

Kevorkian defense now winding down

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

The trial of Dr. Jack Kevorkian was expected to resume today with defense attorneys still hopeful it might conclude this week.

"I certainly hope it will wrap up this week," lead defense attorney Geoffrey N. Fieger said Wednesday, as the trial was midway into its third week before Oakland Circuit Judge David F. Breck. As he has in the past, Fieger declined to talk about possible witnesses.

"But we'll probably resume today with Sharon Welsh," he said, referring to a close friend of Sherry Miller.

Kevorkian, who turns 68 this month, is charged with violating Michigan's common law against assisted suicide in the Oct. 23, 1991 deaths of Miller, 43, of Roseville, and Marjorie Wentz, 68, of Sodus.

Besides being a close friend of Miller's, Welsh helped care for Miller who was confined to a wheelchair because of acute multiple sclerosis. On the witness stand Tuesday, Welsh, a Clinton Township resident, told jurors she had been assaulted in the prosecutor's office in January, 1992, when she attempted to leave before testifying before the grand jury.

That jury was interviewing witnesses and reviewing evi-

dence against Kevorkian. Oakland County Chief Assistant Prosecutor Lawrence Bunting, the lead prosecutor, told jurors that neither Welsh, nor anyone else, was assaulted. To support that contention, Bunting offered to take a polygraph test and noted that no complaint was ever filed.

Breck denied a motion from Bunting that Welsh's testimony about the alleged assault be stricken from the record. In other contention Tuesday, the panel of nine men and six women saw a video tape of an Australian TV show in which Miller told how her disease had taken away her incentive to live.

"I'm just subsisting," Miller said on the television show. "I'm not living, I'm just here."

Bunting Tuesday said he would likely appeal a decision by Breck that he would not be allowed to tell jurors about a civil injunction against Kevorkian that was in effect when Miller and Wentz took their own lives.

Bunting was not available Wednesday to say if he would file that appeal and if it would delay the trial.

Fieger declined to say whether Kevorkian would take the stand. In his two previous trials, the retired pathologist now living in West Bloomfield, did.

Patterson kicks off reelection bid

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

L. Brooks Patterson has made it official.

Before an estimated 110 enthusiastic supporters Wednesday, Patterson announced he will seek a second four-year term as Oakland County executive.

"There is much to be proud of since we took the first steps of this journey together in January, 1993," Patterson said, referring to the start of his first term.

"We have streamlined and downsized county government to make it more efficient and cost effective."

Patterson, accompanied by his wife Kathy, said his second term would be like his first, with an emphasis on promoting a healthy economic climate.

"(His administration) have implemented more than 100 of the round table's recommendations," Patterson said. "It's one of the best things we've done."

"Because of its unparalleled growth and development over the past few years, Oakland County has become like a state within a state," Patterson said. Using statistics he has used at speaking engagements around the county, he said Oakland has retail sales greater than 17 other states, more people than 11 other states and jobs for 616,000 employees with an annual payroll surpassing \$19.8 billion.

Patterson, who turned 57 in January, became the first candidate to formally announce for the county's top elected position. So far, no Democrat has

announced, although the deadline for assuring a place on the ballot is 4 p.m. on May 14.

Patterson won the county's top position in 1992 by handily defeating Elizabeth Howe of Pleasant Ridge. Howe, now an adjunct professor of marketing at Walsh College, earlier said she is not interested in a rematch with Patterson, although she is confident that Democrats will field a formidable opponent.

Troy resident Jerry L. Bixby, the new chair of the Oakland County Democratic Party, Wednesday said he is aware of at least two people considering a challenge to the incumbent Republican. Bixby was elected party chair Tuesday, said he was not prepared to be specific

about how Democratic strategy.

"But I assure you, we will have a good candidate," he said. Regardless of any challenger, Patterson will be tough to beat. "He's done a super job as executive," said Russ Schulte, a Clarkston businessman who was one of the executive's well-wishers Wednesday.

Indeed, the executive seems to be riding the crest of a wave of support. A poll taken recently by a Lansing area pollster showed Patterson as one of the most frequently mentioned successors to Gov. John Engler.

In addition to being popular, Patterson is well-funded. An Oakland County Elections Division campaign finance report showed him with \$65,637 available for his re-election bid.

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a.m. until 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at the Detroit shelter. For more information call 810-852-7420.

CLARIFICATION

An article in Monday's paper should have said Southfield resident Gregory D. Miles filed for the 21st District County Commission race as a Democrat, not a Republican.

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