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Wednesday, November 07, 2012



Densford holds St. Mary's judgeship with 1,500-vote margin

Stanalonis says absentees won't be enough to change result

By John Wharton, Staff Writer

David W. Densford tallied a lead of 1,529 votes among the more than 41,000 ballots cast by Tuesday night to hold onto a St. Mary's County circuit court judgeship he received last winter by appointment, and thwart a challenge by assistant county prosecutor Joseph M. Stanalonis.

There were still more than 2,100 absentee ballots that have not been counted after the county elections board reported the unofficial results, along with an unknown number of provisional ballots.

"That's not going to be enough," Stanalonis said late that night at a campaign gathering, of the number of absentee ballots he could hope to receive to try to overcome Densford's margin.

Densford, 60, focused during the campaign on his broad experience with a full array of criminal and civil litigation during a 27-year legal career as a public defender, lawyer in private practice and on occasion a court-appointed prosecutor.

"I'm pleased and humbled that the people have decided that I can continue as their circuit court judge," Densford said as his own election night gathering concluded.

Stanalonis, twice shunned by a judicial nominating commission, was endorsed by his boss and the local Fraternal Order of Police lodge. Stanalonis stressed his 17 years' experience prosecuting criminal cases. His supporters heavily criticized the process that had resulted in Densford being tapped last December for the judgeship by Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley (D), who was depicted by Stanalonis as being out of touch with the preferences of St. Mary's residents.

Densford was chosen by the governor from among four nominees for the position, filling a vacancy created last year by the retirement of Circuit Judge C. Clarke Raley. During their ensuing contest for the job, Densford and Stanalonis, both registered Democrats, each collected and spent more than \$50,000. In the primary election last spring, Stanalonis won the Republican contest, and Densford won the Democratic primary.

During the campaign, Densford played up findings by Maryland Judicial Campaign Conduct Committee Inc. that Stanalonis' campaign had violated its standards, and a related complaint filed against Stanalonis with the Maryland Attorney Grievance Commission.

Stanalonis countered that the campaign conduct corporation included contributors to a Prince George's sitting judges political committee, which in turn funded

Densford's campaign, and said that the grievance commission complaint was likewise politically motivated and without merit.

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