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## CHANGING of the GUARD

### Three Oakland judges 'leave quite a legacy'

Oakland County will soon lose three judges — and with them more than a century of legal experience.

Probate Judge Barry M. Grant and Circuit Judges Steven N. Andrews and Fred M. Mester are in their last days on the bench because of their age. The state constitution prohibits people from being elected or appointed to state judicial offices once they turn 70.

All three have been judges for more

than 25 years. They've made lasting impressions on their colleagues, their communities and even the defendants who often begrudgingly appeared before them.

"The three judges who are leaving have been here for such a long period of time that they leave quite a legacy at the court," Chief Judge Wendy Potts said.

Incoming Probate Judge Daniel A. O'Brien will replace Grant, while Mary Ellen Brennan and Lisa Goryca are waiting to fill the two



Grant



Mester



Andrews

See their stories, Page A-12

seats on the circuit bench. Before the new judges start next month, The Oakland Press talked

with each outgoing judge and their colleagues about their careers and future.

### World

Israeli assault on Hamas kills at least 230

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See more photos, Page A-3

Members of the Team du Coeur synchronized skating team practice at the Lakeland Ice Arena in Waterford. Oakland Press photo by JOSE JUAREZ

## Oakland colleges helping students in difficult times

By WALTER WEST  
of The Oakland Press

As Michigan's unemployment and jobless rates continue to climb, local colleges and universities are offering ways to help ease the strains of financial burdens and reveal workers' skills.

Oakland University has created a Special Assistance Fund for students who face financial difficulties.

"The Special Assistance Fund was created to help Oakland University students who have encountered unexpected financial hardships that prevent them from continuing their education," said Mary Beth Snyder, vice

president for student affairs and enrollment management.

"Oakland set aside \$254,800 in additional financial aid out of our general fund to help such students address their financial difficulties due to a significant loss of income, or a sudden change in their parents' financial circumstances."

About 15 percent, or 30, of students who contacted the university have qualified for the grant, she said, adding that those students are in the process of working with financial aid advisers to determine alternatives to continue their education.

The college also has lifted winter registration holds on students with an outstanding balance of \$1,500 or less.

"We lifted the financial hold on their winter registration so as not to penalize them when it comes to securing their winter semester classes," Snyder said.

Three students must pay their balance by Friday, Jan. 2. At Oakland Community College, the institution is starting to help workers affected by recession-related layoffs.

The college has set up the OCC Worker Transition Helpline, managed by OCC's Economic and Workforce Development.

The helpline offers information on career center services, counseling information,



Students walk near the Student Center building on the campus of Oakland Community College in Auburn Hills.

occupational programs, on-the-job, short-term training programs and links to growth industries.

To accommodate laid-off workers and others who want to begin or further their education, OCC also has scheduled additional credit classes

this winter semester. The new classes are in subjects such as English, biology, mathematics and computer management.

The added classes are closed to begin on Monday, Jan. 12.

PLEASE SEE WEATHER/A-7

## State facing wicked mix of flooding, winds, rain, even snow

By KAREN WORKMAN  
of The Oakland Press

It just wouldn't be Michigan weather without getting a taste of all that Mother Nature has to offer in a mere week's time.

Oakland County had a box of more or less everything in the week, and the latest drivers face: With roadways just over by sub-zero temperatures.

On Saturday, a record-breaking high of 59 degrees brought a false sense of spring, as well as much of other bad stuff — dense fog, flooded roadways and more.

The previous record of 58 degrees was recorded in 1994. And Mother Nature isn't done yet. More wild weather is on its way.

### Wicked winds

Thunderstorms, another cold front, damaging winds and more possibilities for flooding are heading toward Michigan.

"Winds will strengthen as a cold front moves through. Sustained winds will increase to 25 to 35 mph during early morning hours and remain strong through Sunday," wrote the National Weather Service in a Wind Advisory report on Saturday.

In addition, "Some large limbs, trees or power lines could be downed due to the strong winds."

Officials from DTE Energy were closely watching the storm as it approached Michigan on Saturday, said DTE spokesman Scott Simons.

"Winds this strong can make driving difficult, especially for high profile vehicles. Use extra caution," suggested the weather report.

The wind advisory was in effect through 4 p.m. today.

### Fog and slippery, dirt roads

As the county warmed up Saturday, dense fog limited visibility to less than a

PLEASE SEE WEATHER/A-7

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**Weather**  
Today's high  
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Get the latest on Michigan's ever-changing weather.

Watch this week's "The Book and His Boss" to hear thoughts on the Lions' run for a winless season.

Will the Lions and their season without a victory? Get the results and share your thoughts.

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Members of the Team du Coeur synchronized skate team perform an exhibition before "The Polar Express on Ice" program.

**M**embers of the Team du Coeur synchronized skating teams are practicing their programs for the upcoming competition season. The teams, made of skaters from all skill levels, have skaters ranging in age from 7 to 15 years old. They represent the Lakeland Skating Club in Waterford Township. All of the teams' assistant coaches are former Lakeland team members, including Kara Helgemo and Kayla Ridgway. Head coaches are Karen Petica, Sara Jack, Grzymkowski and director Heather Blasko. The teams' annual tryouts are in May. Visit [www.teamducoeur.org](http://www.teamducoeur.org).

— From staff reports



Various age group members of the Team du Coeur synchronized skate team wait to take the ice for their skating session.

Oakland Press photos/JOSE JUAREZ

Members of the Team du Coeur synchronized skate team, who are in the Beginner 2 level, practice their routine, under the watchful eye of members of the Beginner 3 group.



Members of the Team du Coeur synchronized skate teams, who are in the Open Juvenile level, practice their routine.



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Visit [www.gcfb.org](http://www.gcfb.org) for more information on how you can help feed our hungry neighbors in Southeastern Michigan.



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