

SEVER
FROM PAGE A1

whether there were any filings that weren't current."

Officials found a failure to file and pay the SBT in 1994 and assessed penalties. Sever said they didn't detect the problem earlier, because for 12 years after that, he wasn't required to pay the tax.

"I'm not going to defend good or bad business practices," he said, pointing out that he has since found success in selling real estate and is getting back on his feet financially.

Knol said that if Sever has paid off his debts, that's good for him and for the State of Michigan. However, she believes Sever's financial difficulties represent a history of mismanagement that voters needed to know.

"It was basically released to inform the public and let them make the decision," she said. "I believe financial management is an issue to the voters. This position is a position of public trust ... I do believe fiscal responsibility is an issue."

She pointed out the information she used was a matter of public record, available at the Oakland County clerk's office and said this was one of three mailings sent out in the last few days before the election. The \$9,000 in taxes represented sales tax receipts owned by Sever's former printing business, she said, providing documentation that showed an existing property lien.

The document she produced, however, is dated Feb. 23, 2001, for taxes that were due in 2000. Sever said that's just old information and indicated he told the Farmington Area Republican Club's endorsement committee his tax debts had

been paid. Knol was endorsed by and is an active member of the club.

"I don't believe that one piece influenced this race," Knol said, pointing out that she won by more than 1,000 votes. "I knocked on more doors than my opponents."

ETHICAL QUESTIONS

Sever conceded Knol ran an excellent race and said he is bothered most by the lack of ethics in her launching an attack so late in the game.

He wondered why Knol didn't bring the issue up earlier, so the two of them could debate and voters could have had more complete and accurate information.

"It showed the type of character she is," he said, "and her willingness to do anything to get a vote. I was willing a week ago to realize she'd run a good campaign and she would likely win."

He said in addition to the literature, voters told him they'd received phone calls that passed on the same information contained in the brochure.

Sever said he spoke to people who said the negative tactic made her more likely to vote for him. "My thought was, she would have won the race with the support she already had," Sever said. "If she'll do this now, what's she going to do in Lansing?"

Sever said he planned to speak with Democratic primary winner Aldo Vagnozzi about changing the laws to prevent so-called "campaign dirty tricks" and said he planned to contact an attorney about statements that were "blatantly false."

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JUDGES
FROM PAGE A1

Farmington voters. He was the top vote winner out of seven candidates in both cities.

Official election results have not yet been released by the Oakland County board of canvassers.

"I think we worked hard," said Brady. "We went door to door virtually every day for the past 12-13 weeks."

The only evenings he did not spend hitting the pavement were those spent at fund-raisers, he said.

His 16 years of experience as a magistrate was another important deciding factor for voters.

"It wasn't my good looks," Brady said jokingly of his success. "I think the fact that peo-

ple understand that I've been magistrate for the past 16 years helped me. I think voters realize that I'm the only candidate who's familiar with the courts."

Magistrates act as assistant judges. They handle small claims and traffic cases, arraignments and search warrants. If a suspect is arraigned or a police officer needs a search warrant on a weekend or evening, the magistrate usually wields the gavel.

Incumbent Judge Frederick Harris, who is not seeking another term, got his start as a magistrate, Brady pointed out. Raczowski said that getting out and meeting voters was key to her primary success.

Raczowski received 2,913 Hills votes and 454 Farmington votes, coming in second place in both communities. She started aggressively campaigning in mid-May, by going door to

door.

"I think part of my appeal was that I am an approachable, friendly and grounded person," Raczowski said.

Those qualities are especially important in a district court setting, where most people begin and end their court contacts.

Like Brady, Raczowski said she plans to continue getting out and meeting voters in preparation for the Nov. 5 general election.

Both candidates plan to take brothers first. Brady said that he plans a vacation. Raczowski said she wants to spend more time at home.

"I'm enjoying actually sitting down and having dinner with my family," she said.

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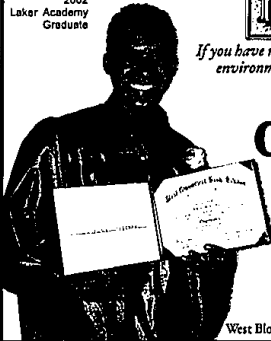
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