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VOL. 92 - NO. 348 50 PAGES

ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA, TUESDAY, JULY 6, 1976

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Today the race for office becomes official

By CHARLES PATTON
Pasco Times Staff Writer

NEW PORT RICHEY — The time has come to separate the men from the boys so to speak as the official qualifying period for political candidates begins at noon today.

This is the time when all those announced candidates for sheriff, County Commission, School Board, superintendent, circuit clerk, tax collector, property appraiser and supervisor of elections get their chance to become official candidates seeking the nomination of the various political parties to carry their standards in the November general election.

Qualifying will end at noon, July 20.

WITH SEVERAL incumbents such as Sheriff Basil Gaines, District 5 County Commissioner Mathew Prahasky Jr. and School Board District 3 member Harley Gilmore not seeking re-election in their posts, the normally active political races are expected to draw even more candidates than usual.

Two avenues are open for candidates to become official vote seekers, by paying a fee equal to 5 per cent of the annual salary of the office they seek or by submitting petitions signed by 5 per cent of registered voters in their party at the most recent general election.

Pasco had 38,731 registered Democrats for the 1976 general election and 27,464 Republicans. Democrats following the petition route will need 1,937 signatures of registered party members. Republicans will need 1,373.

For those with cash in hand, the fees are:

- ✓ Sheriff, circuit clerk and property appraiser, \$1,438.35.
- ✓ Superintendent of schools, \$1,669.45.
- ✓ Tax collector, \$1,254.70.
- ✓ Supervisor of elections, \$1,044.78
- ✓ County Commission, \$808.86.
- ✓ School Board, \$281.62.

Pasco will elect a new sheriff this year. Gaines' announcement that he will not seek re-election has touched off a first-class horse race for that post with 10 announced Democratic candidates and two Republicans.

Democrats include New Port Richey Police Chief John Short, Ronald E. Stanley, chief of operations for the sheriff's department, David Schneider, administrative chief of the sheriff's department, sheriff's detective Donnie E. McKendree, sheriff's Sgt. Robert Long, former Polk County deputy sheriff Melton E. Godwin Jr., restaurant operator Alfred Faiella, real estate consultant Lowell Steve, former sheriff's captain Carl McMullen and sheriff's deputy Archie Boyd.

Republicans seeking the sheriff's job include Prahasky and public defender's investigator William Sherwood, the party's 1972 sheriff's nominee.

WITH PRAHASKY'S decision not to seek re-election, voters will be filling three seats on the County Commission. Incumbent William Hamilton, Republican, is seeking re-election to his District 1 post. He is opposed by Republican Mike Snyder.

Commission Chairman Mike Olson, District 3, is seeking the Democratic nod for a full four-year term. He was elected in 1974 to fill the remainder of the unexpired term of Henry Straubel who died in office.

Olson is opposed so far in his bid by Holiday area restaurant owner Harvey Fogg.

The District 5 race has three announced candidates. Democrats Dave Boatwright, a school teacher, and School Board member Harley Gilmore. Paul Davis, retired military veteran and former member of the Pasco County Board of Zoning Adjustment, is the lone Republican candidate so far.

Gilmore's plans to run for the County Commission leaves three seats to be decided for the School Board.

Incumbent Donnie Zimmer has not yet announced her plans. But Kathleen Edwards,

18, recent graduate of Land O' Lakes Senior High School and Pasco County's outstanding student of 1976, is seeking the Democratic nomination for the District 2 seat.

No candidates have announced for Gilmore's District 3 seat. District 4 board member Dr. Robert Hartzell has not yet announced his plans. No opposition has yet formed.

Circuit Court Clerk Miller Newton's decision to seek the Democratic nomination for 5th District Congressman has opened the door for circuit clerk.

Democrats Doris Cook, an employe in Newton's office, and Joseph E. "Jed" Pittman, former consumer affairs director, both have announced plans for seeking the nomination.

G. Frank Parker Jr., certified public accountant, currently is the lone candidate for the Republican nomination as circuit clerk.

SCHOOL SUPT. Thomas Weightman, a Republican, has announced plans for seeking re-election. He is opposed for the party nomination by Mike Buckley, former assistant superintendent and now builders association executive.

School teacher John L. Wells is the lone candidate for the Democratic nomination.

Nurse Vivian Ruth Lee whose house was sold several years ago in a tax deed sale be-

cause she was not notified of the tax status is seeking the Democratic nomination for tax collector.

She will oppose incumbent Maxine Coulter, also a Democrat, who has announced her candidacy.

Elections Supervisor Mary Morgan is seeking the Democratic nomination to serve another four-year term and is the only announced candidate for that job at this time.

PROPERTY APPRAISER Ted Williams, a Democrat, has not yet announced his plans but is expected to seek re-election.

Two persons will bid for the non-partisan county judge post including incumbents Dan Rasmussen and John G. Pastolida.

Democrats seeking the 5th District congressional seat in addition to **Newton** are James Sursley, Maitland, a handicapped Viet Nam veteran, Orlando businesswoman and housewife JoAnn Saunders, Seminole High School principal Bob T. Reynolds, Sanford, Seminole County Commissioner Sid Vitlen Jr., and Dunedin lawyer Robert C. Coker.

District 37 state Rep. Ron Richmond, R-New Port Richey, is seeking another two-year term. He is opposed by Democratic businessman Thomas L. Costello.

District 36 state Rep. John R. Culbreth, D-Brooksville, is an announced candidate for re-election. Democrats who say they will oppose him are Dale City real estate executive Charles Edwards and Wesley Chapel businessman Bill Bunting.