

# Brotherton Looks Back On Year In Government

**By EMORY DANIELS**

PONTIAC—Despite original setbacks due to organizational demands, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners has accomplished a lot in 1973, says Commissioner Wilbur Brotherton (R-Farmington).

Brotherton, whose 27th district includes Farmington and part of Farmington Hills and Southfield, recited some of this year's major accomplishments in an interview with the Southfield News & Observer.

"We must recognize one thing: The board started the year as a new organization with many new members. It took a certain amount of time for persons to get their feet on the ground and learn their functions."

"The Republican caucus, in my experience, is composed of individuals who are devoted to the good of Oakland County. One thing the year has shown is that democracy in action sometimes is slow in getting things going."

There were many issues the Republican majority on



WILBUR BROTHERTON

vice to persons not taken care of in the past, such as the blind. Farmington Library will be one of the branches to add services for the blind. We will also provide library service to jail inmates and are considering changes in the hotline program run by Oakland University for persons who want reference materials from the Kresge Library."

This year, the board is conducting information studies on the manner in which Oakland County government is functioning, Brotherton adds. An important study topic he cited is the Oakland County Health Dept., which might result in modernized procedures, reduced work positions by about three persons, and improved service.

Expanded health service could include educational programs in the school conducted by the health department, Brotherton added.

A major step taken was when commissioners recently approved the position of an Oakland County executive, says Brotherton, who added that the appointment will

probably go to Daniel Murphy, chairman of the board of auditors.

"We hope to give him new authority and make him responsible for operating the line departments of the county, excluding those headed by elected officers such as the sheriff and prosecutor."

"This will give us the opportunity to see if a county manager form of government can be effective. Murphy has done a great job, and he was appointed by the previous board which was controlled by the Democrats. Apparently, Democrats then thought pretty highly of him, so I don't see this as a political appointment in the partisan sense."

"The majority of Republicans favored an appointed administrator to select a manager on the basis of his background and skills rather than his ability to garner votes. This was a major difference we had with the Democrats, who wanted an elected administrator."

Brotherton, former mayor of the City of Farmington, said another area of progress has been that the county has received quite a bit of state funding for drug abuse prevention programs. Some of these funds will be allocated to the county mental health board, he added, but others will go to local programs to administer.

He added that Oakland County has been designated as manpower agent for the federal government and has received a \$75,000 planning grant to develop a program which could eventually be funded with \$1 million in federal funds.

This effort will be an attempt to place all manpower agencies under one umbrella, he said, and improve service as well as avoid over-lapping and duplications.

These programs will include job skill training, benefits for senior citizens and youth, minorities who have trouble finding work because of language barriers, older displaced workers, and possibly a public employment program.

Another area, still in the formative stage, is the Oakland County Hospital. Brotherton remarked that Democrats once wanted to close the hospital and then decided to relocate it. Republicans have come up with new information from the state, he added, and are considering building a nursing home type facility.

"There is a surplus of hospital beds in the metropolitan Detroit area, and the state doesn't want expansion of hospital beds. We feel it will be better to build a new building, with a nursing home type service, to provide the kind of service now given by the county hospital."

"It is possible to provide a higher level of care than is found in the typical nursing home without building a full hospital. We have had some excellent mental and physical therapy programs in the county hospital which can be transferred very nicely to a nursing home setting."

"It looks like the cost figures will allow us to move ahead with a new facility which will be more economical and provide the service which meets the real needs of the community."

Brotherton cited progress made in negotiations with the state for more equitable formulas on determining state equalized valuation (SEV) for property taxes. Legislation has been introduced, at the urging of the board of commissioners, which will allow cities and townships to assess properties by classes, he said.



CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS were the subject of a do-it-yourself course led by Farmington teachers recently after school. Robert Benjamin instructs Carolyn Hall in the art of making a paper snowflake. (Evert photo)



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LARKIN and REARICK, Attorneys, 2700 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington, Michigan 48034. The Probate Court for the County of Oakland, File No. 197-399. Estate of DANIEL MARTIN LARKIN, GOTT, Deceased.

NOTICE OF HEARING

Take Notice: On January 9, 1974, at 9 A.M., in the Probate Courtroom, Oakland County Courthouse, Pontiac, Michigan, to be the Honorable NOTARIES, Dr. DANIEL A. GOTT, Judge of Probate, a hearing will be held on the petition of BARBARA CONNORS, administrator, for the allowance of his First and Final Account.

Deed: December 3, 1973

Attorney for Petitioner: Larkin & Rearick, 2700 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills, Michigan 48034. Phone 851-2066

Barbara Connors, Petitioner, One Northwestern Drive, Southfield, Michigan. Newspaper: Farmington Enterprise & Observer. Publish: Dec. 12, 19, 26, 1973

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