

# County exec, legal eagles turn out for wedding

BY PAT MURPHY  
STAFF WRITER

Despite warnings it could jeopardize their jobs, at least two assistant prosecutors attended the weekend wedding of Paul J. Rinaldi, fired for violating the prosecutor's ethics code by conducting high-stakes gambling at his bachelor party.

The two assistant prosecutors had lots of legal company at the wedding at Holy Name Church in Detroit Saturday. At least two Oakland circuit judges and the county executive were also among the guests.

"For me it was a matter of

## Engler close to naming new judge

Gov. John Engler is close to naming a successor to Oakland Circuit Judge John N. O'Brien who died March 30.

The list of possible successors is on the governor's desk right now, press secretary John Truscott said Wednesday. Once the governor makes his choice, it will take a day or so to notify candidates after which an announcement will be made, he said.

Truscott declined to say how many candidates are on the list of possible successors, or to speculate about the names on it.

friendship over politics," Executive L. Brooks Patterson said about attending the wedding and the reception at Penna's in Sterling Heights.

"I had a great time," he said. "I did more line dances than Omar Sharif."

Sharif is the Egyptian-born actor of Syrian-Lebanese descent. Patterson's mention of Sharif is a reference to the bride's being Chaldean and the wedding having

a distinctive Middle East flavor.

Patterson said he has known Rinaldi for several years and has a high regard for him, personally and professionally. Rinaldi apparently has an equally high regard for Patterson because he contributed \$1,000 to his campaign last fall.

Asked about Thompson's assertion that attending Rinaldi's wedding might be a breach of ethics, Patterson said, "I wouldn't

comment on that. I've never

advised Dick on public policies." Among the other legal eagles who attended the wedding and/or the reception were Judges Barry Howard and Edward Sosenick.

"It was a beautiful wedding," Howard said. "They (the bride and groom) are friends, and it (attending) was the right thing to do."

The two assistant prosecutors attending were Brian Zabel and

his wife Emily, who is head of the office's victim witness unit. Neither was available for comment.

In response to questions, Thompson Tuesday acknowledged that lawyers on his staff had been cautioned against attending Rinaldi's wedding. "Our ethics code is specific about associating with people under investigation," he said.

Several assistants had asked specifically, he said. "And they

were reminded of the ethics code."

In the final analysis, however, the decision to attend or not was a "matter of personal choice," Thompson said.

The prosecutor said his office didn't "take any roll" of guests at the nuptials. Nor did it plan "to make a big deal" because assistants may have attended.

That stance doesn't represent any lowering of ethical standards, Thompson said.

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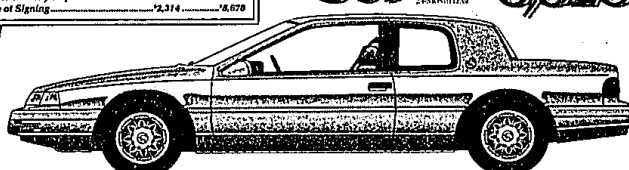


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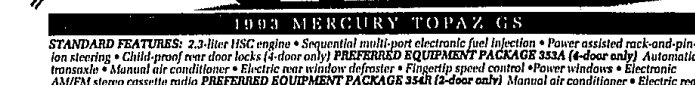
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