

Incumbent judges bump challenger

By RALPH R. ECHTINAW
STAFF WRITER

With the incentive of a rare challenger in an Oakland County Circuit Court election, four incumbent judges campaigned hard and came away winners.

The re-elected judges are Edward Soanick with 211,678 or 72.65 percent of the vote, Denise Langford-Morris with 206,920 or 22 percent of the vote, David Brock with 194,811 votes or 20 percent and Francis O'Brien with 173,343 votes or 18.5 percent.

Challenger Leslie Anne Logan came in fifth with 161,066 votes for 18.1 percent. Winners are insured another six-year term at \$103,000. They ran on a state and campaigning became heated at times.

The difference in volume of support for the incumbents and for the challenger was evident election night by comparing the two celebrations.

The incumbent judges held their soiree at The Main Event, a restaurant overlooking the Lions'

end zone in the Pontiac Silverdome. About 200 individuals, mostly attorneys, turned out to partake of the free food and drink and congratulate the candidates.

Soanick showed up early with a bag full of campaign buttons and emory boards.

Not exactly resplendent in his blue jeans, sneakers and unruly hair, Soanick noted that colleague Langford-Morris would no doubt be more impressively dressed. "She gets her hair done," he

said. "She wants to look nice. Me? I don't care." Said Langford-Morris: "I think it's important that we look good. Especially tonight." Attorney Sylvia Kaufman Delin, who had a fling at running for judge earlier this year but lost in the primary, attended the event to support the incumbents. She is especially impressed with the affable Soanick. "This guy really works hard," she said. "And he's making a name for himself. He puts in the hours after work."

Gilbert wins return to circuit bench

By RALPH R. ECHTINAW
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Oakland County voters chose to return West Bloomfield resident Alice Gilbert to the circuit court bench by a narrow margin over her opponent, Beverly Hills resident Bryan Levy, in Tuesday's election.

Gilbert defeated Levy, 163,231 to 123,701. That's a margin of 66.9 to 43.1 percent. Her new job pays \$103,000 a year, and she won't be up for re-election until the year 2000.

The two were in a contest for a newly created judgeship to ease the docket of the Sixth Circuit Court in Oakland County. Gilbert was unable to be reached for comment on final results of the election as of Wednesday morning.

"The candidate who ran the better campaign deserved to win," Levy said Wednesday morning. "I congratulate her."

"I am fine. Disappointed? Sure. Tired? Extremely," said Levy, currently serving as 46th District Court judge. He added that he will run for re-election in two years, and he doesn't expect his loss to be an impediment.

Asked about the apparent lack of campaigning in the Gilbert/Levy race, he said that "resources were not as available (as in the primary) because of her fine showing." That had the effect of some supporters believing the race was over and it became a self-fulfilling prophecy, he added. Gilbert, 62, was an Oakland County Circuit Court judge once

before, from 1976 to 1992, when she quit to run for Congress. She lost the Republican primary in a bitter fight with state Sen. Dave Honigman, R-West Bloomfield, and went to work for the law firm Hyman & Lippitt in Birmingham.

Gilbert got her law degree from Northwestern University in 1970. She was also a 46th District Court judge from 1968 to 1976.

Levy, 44, has been a 46th District Court judge in Southfield since 1987. He has a reputation for being tougher than most judges on drunken drivers. Co-author of the most recent rule on garnishment, Levy refers to the rules of evidence as "my one true love." He got his law degree in 1976 from the University of Detroit.

Two projects Levy would like to become involved in include writing a new rule for court officers and teaching circuit judges.

The Civic Searchlight, a non-partisan candidate-rating organization, graded Levy and Gilbert earlier this year.

The scale goes from "preferred and well qualified" at the top to "no rating" at the bottom. Levy rated "preferred and well qualified," while Gilbert was given a "well qualified" rating.

When asked in an interview last July to name the most important qualities in a good judge, Gilbert said, "Human qualities. The judge has to be sincerely interested in what is taking place. Listen to what is being said, but hear it."

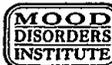
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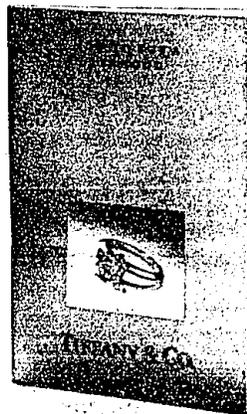
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Many employees will need more than luck to make the most effective early retirement or separation decisions," says certified financial planner Chuck Bolanis.

"Many people take advice from well-meaning friends. The problem is that their situation could be significantly different from yours, and the results could be significantly different, too."

"Do you or a friend have the expertise to accurately evaluate the tax implications concerning early retirement separation packages?" asks Bolanis. "Will you really be able to devise a plan to make sure your money lasts as long as you do?" Bolanis continues. "It's no easy undertaking to implement an overall retirement program that will work to address these and the numerous other critical questions that can impact your retirement."

Financial Planning Group, Inc. has specialized in helping people plan for financial security upon retirement since 1982. All members of the Bolanis professional staff are Certified Financial Planners. For people who

are facing early retirement, or separation, Bolanis and his team of professionals can make an important contribution in helping them make the right decisions. "Personalized financial planning can help you get the most out of your retirement assets," says Bolanis.

Bolanis Financial Planning Group will soon be putting their knowledge to practical use in a free seminar.

The seminar will address financial issues associated with early retirement and separation packages, including when to retire; What are the pros and cons of a monthly annuity vs. a lump sum payout; and tax planning to minimize taxes—now and in the future; how to deal with the new withholding laws, and how to draw on your lump sum before 59½ without a penalty, to name a few.

The seminar will be held at 7 p.m., Tuesday, November 15, at the Wyndham Garden Hotel, 42100 Crescent Blvd., Novi and at 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, November 16, at the Somerset Inn, 2601 W. Big Beaver Rd., Troy.

Even if you don't normally attend seminars, you can't afford to miss this one," says Bolanis. For reservations, call (810) 262-1466 or, toll free, 1-800-44-PLAN.

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