

# Victory

## Patterson sent back to executive's office

BY PAT MURPHY  
STAFF WRITER

At Lilley's Restaurant in Auburn Hills, Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson was happy as early results showed him jumping out to an early lead over Democratic challenger Edward Hamilton.

Yet Patterson's joy was tempered. "I think Mr. Dole is gonna finish second," he said as hundreds of supporters savored the evening... and a buffet featuring Oysters Rockefeller.

Not only was the executive right about Dole, Patterson called it well before Tom Brokaw of NBC and other television networks made similar announcements on the 9 o'clock news.

Patterson took an early lead over Hamilton and never looked back. "This is a Republican area," he said, "and the results will bear that out."

Uncertified results compiled Wednesday showed Patterson pulling 60.4 percent of the vote compared with 39.6 for Hamilton. The incumbent pulled 290,356 votes, and the challenger got 190,572.

"The Clinton tornado didn't help me at all," Hamilton said early. "I was counting on Clinton's coattails, but they just weren't there for me."

Hamilton congratulated the victor. "But I'm still miffed he wouldn't debate... not even before the League of Women Voters," he said.

For Patterson, however, the evening — with one exception — went as expected. "I think voters recognize the good work we've done," he said.

That exception, of course, was in the prosecutor's race where Patterson supported and actively campaigned for fellow Republican David Goreyca. The executive knew the prosecutor's race would be closer than his own, but he expected Goreyca and other Republicans to win.

Early in the campaign, Patterson took on a big assignment. Early polling showed President Clinton and Senator Carl Levin, at the top of the ticket, running strong. Those polls could always be wrong, but the executive — known as Mr. Republican of Southeast Michigan — had to face the possibility that once voters started voting Democratic, they wouldn't stop.

Patterson said it would be his responsibility — as the top of the Republican ticket — to bring ticket-splitting voters back to the GOP side of the ballot.

Patterson was well suited for that role, according to fellow Republicans, including Goreyca.

"Patterson has the best name," Goreyca said as early returns came in Tuesday. "If anybody can fill that role, he can."

George Cline of Clarkston agreed. "It's his integrity," Cline said, "when Mr. Patterson says he'll do something, he does it. Not everybody agrees, but he keeps his word."

Paul Moran of Rochester Hills said Patterson — like Clinton — benefited from a healthy economy. "Challengers have to give voters a reason to change," said Moran. "That reason wasn't there for Patterson or Clinton."

"The economy is good, so why rock the boat?" said Moran. Jill Moran, Paul's wife, said Dole had an decided disadvantage. It wasn't necessarily his age, 73, she said, but the appear-

ance of being out of touch.

That was a bigger problem for Dole than any gender gap, said Moran, an airline attendant who started election day in Dallas.

Patterson, 57, of Waterford previously said his second term would be a continuation of his first, with emphasis on strengthening the economic climate. He would, however, work toward a goal that has eluded him and his predecessor, namely getting back from Lansing a higher percentage of tax dollars Oakland residents pay into state coffers.

Hamilton, 53, of Troy was disappointed Wednesday, but not too demoralized to look to the future. "I may well run for governor in two years," he said. "From the possible candidates I've seen so far, namely Doug Ross and Don Riegler, the Democratic Party needs a conservative."

"Without me in the race, the Democrats could drift too much," said Hamilton.



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Passing time: County Executive L. Brooks Patterson talks with county commissioner Kevin Shehan as numbers come in.

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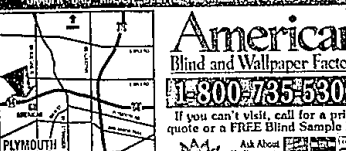
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