

# No dumbbell

## Ex-weightlifter now poised to boost exec

As L. Brooks Patterson assembles his new staff, the Observer & Eccentric will spotlight his appointees and the jobs they will perform for county residents.

By RALPH R. ECHTINAW  
STAFF WRITER

Once upon a time Bob Dustman, covered with sweat, grunting and groaning, endeavored to raise 600 pounds of dead weight into the air.

Now the former radio announcer, reporter, news director and competition weightlifter must lift what some would call a much heavier weight — that of Oakland County Executive-elect L. Brooks Patterson's reputation.

Dustman, 48, was named two weeks ago to the post of public information officer for Patterson's administration, set to take office next month.

Dustman's duties will include maintaining communication between the various county departments, scheduling press conferences and writing press releases.

He has never held a PR job before, and certainly never worked in government, but the radio business was becoming a drag.

"Broadcasting has been very good to me," Dustman said. "But the thrill is gone, as they say."

Certainly the bouncing around from one radio station to another had to get old. "Being in radio is kind of a nomadic life," the Waterford resident said.

Graduating from Central Michigan University in the late 1960s with a speech major, Dustman quickly entered the radio and TV business, working (in chronological order) for WPON, WDEE, WCXI, WMJC, WHND, Metro Traffic Control, and WWJ.

Dustman met Patterson shortly after the latter was elected county prosecutor in the '70s when the former worked at Pontiac's only radio station, WPON.

A great interview

"I loved interviewing him,"



**Grunt work:** L. Brooks Patterson's public relations man Bob Dustman isn't just another pretty face. Here he squats with 625 pounds on his substantial shoulders in 1986 while winning second place in the super heavyweight division of the Masters National Championships in St. Louis, Mo.

Dustman said of the quotable Patterson, "He could always give you a nice 20-second sound bite that fit perfectly. When I learned that he was thinking about running (for executive) I went to him and expressed my interest in doing something."

Roberta Jasina, a news anchor for WWJ-AM who worked with Dustman for eight years, said Dustman and Patterson are a perfect match. "He and Brooks have been as tight as tight can be for a long time," she said.

Jasina was excited about being interviewed in regard to Dustman because, she said, "I wanted to make sure somebody knows what a good guy Bob Dustman is. Bob can get along with just about anybody on Earth. And if he can't get along with you he can probably kill you."

### Gentle giant

She referred to Dustman's size, which is considerable. Topping six feet and 200 pounds, Dustman

used to lift weights in his spare time, winning first place in the state 17 years ago when he could do squats with a 600-pound barbell and bench press 450 pounds.

But Dustman is what you might call a gentle giant. "As big as Bob is I have never seen him lose his temper," Jasina said.

Sonny Elliott, who does weather reports at WWJ, agreed, calling Dustman "a deep and gruff man who seemed to care about who he worked with." Volunteering a bogus negative comment, Elliott said that Dustman "eats the lettuce underneath his shrimp cocktail."

A very big man, Dustman's appearance can be deceiving. "You see someone like Bob and you think, 'Oh, a jock,'" Jasina said, but Dustman then proceeds to surprise folks with his erudition.

An avid reader, Dustman counts among his favorite books: *The White House Years* by Henry Kissinger, *America in Search of Itself* by Theodore White, *The*

*Acting Years* by Bob Schieffer and *The Politics of Upheaval* by Arthur Schlesinger.

"When I read I like to learn something," Dustman said. "Lately I'm brushing up on some of the county manuals and that sort of thing."

As for Patterson's administration, Dustman said, "I think it's going to be a very proactive administration, a very aggressive administration."

Certainly Jasina feels that Patterson picked a winner. "I think Oakland County is lucky to have him in that job," she said. "I think Bob's heart is in that job."

Regarding the most embarrassing thing she knows about Dustman, Jasina said he used to pick up a few extra bucks doing announcing work at Silverdome truck pulls. "He couldn't come to my wedding 17 years ago because he had a truck pull that night," she said.

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