

# Program focuses on dealing with aging parents

CABLE CONNECTION



MARY LINDA CALDERONE

Denise Jenkins is a pro in the Communications Biz. Besides hosting Metro Detroit's 97.7 FM, she is an avid INFO TV-12 producer. A heart-rending conversation I had with her recently, brought to my attention her latest venture to be aired on our community TV channel.

Denise Jenkins knew for a long time there was a good reason why people shouldn't wait

till they were 40 to have kids. But she wasn't exactly sure why until last year. Something happened to her. As she describes it "the difficult decision to put an aging parent in a nursing home took me on an emotional roller coaster. It was one of the most horrendous rides I had ever taken in my lifetime." I kind of clicked then. "Oh, My God," she says, "what if I would have had young children at home to raise? Luckily, she has young children to care for the aging parent wasn't as demanding as it could have been. But it was still rough. She described to me how she had taken her mother-in-law in. This is a woman she loves dearly. Yet,

she just didn't have the strength to care for her. When she felt, Denise couldn't physically help her up. Nor did she have the proper equipment at home to take care of her. Yes, it was an extremely difficult decision for her to make. But it was even harder to admit to herself that she just couldn't do it all. When she looked around her, she saw many of her friends and acquaintances in similar situations, dealing with aging parents, dual career marriages and day care for small children — all the assorted and sundry items life has dealt us "baby boomers" in the 90s. Based upon her personal experience, Denise doesn't think we, as a society should feel guilty concerning these social dilemmas. When she was going through all of this trauma, the nightly news reports concerning sensational stories on nursing homes and day care places just didn't help either. It made her feel even worse. That's when she made a personal commitment to produce, along with the help of Government Production Coordinator, Kevin Southers, a special episode of "Coffee and Conversation" on INFO TV-12 dealing with Baby Boomers stuck in the middle of both aging parents and making critical decisions for both.

This special episode of "Coffee and Conversation" will air on INFO TV-12, Mondays at noon in June. Should you miss the program, remember Friday is Viewer's Request Day on INFO TV-12. Call 653-7303, ext. 261 to request the show. The next SWOCC meeting is Tuesday, June 11, at 4:30 a.m. in Farmington High School and OCC via I-NET. The next CAC meeting is Tuesday, June 11, at 4:30 p.m. at the SWOCC office. Mary Linda Calderone is the Community Outreach Coordinator for the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission.

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## Candidates for prosecutor's job square off in inaugural forum

BY PAT MURPHY

STAFF WRITER

Dr. Jack Kevorkian, plea bargaining and the infamous corruption probe into the Oakland County sheriff's department dominated the first campaign encounter between the two candidates vying for the Republican nomination for Oakland County prosecutor.

Incumbent prosecutor Richard Thompson and challenger David Gorcyca compared philosophies and traded barbs as they squared off in the inaugural forum for the first time in the campaign at a candidate's night sponsored by the Bloomfield Republican Women's Club Monday.

It wasn't a debate. But the exchange provided a beginning basis for comparing the two candidates, and several people who attended said they wanted more joint appearances.

Gorcyca and Thompson are vying in the Aug. 6 primary. The winner will face Democratic challenger Steve Kaplan of West Bloomfield who is unopposed in the primary.

Gorcyca, a former Oakland County assistant prosecutor who has a home in Royal Oak and a law office in Bingham Farms, started his presentation with some background — and then an attack on the incumbent's performance in office.

He's a 1980 graduate of Birmingham Brother Rice and 1988 graduate of the Detroit College of Law. He was an assistant prosecutor from May 1988, until July 1990 when he went into private practice. He's currently a city commissioner in Royal Oak.

The incumbent's "mismanagement and failed policies" have been costly, Gorcyca charged, wanting as much as \$1 million in tax dollars. He accused the Thompson of ineffectively promoting an appearance of being tough on crime.

"He (Thompson) talks about a conviction rate of 98 percent," Gorcyca said, referring to the incumbent's claimed success rate. But according to his review of Oakland Circuit Court

■ It's time for tough justice, not tough talk.

David Gorcyca  
— challenger

records, Thompson's conviction rate is closer to 51 percent, Gorcyca said.

"It's time for tough justice, not tough talk," Gorcyca said. Thompson, who was chief assistant to L. Brooks Patterson before being elected prosecutor in 1988, is seeking his third term in office.

"I'm running on my record," said the Clarkston resident who graduated from Staunton Military Academy in Virginia in 1955 and Wayne State University Law School in 1964.

Since being elected, his office has handled more than 47,000 felony cases, Thompson said, with a conviction rate of 98 percent. He has performed his duties using the rule of law as his guide, Thompson said. "I've enforced the law without fear or favor and without regard to the 'celebrity status' of any defendant."

He has been more successful than any other prosecutor in enforcing Michigan's "drug-lifer" law, he said, referring to the state's toughest anti-nation laws against possessing or dealing controlled substances.

At the same time his office has initiated, or helped initiate, special units to deal with drug trafficking, child sexual assault, domestic violence and auto theft.

The question and answer period dealt with a variety of issues. Here are some of the topics raised and the candidates' responses:

• Kevorkian, the retired

pathologist now living in West Bloomfield, came up several times, with Thompson insisting he had little option and Gorcyca insisting the incumbent's handling was a sign of bad judgment.

Thompson reiterated what he has said earlier about prosecuting Kevorkian, namely that in a nation of laws, he had little option. He doesn't consider the popularity of any law before enforcing it, he said, apparently mindful of public opinion polls showing many residents favor the availability of the apparatus for assisted suicide. "Public opinion is fickle," said Thompson.

In January 1991, after murder charges against Kevorkian were dismissed in Clarkston District Court, he had asked the Legislature to enact appropriate laws against assisted suicide, Thompson said. When their efforts were ineffective, he was left with little option but to enforce the existing law.

Gorcyca criticized the incumbent for several aspects of his handling of Kevorkian, the man who said he relishes the nickname "Doctor Death." He was particularly critical of Kevorkian's last two trials, both of which lasted for weeks before ending in acquittal.

"The issue of assisted suicide should be decided in Lansing," Gorcyca said, "not in circuit court."

The prosecutor should have prosecuted Kevorkian in another manner, Gorcyca insisted, such as appealing the dismissal of murder charges (in Clarkston District Court) and ordering the function issued by an Oakland Circuit judge that prohibited Kevorkian's participation in subsequent assisted suicides.

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