

# Dems put Arab-American on ticket

By TIM RICHARD  
STAFF WRITER

Michigan Democrats, always sensitive about ticket-balancing, have nominated their first Arab-American to statewide office, dumping liberal activist Annette Miller after 24 years.

"Alan Amen brings an Arab name to the ticket. We have 250,000 Arab-Americans in the state," said UAW hair-appearing Steve Yelich.

State Democrats picked Amen to run for the Wayne State University board Nov. 6. He is a five-year member of the Dearborn school board and Henry Ford Community College board (one board does both jobs).

Amen defeated Miller in the only contested race during the Democrats' love-in convention last weekend in Flint. His running mate will be Leon Atchison, retired Michigan Consolidated Gas Co. executive from Detroit and a 25-year member of the

## STATE SIDE

WSU board.

Amen makes his living by commuting to Flint to direct the financial aid office of Most Community College. His issue: "I'm not happy with any of the tuition increases at any college in this state. Every time you raise tuition, you're losing some (students) at the lower earnings end," said the WSU graduate.

### Series of errors

The Amen-Miller battle was the culmination of a series of errors and yet another defeat for the Michigan Education Association, whose power ranks a distant second to the AFL-CIO caucus among state Democrats.

Miller, a nurse from Huntington Woods, won her first term on the State Board of Education in 1970 but decided this year, "24 years were enough. It was time for

someone else. It has been a sweet and sour experience — a pleasure to see some of my ideas put into policy, but also bad to see the religious right wing insert itself into the board through some members.

"I was very distressed at the support the State Board has given to charter schools. It's an excuse for vouchers," said Miller. She was one of three Democratic board members suing suit to block state aid to the Noah Webster Academy, a charter school with fundamentalist Protestant overtones.

"I wanted to graduate to college after 24 years in K-12," Miller quipped. So when Wayne State board member Robert Nafaly, a former Blanchard administration budget director from West Bloomfield, decided against seeking reelection, Miller bid for that post.

"Miller was too late. A consensus developed that an Arab was needed," said Aldo Vagnozzi, Farmington Hills councilman and

a longtime figure in Big Labor's caucus.

### MEA backs Miller

The second snafu occurred during the MEA caucus Saturday morning. The teachers union endorsed Amen and Miller, turning its back on incumbent Atchison without explanation. (Atchison admitted, "I missed the MEA interview.")

Saturday afternoon, the AFL-CIO endorsed Amen and Atchison. That appeared to set the stage for a convention showdown between Miller and Atchison.

Instead, MEA allowed Atchison to be nominated without opposition at the convention and found both its endorsees fighting each other. Amen won, 2,600 to 1,000.

Amen and Atchison will square off against Republican nominees Diane Dunnaskis, a Lake Orion teacher, and Edward Heroutin, a Southfield lawyer.

# Bill would secure city manager jobs

By TIM RICHARD  
STAFF WRITER

City councils could make multi-year contracts with their hired managers under a bill awaiting state Senate action.

So could charter townships, general law townships, home-rule and general law villages which hire managers.

"These people (professional managers) don't want to move without the assurance they will be in their jobs for a period of time," said the sponsor, Sen. David Honigman, R-West Bloomfield.

His Senate Local Government Committee gave the bills 3-0 approval and sent them to the Senate floor.

Currently, a council cannot obligate the city beyond the current council members term of office. The Michigan Municipal League

complained that the restriction hampered the hiring of top people.

The employment contract would have to be written and specify the officer's compensation and other conditions of employment. It could also provide for severance pay and benefits if the council wanted to remove the manager.

The bills would apply only where home-rule cities and villages had charters allowing multi-term contracts. The bills could not grant powers where the charters didn't allow them.

In other business, Honigman canceled a plan to report out a bill limiting cities' residency rules for employees — a bill that Detroit, in particular, opposes vehemently.

"It won't be taken up until November because of certain agreements," said Honigman, admitting he was being vague about the "agreements."

"I've worked on this bill for four years. It has been a long, tough, uphill fight. I've determined to pass it before I leave or die," said Honigman, sponsor of Senate Bill 597.

"I am here. I am ready to vote in the affirmative," announced Sen. Jon Cizky, R-Saginaw.

As drafted, SB 597 would apply only to police and firefighters. It would supersede city charters, rules and collective bargaining contracts. It would apply to cities, counties, villages, townships and authorities but not institutions of higher education.

Detroit has had such residency

rules for years to assure jobs for its residents.

Mayor Dennis Archer was expected to make a strong pitch against the bill at Tuesday's session, drawing a crowd of onlookers and reporters, but Archer sent word he couldn't attend.

Honigman argues that residency rules are outdated because they work a hardship on married couples who work in different communities. Detroit's rules have reportedly forced married couples to set up fictitious second residences.

Refer to Senate Bills 1195 to 1199 when writing about the contract bills to your state senator. Refer to SB 597 when writing about the residency requirement bill. Legislators are in the State Capitol, Lansing 48909.

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