



Hanft confirmed as family court judge

By BOB GARDINIER, Staff writer

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TROY -- Longtime family court attorney Richard A. Hanft will fill a vacancy on the Rensselaer County Family Court bench.

The state Senate late Wednesday confirmed Hanft's appointment to fill the vacancy created when former Judge Linda Griffin retired in March.

He was nominated last month by Gov. David Paterson and will have to run for election in November.

For more than 35 years, Hanft, a Democrat, has practiced family and matrimonial law in the court and has served as a certified law guardian.

"This has been a dream of mine for many years and to finally have it fulfilled is both thrilling and humbling," Hanft said in a statement. "I look forward to serving Rensselaer County from the judicial bench."

The seat, which has a 10-year term, has attracted a crowd. Hanft will have to run in a primary against two other Democrats interested in the seat, attorneys Beth Walsh and Geri Pomerantz. The winner of the primary will face Republican Arthur Dunn in November.

Hanft serves as counsel to the Albany firm of Tully Rinckey PLLC and also as legislative assistant to the Troy City Council. He was Troy's corporation counsel from 1992 to 1994 and has been counsel for the towns of Nassau and North Greenbush, to both the majority and the minority of the Rensselaer County Legislature and the county Sewer District.