# New circuit judges quickly get the hang of it

Keen judicial professionalism, marked by competence, thorough preparation and occasional wit, best describes court decorum established by judges Deborah Tyner and Rudy Nichols, Oakland County's newest circuit judges.

Elected last November in a tough race for two newly created judicial positions in Oakland County Circuit Court. Tyner of Franklin and Nichols of Waterford Township have been on the job since January.

During recent busy Wednesday morning sessions, both displayed cool efficiency in dispensing with builging caseloads, completling busi-



Deborah Tyner, the youngest Oakland County Circuit Court judge, already feels thoroughly at home in her courtroom.

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Sponsored by the Royal Oak Swedenborgian Church and Growth Center, the first session begins Finday, April 12, from 7,30-9p m, and will continue for the next three cooperative Findips evenings. Childrane is available. Cost is \$4 optional constituted on periodiable footisges session. All proceeds will go to the Oakland Coordy Food Bank. Call 546-7583, 9a.m.-5p.m. If on any Finday, first periodia the Galland Coordy Food Bank. Call 546-7583, 9a.m.-5p.m. If on any Finday three periodic steel deadline Wednesday, April 10,1991.

Our fabilitation will be Rev. Steve Platfs who serves both as a part utilinant at mand (post).

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and come back periore are courty lat-ret today."

A similar circumstance arises in a later case. "It's a question of time.
I'm saying this bemusingly, but have we reached a level of civility yet or are we going to light it out!"
To a long-winded attorney: "I've read your brief. Is there any addi-tional information between the con-lation of the court of the court of the later than the condition of the court of the proved, detily handling a minor twist in a complex medical malpractice suit against the estate of a deceased defendant.

The prospecuation wants names and

defendant. The prosecution wants names and addresses of the deceased's adolt children. Defense argues providing such information is "doing the prosecutions" work" and then claims the information is unknown. "Is that just a statement for the record," Tyner asks, "or is it truly burdensome?" She then orders the information be turned over, "If it's readily available. Make a reasonable effort to obtain it. That's implicit in my order."

my order."

While Tyner and Nichols display similar judicial style, personal style differs markedly.

NICHOLS, PERHAPS shaped by seven years experience in elected public office, is outgoing and easy to talk with.

Tyner, in press interviews, care-fully measures what she does say.

Both speak of heavy case loads,

IT'S 9:04 'A.M. on motion day in Nichols' courtroom on the fourth floor of circuit court. Of some 51 cases assigned him this Wednesday morning, he is aiready on case three. "In the interest of time," he advises attorneys representing opposing cilents, "you reach an agreement and come back (before the court) later today."

Tyner is more formal. "The heaviness of the docket is troublesome."
Nichols is casual. "It's a lot. I work some evenings and always half the day on Saturday. I'm busy all the time, going lickety split. You do the best you can, what you can. Just chip away at it."

best you can, what you can, Just cnip away at it."

Each Oakland circuit judge is as-signed an estimated 2,000 cases an-nually, the highest judge-to-case ra-tio in the state, according to Chief Circuit Judge Steven Andrews.

to in the state, according to the Circuit Judge Steven Andrews. Any new judge positions under consideration?

Tyner refuses to answer, saying she is not the appropriate person to ask. Nichols readily acknowleges there is speculation about two new positions. Andrews confirms he is seriously considering such a request from Oakland County commissioners for the 1994 elections.

Tyner would not revisit the 1990 election in which she and Nichols received top votes in a field of four candidates. Done and over, she said. Nichols, however, said that of the seven campaigns he has waged (two

the county bench entirely stimulating. for state Senate and four for state House), this was by far "the hardest, a real cliff hanger."

Rudy Nichols has found his move from the state Legislature to

"I WAS FIGITING the perception I was a hard over Republican in a non-partisan race." He also feared the race because "attorneys fight hard." Nichols narrowly beat out attorney Thomas Brennan who placed third. District Judge James Sheehy placed fourth.

Tyner, who came in first, campaigned on a platform of tough justice and outspent her opponents by youngest candidate. Chief circuit Judge Andrews said Tyner and Nichols are "assets to the bench. They are contributing more than I ever Imagined." Each, he add, is emerging as a Judicial leader. "I WAS FIGHTING the perception

than I ever Imagined. Fach, he add-d, is emerging as a judicial leader. He has appointed both to special projects alimed at modernizing the circuit court system in an effort to speed up case disposition, a neces-sary move because "we are receiv-ing new cases at an increasing pace."

## Oakland bench busy, efficient

Newly released figures for 1990 show the Oakland County Circuit Court remains one of the busiest in the state.

More than 29,000 new cases were filed — a 4 percent increase over 1989. And of those cases, more than 7,800 were criminal cases.

Cases for 1991 have been redistri Cases more than two years old dropped 13 percent to 387.
 The court conducted 507 jury and Rudy Nichols.

Cases for 1991 maye been recusary to be de to the bench — Deborah Tyner and Rudy Nichols.

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