

First woman named to bench in Arundel

By Michael J. Clark
Anne Arundel Bureau of The Sun

Governor Hughes has appointed the first woman to the bench in Anne Arundel county by naming Martha Wyatt, an Annapolis lawyer, to the District Court. He also named Robert H. Heller, Jr., a Republican who practices law in Severna Park, to the county's Circuit Court.

The 44-year-old Ms. Wyatt, chairwoman of the Maryland Commission for Women, will replace retiring District Judge Arthur A. Anderson June 14, the governor's office announced yesterday.

The appointment of Mr. Heller, 42, will take place immediately because he replaces Judge James L. Wray, who retired from the county Circuit Court Thursday. Mr. Heller said his firm has a general practice

that includes the representation of various real estate companies.

Ms. Wyatt will be the ninth female judge in the 88-member statewide District Court system.

"I want to afford people due process and take a careful approach to the law. I come from a humanistic background," she said. A lawyer for eight years, Ms. Wyatt earlier worked as an elementary school teacher and researcher.

She said she considered her appointment "exciting," adding that she believed she would bear "some special burden as the first woman on the bench in Anne Arundel county because I imagine I will be scrutinized a little more than is normally the case for an appointee."

The Democrat graduated from St. John's College and the Univer-

See **JUDGES**, A6, Col. 5

2 to judgeships in Arundel

JUDGES, from A5

sity of Maryland Law School. She will serve a 10-year term on the District Court, a job paying \$50,500 a year, subject to confirmation by the state Senate.

After being notified of her judicial appointment yesterday afternoon, Ms. Wyatt received a call saying she was selected for jury duty. The jury duty request put her in a quandary, she said. "I was looking forward to it, but I guess I will have to talk to Judge [Robert] Sweeney about this." Judge Sweeney is chief of the District Court of Maryland.

Mr. Heller, an Arnold resident, said that in his interview with Governor Hughes about his interest in the judgeship, the governor did not inquire about his political party affiliation.

"He said it was unimportant to him," Mr. Heller said. The new appointee will have to seek election to a 15-year term on the Circuit Court in November, 1986. The Circuit Court judgeship pays \$55,000 a year.

Mr. Heller, a University of Maryland graduate who served a tour as a Navy officer, said he had to drop out of night law school at one point but later returned to the day law school at the University of Maryland and graduated with honors. Before that, he had been a salesman for the Xerox Corporation.

Mr. Heller said he was motivated to return to law school because "I had a burning inside of me to be a lawyer. I did not want to reach the age of 50 and say, 'I wish I had followed that desire,' and hadn't."

He is a partner in a law firm he established with two former classmates, William L. Corbin and Robert W. Warfield. The firm has a general practice and represents real estate firms. Mr. Heller said he has been the counsel to the Board of Realtors of Anne Arundel county.

He also is a member and secretary of the 5th Judicial Circuit Character Committee, which reviews the backgrounds of bar applicants seeking to practice in Carroll, Howard and Anne Arundel counties, and he is a member of the inquiry panel of the Attorney Grievance Commission.