

# O'Brien, Grant lead Circuit Court race

BY SANDRA ARMBRUSTER  
OAKLAND COUNTY EDITOR

November's general election will see John N. O'Brien and Nanci Grant face off in what's likely to be a hard-fought battle for an open seat for Oakland County Circuit Court judge. The two placed first with 38,470 votes (33.9) and second with 29,646 votes (26.2 percent) in Tuesday's primary election.

Both candidates said that they would continue a campaign based on their qualifications into the November race.

Noting that he was "operating on three and a half hours of sleep" Wednesday morning, O'Brien said the campaign will include "just more of the same". He talked about his background as an Oakland County assistant prosecutor, work on civil cases and experience as a circuit court clerk/researcher.

Grant, an attorney for Dickinson Wright, said that people voting for her "appreciated my background and qualifications". She added that she would continue to campaign for greater

court efficiency and saving taxpayer dollars.

"I'll continue to go forward and meet people and let them know that I have trial experience," she continued.

Placing a close third behind Grant was Susan Moiseev, a 48th District Court judge for 10 years and an attorney for nine years previously, with 26,240 votes (23.2 percent).

Acknowledging that she was disappointed with the results of the election, Moiseev said: "I thought I ran a good campaign with a good message. Experience is important. A sitting district judge knows more about a trial court than a lawyer with under 10 years experience."

For Moiseev, and Carol Hackett Garagiola who placed fourth and last, it will be back to work next week after a brief hiatus. Garagiola received 18,876 votes (16.7 percent).

"Looking at the whole experience" Wednesday morning — her 25th wedding anniversary — was Garagiola who said she had "not a moment of regret about the campaign. We had no PAC,



Garagiola

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tions. I  
love the  
work I do  
(head of the Oak-  
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excellent candi-

date."

Tuesday's primary election brought much attention to the race after the Oakland County Bar Association committee interviewed the four contenders for the race and ranked O'Brien as "well qualified" over Judge Moiseev, who was rated one step lower at "qualified".

Also rated as qualified were Grant and Hackett Garagiola. Some accused the bar rankings as being politically motivated, a charged denied by those on the



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seov, of Southfield, had hoped that her experience would transfer over to voters' confidence in tapping her for the circuit court post. Her literature repeatedly pointed out that she was the only "actual judge" in the contest.

O'Brien, a Royal Oak resident who won major endorsements from The Eclectic, The Detroit News, The Detroit Free Press and the Spinal Column, as well as judges and police organizations.

While not judges themselves, O'Brien and the two other con-

O'Brien's father, John N. O'Brien, also was a circuit court judge until he died in 1993. John O'Brien's son also is the nephew of circuit Judge Francis X. O'Brien.

Nanci Grant, a West Bloomfield resident, is the daughter of Oakland County Probate Judge Barry Grant, who is unopposed in the current election. But the Grants maintained during the election that the family association was irrelevant to her qualifications.

Her campaign placed large, green and blue signs throughout

who helped her make the cut for November.

"Signs are nice; they give you name recognition," O'Brien said. "Unfortunately that's all they tell you. They say nothing about experience, ideas and goals. That's pretty important."

And Garagiola, a Bloomfield Township resident, is the daughter of federal judge Barbara Hackett and the wife of sports caster Steve Garagiola. She raised the least amount of any candidate in the campaign, a factor that she said "absolutely" influenced the race.

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