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WILLIAM D. ALLEN

will keep present department heads

By THEODORE H. HENDRICKS

William D. Allen, the upset victor in the election for clerk of the Baltimore Superior Court, says his first concern will be to keep the enormous operation of the office "functioning smoothly as before."

"I plan no wholesale changes. I hope to keep the office in excellent shape and do as good a job as my predecessor," Mr. Allen said.

The Superior Court is one of six separate ones grouped under the Baltimore Supreme Bench. Superior Court has the largest clerk's office in the state, with 80 employees, and collects an estimated \$45 million a year in fees.

Superior Court is responsible for all the land records in the city, the recording of mortgages and deeds, the handling of appeals from the Workmen's Compensation Board and a large share of the civil lawsuits that are tried in the city.

Mr. Allen was certified as the winning

clerk by 752 votes over Robert H. Bouse, a 37-year-veteran Courthouse employee who ran as the incumbent in the Superior Court clerk's race. Mr. Allen faces no Republican opposition in the general election.

Mr. Allen's swearing-in ceremony is tentatively set for December 1.

The 40-year-old victor said he ran for the clerk's office despite the general feeling that he was a "strong underdog" beside Mr. Bouse, the State Court Clerks Association president who had been clerk for 10 years.

"I was specifically left out for endorsement by the black political organizations," Mr. Allen, himself a black, noted. The organizations were committed to a Courthouse ticket which endorsed Mr. Bouse, who is white, along with black candidates for other clerk's offices.

"Mine was a door-to-door campaign among conservative blacks, and the turn-

ing point came when I got the endorsement of the Baptist Ministers Conference and its affiliates," Mr. Allen said.

Political observers also pointed out that Mr. Allen's name appeared on the election ballot along with that of Judge Milton B. Allen, a popular black judge who polled more than 40,000 votes in the city election.

Observers speculated that Mr. Allen's stunning upset victory was at least partly the result of people, anxious to assure Judge Allen's election to the Supreme Bench, pulling the lever on Mr. Allen's spot as well as that of the judge.

Mr. Allen's total vote was 31,863.

He was the first black employee in any city court clerk's office. He started as a deputy clerk in Criminal Court in 1965. He served as a courtroom clerk and now is supervisor of the post-conviction section of the Criminal Court.

According to Mr. Allen, hiring practices in his new office will conform to the guidelines set down by the judges of the Supreme Bench. "I am not beholden to any political commitments," he said.

"Applications for open jobs will be taken from anyone who has the potential to be a good deputy," he remarked. "But there will be no change in the leadership or the heads of departments in the office."

The six separate clerk's offices in the Courthouse were created years ago as sources of patronage for political clubs. Repeated moves to reform the system and have one elected clerk with six deputies have failed because of organized opposition by political leaders.

The recent primary election gained for black candidates election to three of the six \$25,000-a-year jobs as clerks. Because of the racial balance, there now is some

talk of reviving a move to consolidate the clerk's offices.

According to some behind-the-scenes speculation, black leaders might support consolidation on the theory that the present balance would be retained in the appointment of deputies, who would not have to stand for election, while the gains could be lost otherwise in future elections.

Moreover, judges are anxious to gain some administrative control over the clerk's office by dealing with one chief clerk, rather than six separate elected clerks.

As he prepared to take office, Mr. Allen said he was "open to ideas" but was most anxious to gain the confidence of judges and fellow employees. "I hope to maintain the same standard of excellence in the office that is owed to the citizens of Baltimore and the community," he said.