## Patterson: 'It's not like the Mafia took over'

BY PAT MURPHY
SYAF WATER

(Öakland County Executive L.
Bröoks Patterson disputes the asdessment by prosecutor Richard
Thompson that the charges
against two Rochester Hills officiris and six current or former
members of the sheriff department constitute the "worst case of
political corruption in Oakland
County history" bers, the scandals are extensive, Patterson acknowledged. And the charges are
serious. "But it's not like the
Mufla took over," he said.
Patterson agreed with the asseasment that most of the people
accused — if convicted — would
be classified as petty thieves, not
violent criminals.

In the wake of the charges, two
views seem to prevail on Sheriff
John F. Nichols among Oakland
County presentatives of our
communities.

"One view holds that Nichols —
Oadland County's cross between
Gen. George Patton and Presider Harry Truman — was betyred by people he trusted.

"But once he saw corruption,
has went after it," said county
commissioner Shelley G. Tauh,
REDloomfield Hills. "He didn't
try to hide anything, he tried to
fing solutions."

"The other view is quite different Nichols is the new rester-

The other view is quite different Nichols is the new posteriors. When the control of the control

thing like this implement only company (Detroit Edison), I'd want answers.

Taub, Wolf and others gave their views in response to questions asked Thursday at the regular meeting of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners. They wate interviewed along with other officials including County Executive. L. Brooks Patterson.

Most were willing to put aside generars about the guilt or innoconce of 11 people arrested last wack. Most have already been arraigned, and the courts will generally decide their fate.

But the basic question remains: Do two separate scandals within

the sheriff's department — resulting in criminal charges against three command officers, three deputies and the mayor of Rochester Hills — indicate structural problems?

The two scandials were spelled out Tuesday at a press conference by Nichola and Thompson.

"A pervasive pattern of corruption and misconduct at the work-release facility," said Thompson, resulted in immates getting privileges in exchange for gits or favors to command officurs or deputies.

"Food and alcohol were routinely bartered in exchange for extended hours away from the facility by immates," Thompson said. In other cases, sheriff's officers got reduced prices on auto repairs and home improvements in exchange for special treatment to immates who were supposed to be released only during working hours, and then under close surveillance.

As outlined by Thompson, the situation was equally corrupt at the Rochester Hills substation where county deputies, under contract with the city, perform policie duties.

The investigation uncovered hilling measures weeken.

where county deputies, under contract with the city, perform police duties.

Itee duties.

The investigation uncovered billing practices under which then Capt. Grard Carlin allegedly received \$20,574 in unwarranted overtime poy, said the prosecutor. Allegedly with the cooperation of Rochester Hills Mayor Billie Irehand and her assistant, Doris Keylon, command officers at the substation received illegal Christmas bonuses and the cunty was cheated out of more than \$425,000 over the work.

The work-release scandal, seven people were arrested — former Capt. Garald Reeves, former Ser. Junes Coutty, suspended lie Stear and three innates. They are cheged with 24 felonies.

The Rochester Hills substation four people were arrested — formation four people were arrested — formation four people were arrested — for Carlin.

At the Rochester Hills substa-tion, four people were arrested — former Capt. Carlin, suspended Deputy Michael C. Schmitzele, Mayor Ireland and her assistant Keylon. They are charged with a total of 47 charges, 39 folonies and four misdemeanors.

'A sad day'
"This is an embarrassment

"This is an embarrasment," said county commissioner John P. Garfield, R-Rochester Hills. "I don't know how this could have slid by" internal controls. County commissioner Thomas A. Law, R-West Bloomfield, said the scandals and arrests constitute a sad day for Oakland and its image as a county of clean government.

"But it's even sudder for John Nichols. He relied on people. he trusted them. And they let him down."

County commissioner Donald W. Jensen, R-Birmingham, soid he doesn't have enough first-hand information to decided if Sheriff Nichols can rightly be accused of load or lax monagement. "All I know is what I read in the papers," he said. "I don't like what I read, but I readly don't know if the sheriff did anything wrong.

"I know that Nichols is generally quick to discipline anybody within his department who does anything wrong," said Jensen. "I don't know how things got so out of hand. But I would like some answers."

Commissioner Sue Ann Doug.

of hand. But I would like some onswers."
Commissioner Sue Ann Douglas, R.Rochester Hills, said she too would like some answers. Commissioners don't have any direct control over the sheriff's department, she said. "But we do approve his budget. We should be able to get some answers about what went wrong."

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But getting answers from Nichols — even if they control the 
purse strings — isn't easy, said 
commissioner Nancy Dingeldey, 
whose I II h District includes part 
of West Bloomfield. "He's very 
intimidating." Nichols was indeed intimidating at last Tuesday's press conference. With obvious contempt for 
reporters, Nichols glarde defantly 
as he defended his department as 
well as his handling of the painful 
episode.

wen as a superior of the state police, the FBI. Treasury officials and the U.S. Secret Service were involved in the eight-month investigation, Nichols said. "With all those investigative agencies involved, I'm sure we found everything there

was to find.
"If we didn't, we'll go back after

it," he wowd.

Nichols looked strained and weary at the press conference. Yet he stood erect and held his chin

he stood erect and held his chin high.

He's got more than 700 deputies within his department, he said, and they're all good officers. The department shoulin't be tarnished by the misdeeds of a few officers.

"Even the officers who are charged were damn good officers in their day." Nichols asserted.

"And don't you (the media) ever forget it."

Nichols, now 74, was elected to his third four-year term last No-

his third four-year term last No-vember. Nobody interviewed last week would rule out his seeking a fourth consecutive term.

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## Students attend OU writer's confab

Seven Oakland County high school juniors and seniors will at-tend Oakland University's 32nd Annual Writers' Conference Sat-uriday on scholarships from the Mary Kay Davis Student Writers Endowment.

Endowment.

The five students from our area are: Nazik Najar, Marian High School, Bloomfield Hills; David-Wolach, Roeper School, Bloomfield Hills; Leah Michaelson, Mercy High School, Farmington

Hills; Renee Chou, North Farmington High School; Tarah Kandell, Lutheran High School Northwest, Rochester Hills.

The students were chosen on the basis of their creative writing samples and on teacher recom-mendations. They will attend Sturday conference seasions pre-sented by professional writers, ed-tiors and agents in every field of writing. Award-winning Michigan

novelist Tom Kakonis will speak at the luncheon program.
Co-sponsored by the OU Division of Continuing Education and the Detroit Women Writers, the conference for novice and experienced adult writers has been extended to a limited number of worthy high school writers. The Mary Kay Davis Student Writers Endowment honors the memory of a Detroit Women Writers member.



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