

Patterson quits OU board, forms county ethics panel

By RALPH R. ECHTINAW
STAFF WRITER

Citing a conflict of interest with his new job and an urge to set a good example for Oakland County employees, Executive L. Brooks Patterson announced his resignation Saturday from the Oakland University Board of Trustees.

"I cannot expect a high standard of ethical conduct from others if I don't expect it of myself," he said. "That's why I feel it's imperative I step down as a trustee. It's necessary to avoid even the slightest appearance of a conflict of interest."

Elected last November, Patterson moved into his new office on Monday as Oakland County's first new executive since Dan Murphy created the job in 1974. But as an attorney in private practice, Patterson was appointed to the OU board by Gov. John Engler on Jan. 9, 1991.

"I have enjoyed my service as a trustee and, therefore, it is with much regret that I must tender my resignation from the board," Patterson said in a Dec. 21, 1992, letter to Engler. "I feel I would violate Michigan's incompatibility statute if I attempted to serve in both (jobs)."

In an interview Monday, Patterson said he "didn't want to put a cloud over the (OU) board."

University President Sandra Packard said in a press release, "We hope to continue our close relationship with Mr. Patterson and with Oakland County and wish him well in his new challenge. The county's gain is certainly our loss."

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L. Brooks Patterson
Oakland County Executive

The governor must now appoint someone to replace Patterson on the board for the rest of an eight-year term ending Aug. 11, 1998. He doesn't have to do it by any specific time, but Engler has been prompt in the past with state university board appointments. If you're interested in getting the appointment, or know someone else who would like it, contact Engler's office in Lansing.

Patterson's resignation coincides with another announcement that he has started an "ethics committee" of county residents to create a list of rules for the behavior of the executive department's 213 employees.

The Dan Murphy Administration, Dustman said, didn't have any written ethics rules for employees. Patterson wants to have the rules down on paper so that employees have a good idea of what they're not supposed to be doing.

Named to the committee are: ■ Bernard Dobranski, a dean at the University of Detroit law school.

■ Ed Parks, the managing partner with Plante & Moran.

■ Hilda Gage, an Oakland County Circuit Court judge.

■ Fred Harris, an Oakland County 4th District Court judge.

■ Patsy Fulton, the chancellor of Oakland Community College.

■ David Littman, the chief economist of Manufacturers Bank.

■ James Sharp, the chairman of the Oakland University Board of Trustees.

■ Andy Creamer, retired president of Pontiac State Bank (now National Bank of Detroit).

■ Robert Aranosian, the director of Pontiac Osteopathic Hospital's trauma center.

■ Jack McDonald, an attorney and former Oakland County commissioner.

■ James Alexander, the chairman of the Oakland County Republican Committee.

Patterson spokesman Bob Dustman said the committee will meet sometime this month and probably have a set of rules to submit for approval in two months.

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