

The Sun

Letters

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by The Baltimore Sun

December 1, 1996 Page(s): 4B

Edition: HOWARD SUN

Section: METRO

Length: 1378 words

Biographee: COLUMN, LETTER

Record Number: BSUN484837

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Ecker was right to stay quiet on judges race

Notwithstanding the argument put forward by Norris West in The Sun in Howard on Nov. 17, County Executive Charles I. Ecker was correct in not using his position within the county to influence the recent judicial race.

The race was non-partisan in nature. There were good Republicans and Democrats supporting both the Leasure/Hill Staton and Gelfman/Smith tickets. As head of the Republican Party in Howard County, it would have been inappropriate for Mr. Ecker to use his position to support one ticket or the other.

The quality of all four candidates was outstanding. The Circuit Court would have been well-served by any two of the candidates running. Both political parties were divided about who would make the best judges, as were the Howard County Bar Association and other groups who actively participated in the election. Which two judges should Mr. Ecker have supported?

What power did Mr. Ecker cede to other members of the Republican Party? In a non-partisan election, could it have been possible to unite all of the Republicans behind one slate? Under the circumstances, such a feat would have been impossible. It might even have been inappropriate.

There is little doubt that some people supported the Gelfman/Smith slate in order to undermine Gov. Parris N. Glendening politically, and in so doing help the chances of their champion, Ellen Sauerbrey, in 1998. Likewise, many people supported the Leasure/Hill Staton ticket merely because they were the incumbents.

Sometimes, power not used is power not abused. Mr. Ecker has proven many times over that his prime motivation is not political benefit, but the benefit of the citizens of Howard County. He did the much harder thing. He let the citizens of Howard County choose. Now, Mr. Ecker can go about the business of healing the wounds. That is leadership.

Michael W. Davis

Pub Date: 12/01/96

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