

Hope strength will carry into governor race

Democrats savor state judicial election victories

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Pennsylvania's Democratic leaders yesterday relished their statewide election of Supreme and Superior Court judges, and hoped the signs of increased party strength would carry into next year's battle for governor.

Maverick Democrats won the top offices in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, while party-backed candidates captured 14 of the 24 mayoral battles in third class cities, and two of the three contested House seats.

Voters also overwhelmingly approved constitutional amendments providing relief for flood victims and disabled war veterans.

The victory of Allegheny County Judge Rolf Larsen in the Supreme Court race gives the Democrats their first majority in the 250-year history of the state's highest tribunal. They will have a 4-3 edge with the chief justice, Michael J. Eagen of Scranton, also a Democrat.

Larsen, who had ousted the party's choice in the primary, defeated Philadelphia Republican Frank J. Montemuro, Jr. by nearly 220,000 votes and immediately pledged to work for changes that will toughen the court's image.

"I think the whole judicial system is too lenient," 43-year-old Larsen said. He was considered unqualified for judge by the Pittsburgh

bar when he first ran for the Family Court five years ago.

John P. Hester, 61, also an Allegheny county judge, was an easy winner in the Superior Court race. He beat Robert I. Shadle, president judge of the York County Common Pleas Court, by more than 128,000 votes.

Democratic State Chairman Harvey Thiemann hailed the results, crediting the hard-working candidates, the big Democratic registration edge of more than 700,000 and party loyalty in discouraging ticket splitting.

Richard Filling, the GOP chairman, said the results raise organization problems for 1978

when a successor to Gov. Milton Shapp will be elected.

"We continue to lose in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh," Filling said. "We're going to have to zero in on those two areas."

Democrats won every race in Philadelphia, electing a new district attorney, returning the city controller for a second term and choosing a successor to former House Speaker Herbert Fineman who quit after he was convicted in federal court of obstructing justice.

"It's been a great victory," said Mayor Frank L. Rizzo congratulated winners Edward Rendell for D.A. and controller William Klenk.

In Pittsburgh, acting Mayor Richard Caliguri won the job fulltime. Caliguri ran as an independent against the Democratic-endorsed Thomas Foerster and Republican Joseph Cosetti, who switched his Democratic registration to make the race.

Caliguri won by less than 5,000 votes out of 150,000 cast. He was backed by Peter Flaherty, another Democratic maverick, whom he succeeded when Flaherty joined the Carter Administration as the No. 2 man in the U.S. Justice Department.

Caliguri is the first non-Irish mayor elected in Pittsburgh in 40 years.

Brezhnev says U.S. relations better

MOSCOW (AP) — Soviet President Leonid I. Brezhnev received a message from President Carter yesterday and said "U.S.-Soviet relations have shown a definite change for the better."

U.S. Ambassador Malcolm Toon handed Carter's message to Brezhnev during a meeting in the Soviet leader's Kremlin office that lasted just more than an hour.

A State Department spokesman in Washington said the message was a private letter relating to the 60th anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution, celebrated Monday. But American officials here and in Washington declined to give its contents.

new agreement on limiting strategic offensive arms on the basis of principled accords reached as a result of the recent talks," Tass said.

Carter has said a second SALT agreement can be expected "within weeks." Both sides have indicated progress in arms negotiations.

Western diplomats here say a Carter-Brezhnev meeting is a possibility early next year after an accord is concluded, or even later this year before an agreement is reached.

Carter has said he would like to meet Brezhnev before the end of this year, and the diplomats say a meeting in a neutral country is possible when Brezhnev travels to West Germany at a still-undisclosed date next month.

The U.S. embassy would not say whether Brezhnev and Toon discussed such a possibility.

Observers here suggested Toon may have discussed with Brezhnev the American concern about upcoming trials of Soviet dissidents. Last week, Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance said new Soviet moves against dissidents could create anti-Soviet feeling in the United States.

Toon may also have sought further details on Brezhnev's proposal last week for a ban on all testing of nuclear weapons, together with a moratorium on peaceful atomic explosions.

The Carter message and Brezhnev's comment came at a time of warning U.S.-Soviet relations, when Soviet propaganda attacks against the United States have fallen off markedly, and Jewish emigration from the U.S.S.R. has increased from an average of 250 a week to 400 a week.

In a recent visit to Washington, Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko showed a new Soviet willingness to consider the sort of informal "get-acquainted" summit meeting Carter has been hoping for.

Settlement urged in utility suit

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — The federal judge hearing a uranium lawsuit involving a number of electric utilities and Westinghouse Electric Corp. pressed yesterday for negotiated settlements.

Judge Robert R. Merhige Jr. directed lawyers for Westinghouse and seven of the utilities involved to submit to a court-appointed master a proposal that would form the basis for fair and equitable settlements.

During Tuesday's session, Lewis T. Booker, lead counsel for the utilities, told Judge Merhige that six of them had agreed to a statement that it is in the best interests of the public and the litigants to negotiate settlements.

A seventh utility said this is "usually" the case. The remaining utilities refused to take any position. None of the utilities was identified in court.

The contract disputes led to suits by 10 electric utilities against Westinghouse totaling \$2.5 billion. The outcome could affect the utility rates of some 33 million consumers and have enormous financial impact on one of the nation's largest corporations.

While the suits of the 10 utilities were consolidated into one case, each has been given an opportunity to present its own evidence in the trial.

The utilities involved are Houston Lighting & Power Co., Long Island Lighting Co., Texas Utilities, Wisconsin Electric, South Carolina Electric, Alabama Power, Northeast Utilities, Virginia Electric & Power Co., Tennessee Valley Authority and Florida Light & Power.

Alabama Power and Westinghouse have reached agreement in principle

on an out-of-court settlement, but details still are being worked out and require approval by the court and by the boards of both Alabama Power and Westinghouse.

Merhige said yesterday he was "disturbed" that not all the utilities would accept the proposition that a negotiated settlement was in the best interests of all parties and the public.

Merhige told the lawyers he would not see and did not want to see the settlement proposals. They are to be submitted to Dean William B. Spong, master of the law school at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg.

Earlier in the lengthy trial Spong was named special master to explore negotiated settlements.

Merhige gave the lawyers 15 to 20 days to submit position papers to Spong on the settlement proposals.

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