

Threatened judge 'grateful' to B'ham polan

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

Being a judge carries a certain amount of danger, said David F. Breck, the former Birmingham mayor who is now an Oakland County Circuit Judge.

But when he learned the danger came from "Bobby the Greek," who police say targeted him with a \$50,000 contract, Breck took notice. "This man was definitely capable of doing it," Breck said Friday. "I definitely took the news seriously."

The judge was referring to his reaction to information from police that Haralabos Manetas, better known as "Bobby the Greek," tried to hire a hit man to settle an old score.

From within the walls of Jackson Prison where he is serving a possible 60-year sentence for drug dealing, Manetas tried to hire an undercover police officer to kill Breck, according to police.

Police foiled that plot. But not without first alerting Breck and assigning officers to protect him. At one point, at the insistence of Birmingham police, Breck was moved from his Birmingham residence to an area motel so officers could assure his safety.

"I WAS IN one room," said Breck, referring to the weekend of Jan. 25, and two officers with rifles were in the one across the hall on a 24-hour basis."

Breck said he is not at liberty to

discuss that weekend. But he is certainly happy about the protection he received.

"I'm grateful to the job the Birmingham police did," Breck said. "And I'm grateful to the Sheriff's Department, State Police and the prosecutor's office — especially Charles Semchena and Larry Bunting (Oakland County assistant prosecutors)."

Breck said he was informed of the threat Jan. 17, while he was at his cottage in northern Michigan. From then on, with the cooperation of various police agencies, he was under tight security — with plain-clothed officers in his courtroom, officers escorting him to dinner and unmarked cars parked at or near his home in Birmingham.

"I didn't tell my family," said

Breck. "I didn't want them to get upset."

THE JUDGE also decided against informing his staff or other judges about the threat. Nor were city, county or other court officials advised.

"But I took things very seriously," Breck said. "I was constantly looking at the cars next to me and checking the rear view mirror. I didn't take any chances."

At one point, he was startled — and alerted nearby police — as a white sports car stopped in the street and the driver ran to the door of Breck's home carrying an envelope.

It turned out to be a false alarm, he said, a tenant dropping off his rental payment.

Until 1989 when convicted as a repeat drug offender, the man accused of making the threat was a well-known drug dealer with a penchant for expensive living and a potential for violence, according to police. Among property seized during the prosecution were a diamond watch, two cars — including a \$60,000 Jaguar — and gold jewelry.

The arrest leading to Manetas' conviction occurred in June, 1989, in Southfield, after he held a woman, his former girl friend, overnight at his apartment.

"After the women testified against him," said Breck, "she was given a new identity under the witness protection program."

Given Manetas' background and the seriousness of charges against

him, Breck is, Feb. 27, at the Guest the maximum's Bee Administration to 60 years of payee Road in Bloomfield

BRECK's revenge sur talked with dope dealer, offered to p \$45,000 after Manetas 1985, accor Prosecutor charge of about the pl his prelimi solicitation for said.

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Archer's vision for Detroit plays well at

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

If he does run for mayor of Detroit, Dennis Archer can count on support from students at the Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College.

That seems like a logical conclusion for Archer, who outlined his vision of metro Detroit at the Farmington Hills campus Wednesday. The former Michigan Supreme Court Justice spoke as part of OCC's Distinguished Speaker Series.

Nearly 300 students crowded into Smith Theatre for the 60-minute presentation. In addition to the usual question-and-answer period, more than a dozen students lined up to talk to Archer on a one-on-one basis.

"This is an impressive turnout," said Professor Gerald E. Faye, who teaches economics and political science. "Not many speakers generate this kind of reaction."

OCC student, Christa Varga of Livonia summarized reaction to Archer this way: "He certainly has a vision of Detroit."

ANOTHER STUDENT, Gary Thomson of Farmington Hills, said he enjoyed Archer's presentation, with one major reservation. "I didn't



see anything about how this (Archer's vision of Detroit) would ever come about."

Archer had been on the state's highest court for almost seven years before resigning in late 1990 to join the Detroit-based law firm of Dickinson, Wright, Moon, VanDusen & Freeman.

When he resigned, Archer made two points that generated controversy — he planned to look into running for mayor of Detroit, and he wanted a black judge to succeed him on the

state's highest court. Both were part of his presentation at OCC.

Archer didn't announce his candidacy. But his vision of metro Detroit is clearly based on some changes, including one in the mayor's office.

For one thing, he wants Detroit to get good press.

"I can see a Time magazine article touting Detroit as the most improved city in the nation," Archer said. That article, and others, would cite the city's cultural diversity and expanded amenities such as the Detroit Institute of Art, the Detroit Symphony and the Michigan Opera Theatre.

IN HIS VISION, Archer said, the media congratulates Detroit on its safe streets, excellent public schools and great health care delivery system. "The city has finally recognized the dignity of its residents," he said.

The Detroit in Archer's vision has strong neighborhoods, a diverse economy, a good transportation system and a harmonious relationship between business, labor and all levels of government.

The Motor City Archer said he envisions is clearly different from the Detroit headed by Mayor Coleman Young. It is no longer the butt of jokes, but a thriving metropolis —

with no Coleman Young in the picture, he said.

"The people of Detroit love Mayor Young," Archer said after his speech. But the city's leaders — its movers and shakers — see a rebirth of Detroit under a different mayor, he said.

In response to questions from students and the media, Archer said he sees signs that Detroit can indeed be revitalized into the city of his vision.

Similar renaissances have occurred in Baltimore, Cleveland and other cities, he said. "But it took leadership, cooperation and people with vision. It also took time."

DETROIT'S TURNABOUT will be more rapid, Archer said, because the city will learn from the experiences of others. That turnabout is already in the planning stages, he said, as business, industry, labor and government see the area's problems and

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