

Branden Gemzer

Democratic candidate for Michigan state representative, 91st District



Branden grew up in Egelston Township and graduated from Oakridge Public Schools. He is the son of Joe Gemzer and Sherrie Maitland-Clark. Between high school and college he worked a summer internship in the City of Muskegon Clerk's office.

He attended Wittenberg University starting in August, 1999, and earned a B.A. in philosophy with a minor in political science. In 2000, he joined

the U.S. Marine Corps and was deployed to Iraq in 2003. Afterward, he returned home and became a leader among both his college and military peers. He graduated in May of 2005 and began his second deployment in June.

In 2006, he returned to Muskegon County. To help the community, he organized the Oakridge Alumni Association, which provides scholarships and grants to students and programs in the Oakridge District. He is also a volunteer for several nonprofit and municipal programs. Branden has been a servant to our country and community and would like to continue that by fighting for the working families of West Michigan in Lansing. •

Goeff Hansen

Republican candidate for Michigan state senate 34th District

Goef Hansen graduated from Hart High School in 1978. He attended West Shore Community College and Hope College. He is married to his wife, Tami, and they have two grown sons and four grandchildren. He attends Hart Congregational Church.

He was manager and owner of Hansen Foods from 1978 to 1988; he started Hansen Foods in Bear Lake, Michigan in 1989 and then returned as owner and manager of the Hart store. He launched Hansen Distributing in 2002.

He served on the Oceana County ambulance service as an EMT and a firefighter in Hart.

Hansen is a former Hart Township supervisor; a member of the Hart schools facility study board; the Hart Lake Board; the Hart Area Fire Administrative Board; the Hart/Silver Lake Chamber of Commerce; and the Hart 425 Downtown Development Authority.

Elected state representative in 2004 and currently serving his third term, he represents the 100th District, which includes Lake, Newaygo and Oceana counties.

He is a member of the Michigan Farm Bureau, NRA, MCRGO, Ducks Unlimited, Whitetails Unlimited, Bitely Better Conservation Club, Mason County Fin and Feather Club and Safari Club International.

He is running for the state senate seat being vacated by Jerry VanWoerkom who is term-limited. •

Mary Valentine

Democratic candidate for Michigan state senate, 34th District

Mary Valentine is completing her second term as state representative for Michigan's 91st District. She chairs the Families and Children's Services Committee and serves on Agriculture, Education, and Health policy committees as well. She recently established a caucus comprised of legislators from both sides of the aisle in both the house and senate to raise awareness of and promote education about human trafficking.

Representative Valentine has earned a number of awards, including Woman of Accomplishment from Muskegon Community College; Healthcare Hero from the SEIU Healthcare; a distinguished service award from DIIME (Drug Industry Immunity Must End); honors from the Progressive Women's Alliance; Vote of Courage award from Michigan's Children; and Hero of Education Award from the education sorority.

Mary worked for more than 30 years as a public school speech pathologist. She has also earned a master's degree in guidance and counseling. She taught Sunday school for 16 years, served on her church's administrative board, and was director of youth education. She has been involved with Mona Shores Football Club and band parents, served on the Michigan Democratic Party State Central Committee, and was secretary of the Dickinson County Democratic Party.

Mary and her husband, Phil, have two adult children. •

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