

The Calvert Recorder

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Photo by Theodore McGinley

Laura Martin (R), center, mingles with guests Sunday at the kickoff for her campaign for state's attorney held at the Old Field Inn in Prince Frederick.

Martin kicks off prosecutor campaign

By Steve Schuster
Staff Writer

Laura Martin vows to take politics out of the courtroom.

Martin, who is running for Calvert County State's Attorney as a Republican, made the remark at a campaign fundraiser held at the Old Field Inn in Prince Frederick on Sunday.

"I'm not a politician. I am a prosecutor. It's all I've ever been, it's all I've wanted to do with my life. I want to serve the community," Martin said at the brunch.

Nearly 100 people attended Martin's brunch, including officers from the Calvert County Sheriff's Office, Sheriff Mike Evans (R), troopers with the Maryland State Police, prosecutors from around the state, Calvert County commissioners, members of the Republican Central Committee, crime victims and even a member of the Department of Homeland Security, her husband Michael Martin.

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Martin's mother- and father- in-law, John and Jean Martin, are very proud of their daughter-in-law.

"She's a very driven girl. She loves the law ... she's a very studious person," John Martin said.

"She's very fair, very conscientious, and very caring," Jean Martin said.

Laura's husband, Michael Martin, a retired Secret Service agent who now works for the Department of Homeland Security, said that Martin, in her capacity as a prosecutor, was instrumental in Prince George's County, and she really loves Calvert County.

"We've grown roots here. Laura could be a high-dollar New York City attorney if she wanted to be, but instead she wants to make Calvert the best county, and she can do it," he said.

Martin who has more than 16 years of prosecutorial experience, had served Calvert County as a deputy state's attorney under former State's Attorney Robert Riddle for seven years until she resigned in the wake of the appointment of Interim State's Attorney Greg Wells (D), her opponent in the upcoming election.

She also worked as a prosecutor for Prince George's County for nine years.

Bruce Evarrtt, an investigator for the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission Police Department said, "When I investigated serious cases [as a detective for Prince George's County at that time] I worked closely with [Martin, who was a prosecutor for Prince George's County.] She is a very competent trial attorney. She was more prepared than some of the other state's attorneys I worked with. I have nothing bad to say about Greg Wells ... I [just] know that Laura has more prosecutorial experience than Greg. Laura is better qualified," Evarrtt said.

Wells has already announced plans to run for the office to which he was appointed in January.

Fran Longwell, who has been a member of the state's attorney's office in Prince George's County for 26 years, also attended the fundraiser. Longwell said

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she worked with Martin when they were in the sexual assault and homicide unit. She also worked with Martin prior to that when Martin was a law clerk.

“She is an excellent prosecutor. She is very dedicated. She has tried some of the most difficult homicide cases, and she did them very well. She’s a career prosecutor. She truly cares about being a prosecutor and about the community,” Longwell said.

Martin believes that because she has more years of experience, she is more qualified for the position than her opponent, Wells.

“I know the county and the people, I’ve raised my family here,” Martin said.

“The citizens of Calvert County need a prosecutor in that position, not an administrator, not somebody to push papers, but someone who is going to be a voice for the people, someone who is going to be in the courtroom and actually prosecute the more serious violent felonies in our county. That is what I was responsible for as deputy. That is what I think the state’s attorney should be doing, and that is what I will do if I am elected as state’s attorney,” Martin said.

Wells said that he has more than 10 years of prosecutorial experience, and that he “would put my trial experience up against hers any time. I worked for three years as a deputy, the same role that Martin had. I have been a voice for the people. I have been involved in community activities since 1995. I am in court at least twice a week, every week. I’m not a paper pusher, I am actively in the courtroom handling a docket each week,” Wells said. In addition, Wells said he manages a staff of more than 30.

Martin said that when she was a prosecutor in Prince George’s County she prosecuted on average 20 homicides per year, and that Wells probably has prosecuted few if any.

Wells said in a telephone interview that although he has only prosecuted two homicide cases, he has prosecuted a variety of other cases from rapes to armed robbery.

“There have not been that many homicides in Calvert [compared to Prince George’s County]. Trial experience is trial experience,” Wells said.

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Martin believes that sexual child abuse, domestic violence, burglary and drug issues are just some of the many problems in Calvert County.

“I would like to see the state’s attorney’s office more involved in the community ...We must find a partnership [with] being in the courtroom and being involved the community,” Martin said.

In addition to having experience as a prosecutor, Martin has taught at the Maryland State Police academy and has worked with law enforcement agencies at the local, state and federal levels.

Martin has what she considers to be significant plans to reform the current system’s flaws. If elected, Martin vows to reestablish the domestic violence unit. First, she plans to make sure that victims and law enforcement officers have one point of contact, she said. She also plans on making sure that only senior prosecutors who are well trained will prosecute sexual abuse cases. She also vows to have a strong working relationship with law enforcement.

The Calvert County Republican Party is strongly behind Martin.

“Laura Martin is the person for the job. I’ve looked at the cases that she’s done. She is definitely looking out for the citizens of Calvert County. She has no other agenda except to be the prosecutor and keep our community safe,” said Robin Marshall, Chairman of the Calvert County Republican Central Committee.

Martin has received numerous awards including Honorary Police Officer by the Prince George’s County Police Department, Outstanding Achievement in Advocacy by the Calvert Commission for women and the Law Enforcement award by the Optimist Clubs of Calvert County. More recently, Martin received the Sheriff’s Salute award by the Calvert County Sheriff’s Office for many years of assistance in the sheriff’s office.