

'Fondest hope' — Howard appointed circuit judge

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Barry Howard will realize "my fondest hope" March 10 when he is invested as an Oakland circuit judge. The first of his family to graduate from college, Howard, 40, of West Bloomfield, actually will ascend to the bench later this month.

"I've worked on about 25 campaigns," said Howard, whose list of candidate credits spans the political spectrum.

AS EXPECTED, Gov. James J. Blanchard this week selected Howard for the trial court vacancy created by the resignation of Norman L. Lippitt, another Blanchard appointee who left to return to private practice.

Circuit court handles criminal cases, major civil cases, domestic relations and some appeals from district courts. Oakland County has 14 circuit judges.

In addition, circuit judges frequently are asked to pinch-hit on the state Court of Appeals.

Howard's name had topped every speculative list of judicial prospects. While he will have to face voters when the term expires in 1990, in-



Barry Howard
picked by Blanchard

cumbent judges are rarely challenged.

Current salary of \$92,000. It's expected to increase to \$95,220 later this year.

HE WILL TRY to be like his most admired judge, Cornelia Kennedy of

the U.S. District Court.

"She has a great temperament. She's a very kind person, respectful of lawyers, just nice to people."

"She's knowledgeable in the law. She's always prepared and expects people to be prepared. She starts on time."

"She just epitomizes what a judge should be. On any check list, she's the closest to being perfect of anyone I know," Howard said.

ALTHOUGH HE never has run for office, Howard knows his way around politics.

"I'm the Democratic finance director for Oakland County," he said of the job that requires a lot of money-raising.

He also is an appointive member of the board of Western Michigan University.

Last July, he was part of the Michigan delegation to the Democratic National Convention.

Greg Morris, Blanchard's personal chief who announced the appointment, said Howard had earned stature as chairman of the representative assembly of the State Bar of Michigan.

A MEMBER of the firm of Carson, Fisher, Potts & Hyman in Birmingham, Howard specializes in labor, administrative and general civil litigation.

"In 15 years of practice," he said, "I've been in the federal district court, the U.S. Court of Appeals and in 20 or 25 counties. I used to represent the Police Officers Association of Michigan."

Born in Mount Clemens, Howard was raised in Birmingham and Detroit, moving to West Bloomfield in 1962. He earned a bachelor's degree in history, along with a teaching certificate, in 1970 from the University of Michigan and a juris doctor in 1973 from the University of Detroit Law School.

He and wife Ranny have three sons — Brian, 12, David, 10, and Chad, 9.

Bus ridership up in suburbs

More people in southeastern Michigan are riding SMART, the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) large bus service.

Average weekday ridership in January on SMART buses in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties increased a total of 4.4 percent over January, 1988, said Albert Martin, general manager. SMART is the new name of the former Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority.

Saturday ridership increased over 10 percent, and Sunday ridership climbed 18 percent. The highest weekday ridership gains were reported in Oakland County, followed by Wayne County.

Weekend service climbed partially because of favorable weather

which made our service to shopping malls very popular," Martin said.

"Also, in the past year, we have continued to shift our service to better meet riders' needs, particularly in the suburbs where employment has increased."

MARTIN SAID SMART's planners and schedulers have also concentrated on offering better connections.

Retirees to meet

The new federal Catastrophic Medical Care Act will be the topic when the Suburban Association of Retired School Personnel meets at 1 p.m. Monday, Feb. 27. Place will be the barrier-free Congregational Church of Birmingham, 1000 Cranbrook Road, at Woodward.

A representative of Blue Cross/Blue Shield will explain how state benefits supplement Medicare benefits. Fee is \$1.

Treasurer Marilyn Fowler said the group has 1,000 members — administrators, teachers, bus drivers, cafeteria, maintenance and office workers — from southern Oakland County.

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