



James F. O'Neil, state board of education candidate, was on the defensive as he spoke to this 18th Congressional District delegation at the GOP state convention. O'Neil lost the district and the nomination. (staff photo)

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GOP war horse unsaddled in state school board race

By TIM RICHARD

"It's too bad. It shouldn't have happened to Jim that way," said a long-time suburban Republican, shaking his head.

He referred to the beating that former two-term State Board of Education member James F. O'Neil of Livonia took from newcomer Silverenia Q. Kanoyton (sounds like "annointin'") at last weekend's GOP state convention in Detroit.

After losing for the state board in 1974 and '76, O'Neil launched a third bid for a comeback.

What the Republican friend of O'Neil's said "shouldn't have happened" was that top party leaders waited until O'Neil had begun campaigning to come up with Ms. Kanoyton, 30, a black, to oppose him.

MS. KANOYTON'S campaign was managed by her immediate boss, former State Sen. William Ballenger, who now heads the state's department of licensing and regulation.

It was aided by "honorary co-chairpersons" Peter Fletcher Jr. and Ranny Riecker, who happen to be Michigan's Republican National Committee members.

In Oakland County, her drive was pushed by Florence (Jo) Saltzman of Franklin, O'Neil's running mate for the state board in both '74 and '76.

While Mrs. Saltzman, whose husband Art is 19th District GOP chairman, had nothing derogatory to say about O'Neil, other party sources said there was bad blood between her and O'Neil about how the '76 campaign was run.

Moreover, O'Neil, while serving on the state board (1967-74), had been in Washington testifying against cross-district school busing and had missed a board vote on a hot Royal Oak school boundary case. O'Neil frankly told an Oakland County delegation from the 18th Congressional District he thought he had his priorities right. The 18th district disagreed, supporting Ms. Kanoyton 48-24 on the first ballot.

A BITTER O'Neil the next day sent a two-page statement to reporters covering the Democratic State Convention in Lansing denouncing Gov. William Milliken for "bolsism of the worst kind."

O'Neil accused Milliken of cutting a deal with the "teachers' union family in which Milliken has agreed to give control of education to the teachers. Ms. Kanoyton is a former teacher, and there are presently six other educators or former educators on the eight-member state board." In return, he said, Milliken expects support for his gubernatorial race and his national political ambitions.

O'Neil is a Ford Motor Co. administrator.

Besides being a savage attack on Milliken, it marked the first time a prominent Michigan Republican had said for publication that Milliken may be entertaining national ambitions.

Mrs. Saltzman, speaking to GOP delegates, endorsed incumbent board member Barbara DuMouchelle, who received the first nomination without opposition, and Ms. Kanoyton. Mrs. Saltzman concentrated on Ms. Kanoyton's quick mind, ability as a social sciences teacher and workshop developer, and state experience.

MS. KANOYTON beat O'Neil on the second ballot, 81-696.

In suburbia, O'Neil led 78-5 in his home 2d Congressional District and 41-9 in the 15th, covering western Wayne County.

Ms. Kanoyton carried the 12th (Macomb and a portion of Oakland), 46-27; the 17th (Redford, Southfield, Farmington), 40-31; the 18th (eastern Oakland), 45-27; and the 19th (western Oakland), 66-35.

In predominantly black districts, they split, O'Neil carrying the 1st by 19-0 and Ms. Kanoyton the 13th, 9-3.

The state board battle was the hottest race the Republicans had that afternoon, but it wasn't the only one.

SUBURBAN Republicans split all over the map on two battles for two Michigan State University trustee nominations.

Paul V. Gadola, Flint attorney and trustee of Mott Community College, won the first nomination, defeating Mary Sharp of East Lansing and Douglas Dent, a Northville High School teacher.

Gadola was nominated by Oakland County GOP Chairman Art Elliott of Troy. Dent was nominated by State Rep. Mel Larsen of Oxford, who earlier won the GOP nomination for secretary of state, and got a supporting speech from State Sen. R. Robert Geake of Northville.

The vote was 1,080 for Gadola, 397 for Mrs. Sharp and 38 for Dent.

The second nomination went to Mrs. Sharp, who defeated Thomas Klunzinger, Robert W. McKay and J. Bernard Derrico.

Klunzinger's candidacy got a seconding speech from State Rep. Jack Kirksey of Livonia. Klunzinger is now on the Republican staff in the State House of Representatives and he was the GOP nominee for Congress in the 17th District in 1970.

He gained fame of a sort when he told the world in 1970 that Detroit's voter registration system was defective, illustrating it by registering to vote three times in the same election. Instead of making a case against the Detroit city clerk's office, however, he was nearly charged with vote fraud. There was no prosecution, because an embarrassed clerk's office destroyed his three invalid registrations.

Retiring State Sen. Gilbert Bursley of Ann Arbor and Detroit attorney John R. Axe were nominated without opposition to the University of Michigan Board of Regents.

Harper Woods Councilman James R. Haley and Laura Reyes Kopack, a leader in GOP Hispanic and ethnic groups, were nominated to the Wayne State University Board of Governors.

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15	16
17	18
19 Senior Citizens Coffee 9:30 a.m. Center Court	20
21	22
23	24
25	26
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31	

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