,"
sald Janet Good of Farmington Hills
who is president of Hemlock of
Michigan, the state chapter of the
national society advocating death
with dignity.
Good feels strongly that legislators should act quickly to legalize a
physician's right to assist somebody
take his or her own life.
Hemlock in Michigan has about
150 members, she said.
At the other end of the philosophi-

At the other end of the philosophi-cal spectrum is Right to Life of

Michigan.

The organization's 40,000 house-hold members in Oakland County want lively debate as well as prompt

action, according to regional spok-esperson Barbara Lowman. But Right to Life wants assisted suicides – something it considers a form of cuthanasia – criminalized, sald Lowman. "Dr. Kevorklan brought the issue to Oakland and Michigan full blast." I see assisted suicide as a civil rights matter

. similar to the abortion issue.

— Janet Good president, Hemlock of Michigan



Issue, the prosecutor said he would not appeal the dismissal in Kevorkian's case, but would consider marder and the same said to be said to be

Church Cranbrook will present a panel discussion on "The Right to. Die: Sucide and Assisted Sucide," as part of its First Monday Forum beginning at 7:30 p.m.

One one side of the Issue will be, another West Bloomfield lawer, Daniel C. Devine, representing Hemcheck of Michigan, which has joined Kevorkian in his civil suit.

The Rev. J. Donald Waring, an Episcopal priest and assistant at Christ Church Cranbrook, will participate in the discussion, but not

necessarily as an opponent. "I'm just going to raise some ethical questions," he said.

White Warring said he is not necessarily against assisted suicides, he strongly disagrees with Kevorkian on one point. "He (Kevorkian) said assisted suicide in the said of the said o

cal ramifications."
Part of the problem, Waring said, is that theologians are delving into a relatively new area. Whereas many religions disdain suicide and oppose cuthanasia, assisted suicides raise new and different questions open to various interpretations.

Others agree.

various Interpretations.
Others agree.
"THERE'S NO SINGLE Jewish
point of view on assisted suicide."
said Rabbi Sherwin Wine of the Birmingham Temple in Farmington
Hills. "I personally take a liberal
view that Janet Atkins had the right
to choose death and to receive medical assistance.
"But others may take the view.
that suffering comes from God and
that rejecting it is an act of defi-

ance." he said. "And many believe that only God can take a life." When asked how the Catholic Church views assisted suicide, Fr. Haymond Kuzava of St. Irenaeus in Rochester Hills said he isn't sure.

"I know the church's traditional stance on the sanctity of life," he said. "But this is a relatively new area. We are referring calls to the diocese."

Brenda Marshall

Brenda Marshall, a spokesperson or the Archdiocese of Detroit, sald Brenda Marshall, a spokesperson for the Architocese of Detroit, sald the church opposes assisted suicide, consistent with traditional church teaching. 'Our position is that life is sacred... from the beginning until its natural end God gives life and only he can end it.'

Good, as president of Hemick of Michigan, disputes that contention and sees assisted suicide as a cultilative... similar to the

abortion issue

"BOTH INVOLVE choice," said Good, a retired Equal Employment Opportunity officer with the Michi-gan Employment Security Commis-sion.

Michigan full blast." THE COUNTY become a focal point in the dispute last June when Dr. Jack Kevorkian allowed Janet Atkins, a 34-year-old victim of Athenemer's disease, use his suicident of the second of the second pressed murder charges as well elvis action against Kevorkian, while West Bloomfield atterneys Geoffrey Pieger and Michael A. Schwartz defended the retired Royal Oak pathologist. The criminal action against Kevorkian seemlnely came to an end last week when Clarkston District Judge Gerale E. MetNaily dismissed murder charges, saying existing Michigan law does not prohibit it. Agreeing state law is vague on the County of the second prohibit of th County chamber gets new head

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Blevins, who lives in Waterford,

ment experience. He most recently served as executive director of the Door County Chamber of Commerce in Wisconsin.

The Oakland County Chamber of Commerce is a regional non-profit organization representing 1,000 members of the business community.

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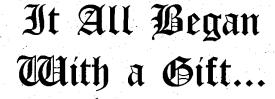






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