

Kraemer: Make prosecutor's office work

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Barry Kraemer is finally getting his day in the sun.

The choice of Oakland County Democrats to run for prosecutor, Kraemer, 39, of Clawson was unopposed in his primary while four Republicans battling it out for the GOP nomination got months of attention.

Winner on Nov. 8 will succeed L. Brooks Patterson, retiring after 16 years as the county's chief law enforcement officer.

Kraemer is a public safety officer in Oak Park.



Barry Kraemer
Democratic candidate

Q. What do you do in your job?

A. We are a combined police and fire operation. So we are certified police officers as well as firefighters trained by the Firefighter Training Council. I'm a public safety officer II — fire inspector. I have been since June of 1985. My current responsibilities are fire cause and origin and arson investigation.

Q. To run for prosecutor, you must have a law degree. Have you done any legal practice?

A. Yes, since I passed the bar in 1981, I've been involved in the general practice of law — wills, trusts, house closings, a few divorces. I did quite a bit of mental health work with probate court when I first became an attorney. (He is a sole practitioner.)

Q. What kind of campaign budget do you have to take on Dick Thompson? As you've read in the campaign reports, he's pretty well bred.

A. He spent in excess of \$130,000 in the primary, and he's very capable of raising another \$100,000. We believe we can raise \$100,000 and have set a budget accordingly. Also, I've set a secondary budget if we fall short of that.

Q. If you are elected Oakland County prosecutor, what changes would you make in the office?

A. Retention of quality people in the prosecutor's office — that is very important.

I also see drug forfeiture increased. I think we in Oakland County have fallen behind surrounding counties in terms of a pro-active forfeiture to go after the ill-gotten gains of drug dealers, whether

there is a tremendous caseload and a lot of delay — for persons in the system as well as for attorneys and witnesses and parents of children called into probate court.

Q. Let's back up to retention of quality personnel. Is it your opinion that there's a high turnover of quality people?

A. Yes. People who are professionals... have a sense of worth and belonging. If you instill in them trust and believe in them, you get their loyalty, and they stay.

Obviously, pay is a big issue... but there are people who dedicate their lives to the prosecutor's office and will stay if they are given that degree of respect.

Q. Brooks Patterson has been known for having a legislative program, sometimes a very long one. Do you have a legislative program of your own?

A. No, sir. I don't see myself actively seeking legislation. I would be more than happy to assist any legislator who wanted input from the office, statistical data, information.

We have some good quality legislators. I know (state Rep.) Perry Bulard (D-Ann Arbor) has done a great deal. There are a number of bills he has proposed.

Q. Patterson also has been known for criticizing judges — Circuit Judge James Thorburn, now retiring, comes to mind; District Judge

Marlin Boyle out in Walled Lake. Will you be commenting on judges in the same way?

A. No, sir. I've worked in the system for 18 years, and I've seen a lot of good quality people on the bench.

I don't think it's in my interest to criticize that judge. If I believe he has overstepped his judicial bounds, then under the canon of ethics I would be obligated to bring that to the Judicial Tenure Commission.

Q. Where do you see Barry Kraemer 8 1/2 years from now — assuming you win two terms as prosecutor?

A. I'm a law enforcement professional. This is my first attempt at political office. If I'm not in the

prosecutor's office, I'll be in some form of law enforcement.

Q. How did you decide to become a lawyer?

A. A good lawyer friend of mine who talked to me after I completed my master's work (Kraemer has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice in 1972 and a master's in education from Michigan State University in 1977). I've always been interested in the law, being a law enforcement officer.

It adds credibility to my teaching. I've taught in the Oakland Police Academy. I assisted in teaching the deadly force seminar — decision shooting for police officers; when to shoot, when not to shoot.

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