"Dodge City"

(Continued from p. 5)

told them the voters expected in a states attorney.

"Trying to change Kurt Schmoke as a candidate...wow," Henson exclaims in awe, "we had a candidate that couldn't be changed or challenged."

Largely this fact, among others, led to Kurt Schmoke's victory.

Surprisingly, although for different reasons than Schmoke's, Danny Henson, Ron Shapiro, another important cog in their campaign organization, nor Larry Gibson felt a sustained high from their victory.

Their mood is summed up by Danny Henson.

"Obviously I felt good. But depression set in. It was over. The intensity is something you've got to experience. It's high. Fast. Intense."

For Kurt Schmoke, however, the campaign's end was to mark a new beginning. As Schmoke has acknowledged, it was probably his unswerving stand on crime, for blacks and whites, which had been Swisher's final undoing. Although there were other things.

Early on, Kurt Schmoke received the support of Baltimore's Ministrial Alliance of 166 churches and in the final few days of the campaign, when they finally went with a TV ad, kids in the projects were singing their campaign song. Schmoke was on the way.

Swisher got some late help when he won community sympathy following an untimely newspaper article in which he was described as a young Gov. George Wallace.

About the same time, however, Atty. Gen. Steve Sachs of Maryland neutralized Swisher again by endorsing Schmoke who had already received endorsements from The Sun and The Afro.

Today, and tomorrow, and perhaps during the months and years to come, this election will be analyzed and debated by political experts, but for Kurt Schmoke it is over. His thoughts are filled with the job ahead.

"One of my main goals is to disrupt narcotics trafficking in Baltimore and go as high as I can to get the major dealers of heroin and cocaine.

"We'll have a narcotic strike force of from 12 to 15 assistant states attorneys and investigators working the police drug unit, which has 44 men, in addition to cooperating with the FBI and the Drug Enforcement Administration."

Kurt Schmoke sits back. His secretary has warned him twice of the time and another appointment. Tonight he must appear at campaign functions for Gov. Harry Hughes and Georgia Goslee, who is making a bid to be elected the first black female to sit on the city's Supreme Bench.

But he does not rush his visitor out. Rather, he sits forward and again touches the gold wedding band on his index finger, thinking about a question.

One gets the feeling Kurt Schmoke is always thinking, always pondering a question with the pin-point precision reasoning and logic which comes with years of training as a lawyer.

There was just no one clear-cut reason why I won," he says, "it was a combination of factors. The turn out of voters because of crime and the economy and their feeling and hurt because of what's going on nationally.

"Something's in the air. Black voters have turned out in Prince George's, Richmond, Va., in the north: there's just a greater awareness in black communities on the need and importance of voting.

"Here, in Baltimore," he concludes, "the old Civil Rights constituancy turned out: rich and poor; black and white."

And what does Kurt Schmoke want this constituancy to say at the end of his four years?

"That I lived up to my promises."

"Victory"

(Continued from p. 11)

Milton Allen's campaign in 1970 when he won his bid to become states' attorney and was Allen's chief advisor in 1974 when he lost his bid to win a write-in campaign to retain his seat. Nobody knew Bill Swisher better (as a political advisary) than Gibson and nobody had studied Baltimore's State's Attorney's race in more detail than Gibson. Larry Gibson and his deputy campaign manager and finance committee co-chairman, Danny Henson managed to raise more than $125,000, close to twice the amount either of them had raised before. They spent it well in radio, printed materials, direct mail, polling and a small amount in television. They gave Schmoke credibility and guidance.

Sixth, it appears we are in a new cycle of black interest in the electoral process in Baltimore City. This new interest is occuring at the same time that blacks to the south of Baltimore are also flexing their political muscle.

Blacks had not had a victory in a high interest political contest in Baltimore since 1970! Yes, between 1971 and 1979. There had been, however some notable achievements. Seven blacks either won or retained seats in city wide elections between 1971 and 1979 but over 28 candidates lost during that same period. During that period black politicians lost every single major city wide fight involving Mayor, President of the City Council, Comptroller, and State's Attorney. Black voters had responded with lethargy.

Black voter turn out had been low ever since the 1974 Democratic Primary election hovering between 30-40%. During the high tide of black political involvement and excitement 1966-72, black voter turnout was increasing steadily in every succeeding election. It was a new experience for black voters and black politicians to participate in city-wide contests and to flex this new found political power. The excitement was short lived, however. Blacks piled up loss after loss, often winning lower interest contest, but never taking the big one, the contest that grabbed the headlines and sparked the imagination of the voter.

Comparative Voter Turn-out
Gubernatorial
Democratic Primary Elections 1970-82

	1970-78	1982	+/-
City Average	41.7%	54.9%	+15.2%
Black	38.1%	54.7%	+16.6%
White	46.7%	54.1%	+ 7.4%
Jewish	55.3%	62.8%	+ 7.5%

The roots of the decline in black voter turn-out can be found in the 1972 Seventh Congressional District fight between incumbent Parren J. Mitchell and challenger George L. Russell. In the previous election year, 1971, Russell had lost a bid to become Baltimore's first black mayor. Russell blamed his loss on the refusal of Parren Mitchell's nephew Clarence Mitchell, III to withdraw from the 1971 Mayoral race. Russell felt that Mitchell was a part of the effort to subvert his candidacy.

The campaign was bitter and sharply divided the black community.

In the next election year, black voter turn out hit rock bottom. The spirit of the black voter had been broken.

The 1980 Democratic Primary changed that. A local black attorney and former talk show host, Billy Murphy, made the traditionally low interest Supreme Bench contest into a show of black political power. He won a city wide contest for one of five seats on the Supreme Bench turning a usually staid contest into a media event. As a result, the spark of interest returned. That spark may have contributed to new black hope in winning the big one. Politicians were then talking again about running and winning the Mayoralty, the Presidency of the City Council, and the Comptrollers office. The mood changed.

Black voter turnout in the South is also on the upswing. In Virginia in 1981, black voter turnout exceeded white voter turn out. In the early primaries of 1980 in Mississippi and Alabama, black voter turn out was up by 25 to 33%. In Washington, D.C., black voter turn out was the highest in the history of the District — up 25% over the previous primary. Even in Maryland's Prince George's County 1982 black voter turn out was up 20%. The mood of the black voter nationwide appears to be changing and Baltimore's black voter has been affected as well.

Does this mean, however, that we can expect this trend to continue in Baltimore? Can black candidates seeking city wide office depend on the black voter to come through to win the "big ones"?

It is apparent that it can be done. Whether it will be done will depend in large part to the kind and quality of black politicians who will be seeking city wide office in the future. The black voter has made a statement in the victory of Kurt Schmoke. The black voter not unlike their white counterparts, want candidates who have the background, the programs, and the commitment to those programs. The black voter is ready for a new breed.

The voter is ready, but are the new politicians?

Saundra Banks

She's been running for over three years

Saundra Banks

Looking back at the September Primary Election results, Saundra Banks, a democrat who ran for the Clerk of Circuit Court strongly believes, that "in 1982 women made a statement in terms of ERA being defeated."

Banks said, "I think they came out in record numbers and voted for women. There were also a lot of young people voting this year. These are two overwhelming factors in many of the citywide campaigns."

There were several things Banks said that contributed to her victory, "I believe the minority involvement across the city, and churches that organized with the influence of the congregation, and the large voter turnout were all contributing factors."

"Other organizations like COPE 83, different civic organizations, and the Kurt Schmoke candidacy brought people out," Banks said.

Sharing her feelings about her victory, Banks mentioned, "I was most pleased to hear I had won the election. There had been under-currents in other communities that we were spinning our wheels and that black people didn't necessarily vote. I was extremely surprised but pleased with the margin."

Some of the responsibilities of the Clerk of Circuit Court are according to Banks, "maintenance of all records or judicial proceeds under the Supreme Bench that is now called Circuit Court."

"The Clerk is responsible for many of the nonjudicial functions such as trader's licenses, management of records, natural resources licenses, filing of charters, etc."

There are 365 people in positions under the Circuit Court. According to Banks, "the court is under a new personnel director for the judicial system and a personal merit system."

This is the first time for this type of merit system. Banks added, "It used to be done by statute. The reason it is done this way no is to take existing jobs out of the old system...and put them under the auspices of the personnel director."

The task of selecting future employees in the clerks office will rest with the personnel director. "One of the first steps is classifying and reclassifying of positions...The personnel director will decide, he will use lateral positions in bringing people in," said Banks.

"My duties now," Banks continues, "will be administrative. I will make sure duties and physical operations of the office are carried out."

Banks decided to run for the Circuit Court back in 1979 after legislation was presented to consolidate the six city courts. "As a matter of fact," Banks recalls, "I had my first fundraiser in 1979."

Her main reason for pursuing the Clerk of Circuit court position was "I was against consolidation for several reasons. I felt the consolidation would take away the political parity we had just won, with three blacks being elected to the court," said Banks. In light of this, Banks sensed the possibility of disenfranchisement and decided to do what she could to prevent such.

Educated in Baltimore City Public Schools, Banks graduated from Morgan State University with honors, she is a candiate for an MBA at the University of Maryland.

She is a former City school teacher, and has worked at WEAA in public relations and as a reporter.

She has been married for ten years to Leroy Banks, an engineer for Amtrak. She is 34.

Banks' Campaign was managed by Jackie McLean, Rosetta Kerr and according to Banks, "a lot of advisors."

She sees the position of Clerk of the Circuit Court as "a challenging job." She feels it is "a tremendous responsibility and will require every resource to make it work."

Prepared for the demands and eager to tackle whatever arises in the position, Banks adds, "It can be frustrating, but I welcome the challenge. Having had a four year tenure in the Court of Common Pleas, and having served on the consolidation committee for the last 18 mos. has given me the insight."

Mary Conaway

Court house jobs number over 50

Mary Conaway

Mary Conway, who challenged incumbent Patrick Duffy for the Register of Wills in the Sept. Primary contributes her victory in the election to the large voter turnout, and to her spot-lighting of issues of racial discrimination of office's hiring practices.

Conway said, I was very excited to have won the election. I felt voters wanted a change in the court house and they wanted to see more blacks in citywide positions," added Conway.

The police results of the election showed Conway as trailing behind Duffy and consequently for several weeks made waiting for the official results from the Board of Supervisors of Elections like waiting for Gidot.

"When I thought I had been defeated "Conway said, "I contributed it to what I thought was a split vote with another black in the office. That amount of votes, 110,000 had never been gotten before...it passed the count of the States Attorney's race."

Conway said at that point she thought something was wrong.

The Register of Wills is responsible for housing, keeping wills in the office, opening estates and collecting taxes on deceased person's property and for opening estates. There are 55 positions controlled by the office.

In selecting employees in the Register of Wills Office, Conway plans to do exactly what she stated in her campaign speech. "It will be done by attrition, I will hire blacks and other minorities to fill positions vacated until it reaches 50-50."

Making the decision to run for a political office in Nov. 1981, Conway said, "My husband and I had a discussion about it. I was in the midst of changing careers...I was in Special Education. I liked the administrative aspect of the job and began to campaign." Raymond Haysbert managed Conway's campaign along with a Committee.

Conway earned a bachelor of arts degree from North Carolina Central University in Durham, a Performing Arts Certificate from the Julliard School, a masters of arts in Special Education, and is working towards a doctorate in clinical psychology.

She is married to Delegate Frank Conway and they have three children.

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