

Dems make quick pick for delegates

BY TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

Oakland County is fielding its share of Supreme Court candidates — and more — for the Democratic State Convention.

Judge Marilyn Kelly of the Court of Appeals and Circuit Judge Jessica Cooper campaigned at last weekend's 11th Congressional District convention, where the chief order of business was picking national convention delegates.

Two places are open. Chief Justice James H. Brickley, a Republican appointee and nominee, is seeking reelection. Justice Charles Levin, an independent of strong liberal bent, must retire because he is past age 70.

"She (Kelly) is one of the most judge-like people, in terms of temperament, I know," said state Rep. Maxine Berman, D-Southfield, in a speech for Kelly. "She has been a stalwart supporter of this party."

Kelly, of Bloomfield Hills, has been on the state's second highest court since 1988 and earlier in her career spent 12 years on the State Board of Education.

She is making her second bid for the Supreme Court, whose candidates run on a nonpartisan ballot after being nominated by party conventions. This year's nominations will be made at a Sept. 7 convention.

Kelly gained recent fame by writing the Court of Appeals' 2-1 decision denying "charter school" status to the Noah Webster Academy.

Cooper, a 10-year veteran of the circuit bench and former Southfield district judge, gained public attention when she was repeatedly attacked by Prosecutor Richard Thompson in one of the assisted suicide trials of Dr. Jack Kevorkian. A jury acquitted Kevorkian.

"That's the race," Cooper told Saturday's Democratic convention in Farmington. "You know where I come from. I can't speak partisan politics. I can only tell you where my heart is. These are swing seats."

The state's highest court has three known Republicans, three known Democrats and the independent liberal. The Michigan Chamber of Commerce agrees with Cooper's assessment of the

race's importance; the chamber has targeted the Supreme Court race, particularly as worker's comp and general liability cases rise for judgment.

Meanwhile, Annetta Miller has returned as a candidate, this time for the Wayne State University board. After serving 24 years on the State Board of Education, Miller tried for the WSU board at the 1994 state convention and lost.

A one-time nurse, Miller of Huntington Woods, has a degree in art history and is campaigning as "an energetic advocate of the rights of students, teachers and all educational employees."

There was a bare minimum of controversy as 180 Oakland and 15 Wayne precinct delegates picked the 11th Congressional District's six delegates to the Aug. 28-29 national convention in Chicago.

A "unity slate" drafted by party chair Vicki Barnett and

West Bloomfield lawyer and campaigner Al Holtz got routine approval over token opposition, most of whom dropped out. All six local delegates will be pledged to the renomination of President Bill Clinton.

Three women delegates will be Barnett, a Farmington Hills council member and mother; Terry Ahwal, Livonia resident and Arab-American activist who works for Wayne County Executive Ed McNamara; and Gail Nolin, Sylvan Lake educator and vice chair of the Michigan Education Association's Political Action Committee.

Two delegates will be Holtz, a 25-year activist making his first trip to a presidential nominating convention, and Paul Policichio, soon to be executive vice president of the Service Employees International Union.

Alternate will be Robert Picano, Livonia resident and Wayne County sheriff.

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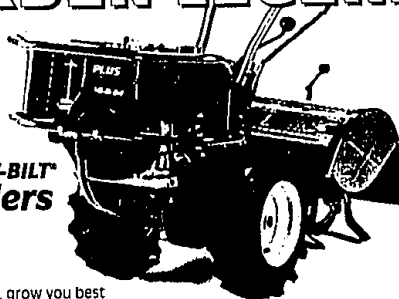
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