

Sheriff search from page A5

ated it intends to act swiftly and in full compliance with the Michigan Open Meetings Act. That law requires, among other things, that applications are public record and that the interviewing process be open to the public.

The committee will advertise the job in local newspapers and publicans, Caddell said. But it doesn't envision a nation-wide search. There is an ample number of local candidates, he said, eliminating the need for any extensive, nation wide search.

County corporation counsel Gerald D. Poisson said the only real qualifications for sheriff, according to the Michigan Constitution, is that candidates be

registered voters within the area represented, in this case Oakland County.

But the committee emphasized it will be looking for other "common sense" qualifications such as educational background, experience in law enforcement and administration. "I also think it's important the next sheriff be able to articulate well — particularly at budget time — and that he (or she) get along with other officials," said Caddell.

Complete applications can be delivered or mailed to: The Oakland County Clerk's Office, The Oakland County Complex, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac 48341.

Hopefuls from page A5

land County Republican Party, attorney David Sebastian of Birmingham, and business man Edward Hamilton, who ran as a Democrat against county Executive L. Brooks Patterson in 1996 before becoming a Republican earlier this year.

Sebastian said he will have no formal input into the selection of a new sheriff. "I have full confidence in the committee," he said.

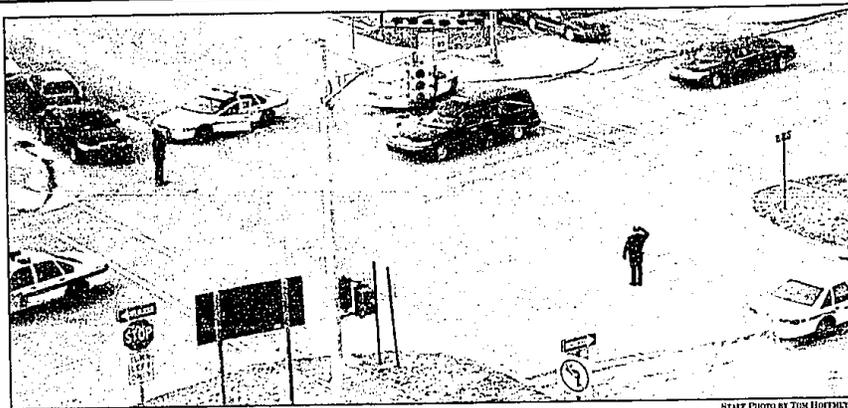
But Sebastian and the local GOP is reportedly preparing for a series of special election in the event Bouchard is named the new sheriff, thereby creating a vacancy in the senate district in which he won re-election two months ago.

Buffa's endorsement this week is his second. Rudy Lozano, an ally and fund raiser for Nichols, last week said he would support Buffa if he became a candidate for sheriff. "John Nichols told me he wanted Buffa as a successor," said Lozano, a Clarkston businessman who is also on the Road Commission for Oakland Coun-

ty. Buffa was a member of the Detroit Police Department, where Nichols rose through the ranks and eventually became Police Commissioner. Buffa joined the Oakland Sheriff's Department in 1987, immediately after retiring in Detroit.

In 1993, when the department was the target of what was described as "the biggest case of political corruption in county history," Nichols by passed command officers with more experience to name Buffa his under-sheriff. Nichols cited Buffa's "loyalty, experience and integrity" when he named him second-in-command.

Jean Nichols, the sheriff's widow, said she too is watching the process of selecting a successor to her late husband. "John and I talked about the person he wanted to take his place," Mrs. Nichols said Monday. "But I think I will stay out of the fray." "From what I can tell, the (vacancy) committee is doing a very competent job," she said.



STAFF PHOTO BY TOM HOFFMEYER

A traffic-stopper: Police officers salute as the John Nichols funeral proceeds southwest on Woodward Avenue at Maple Road in Birmingham on Dec. 23.

UNCF benefit set for Ford dealership

The stars will come out Saturday, Jan. 2, when Walter Douglas, president and majority stockholder of Southfield's Avis Ford, and his wife Retha Douglas, host the Oakland County Initiative's fourth-annual "A Starry Night" benefit celebration.

The event will take place from 7 p.m. to midnight at the Avis Ford dealership, 29200 Telegraph (at 12 Mile), and will benefit the United Negro College Fund (UNCF).

The black-tie gala is one of the many Starry Night parties happening across metropolitan Detroit and is part of the Fox Network's national "Evening of Stars—A Celebration of Educational Excellence" fund-raiser.

Each year the Evening of Stars gives the UNCF an opportunity to raise revenue and thank supporters.

Founded in 1944, the UNCF is the nation's oldest and most successful minority higher education assistance organizations in the country. The organization

currently administers more than 400 educational programs that give students access to higher education and career opportunities. To date, the UNCF has raised more than \$1.4 billion for its member schools and colleges and has helped to educate more than 300,000 students.

Prior to investing in Avis Ford, Walter Douglas was president of New Detroit, Inc. for eight years and served as vice president for six years. During his tenure, he personally led many organizational and community efforts which targeted social, economic, urban and political problems. Last year's Avis Ford celebration helped to raised more than \$37,000 as it generated more than 300 attendees. This year, he hopes to raise even more for the college fund.

Ticket prices for "A Starry Night" benefiting the UNCF are \$50 per person and \$100 per couple. For further details, contact Ned/Detroit at (313) 667-6333.

Kids race for scholarship in Kmart anti-drug program

Three children from the Detroit area know that it pays to be drug-free, and one of them may just drive away with a \$10,000 college scholarship to prove it.

The scholarship is the grand prize in the third-annual Kmart Kids Race Against Drugs National Championships, to be held in Orlando, Fla. Jan. 20-24.

The keen driving skills of Symone Coleman from Detroit, Adams Edwards from Waterford, and Ryan Scislowicz from Rochester all earned a position at the Troy-based Kmart Kids Race Against Drugs National Championships as winners in the fight against drug abuse.

These competitors out-raced 7,814 other contenders during the July pit stop of the Kmart Kids Race Against Drugs National Tour.

This expenses-paid, VIP trip for racers and a parent or legal guardian includes a three-day pass to all of Disney World's theme parks and a \$100 savings bond for each participant.

Kmart Kids Race Against Drugs races are open to children between the ages of 7-12, and Kmart donates \$5 to local drug and alcohol prevention organizations for each racer crossing the finish line.

These children maneuver safety-modified lawn tractors on mini-speedways, which are set up in more than 500 Kmart, Big Kmart and Super Kmart parking lots nationwide, for prizes and for the chance to compete in the National Championships.

The racetracks, complete with hairpin turns, barriers, speed bumps, bridges and tunnels, are similar to the 75 by 185-foot super highways that National Championship contenders will speed through at the National Championship race.

Children are timed by a highly sophisticated time clock, which times the racers down to a hundredth of a second.

The Kmart Family Foundation developed the Kmart Kids Race Against Drugs in 1996 to provide a fun, free, family-oriented event that educates today's young people about the dangers of using drugs and alcohol while encouraging healthy competition.

Since 1996, the Kmart Family Foundation has donated more than \$4.6 million to drug fighting organizations through grants.

Kmart Kids Race Against Drugs, visit Kmart on the World Wide Web at www.kmart.com or call (800) 63-KMART for a race location near you.

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