

The Middlesex County Courthouse in Cambridge.

3 major candidates

## Courthouse again Middlesex issue

By Joe Pilati  
Globe Staff

Towering over East Cambridge, the new Middlesex County Court House casts shadows both literal and figurative — over the political races for top county officers, particularly the commissioner contest to be decided in Tuesday's Democratic primary.

With 22 of its 25 stories built above ground and a price tag that ballooned from an original \$16 million estimate in 1963 to more than \$76 million (including interest that county taxpayers will be paying through 1991), the courthouse finally opened to the public last April 1. Critics and opponents of former Comrs. John Dever and Fred Connors, both defeated in 1972, and incumbent Comr. John Danehy, who seeks re-election on Tuesday, were quick to notice the irony of the April Fool's Day opening date.

Danehy, a Cambridge insurance and bank executive, faces two major opponents in the primary—Charles I. Clough of Concord, an investment broker who founded Citizens for Middlesex County, the bulwark behind the defeats of Dever and Connors two years ago, and Pasquale Coppola, president of a Somerville food processing firm, who drew 14,384 votes and ran fifth in the 1972 race for two commissioners' seats.

Also running for commissioner are Newton atty. Thomas E. McManus, Burlington florist William C. Clements and Everett City Councilman Edward Doherty. They are not expected to have much effect on the main contest between Danehy, Clough and Coppola. There are no Republican candidates for commissioner.

Clough, 32, favors abolition of county government and has accused Danehy of "cronyism, incompetence and compiling a record of padding the county payroll at the expense of the taxpayers."

According to Clough, Danehy "escaped public blame for the courthouse fiasco only because he was not forced to run for re-election in 1972, the year public awareness of the blunder surfaced."

Danehy was elected to the three-member commission in 1966 and 1970, but first took his seat in 1965 after Connors and Clerk of Courts Edward Sullivan — who voted because of a commission vacancy at the time — appointed him. "He (Danehy) participated in all the delays, the thousands of ill-conceived and expensive changes in plans, the suits and the blunders, and never made any public statements alerting the taxpayers about the courthouse," Clough claims.

In an interview Thurs-

day, Danehy said Clough "has completely distorted my voting record on the courthouse, which was totally different from those of Dever and Connors." The two former commissioners signed most of the contracts and work orders for the building without his concurrence, Danehy noted, and he stated that "Clough himself was on record in the newspapers last December, saying so."

Clough helped manage the successful campaigns of Somerville Mayor S. Lester Ralph and Paul E. Tsongas of Lowell (now a candidate for the US House) for the Dever and Connors seats in 1972. If elected, Clough expects to work closely with Tsongas, who also favors abolishing county government.

Ralph, who has not supported abolition, is concentrating on his own campaign for attorney general and is officially neutral in the current commissioner race. Tsongas had endorsed Clough.

Coppola, a Cambridge native who moved to Belmont five years ago, believes the courthouse "is much less of an issue than it was in '72" and agrees with Danehy that county government "has a future," particularly as a magnet for Federal and state funds and as the foundation for regional administration of police, fire and other services.

Like Clough (and, for that matter, Danehy), Coppola styles himself a reformer, but he labels Ralph and Tsongas "zeroes — guys who are more interested in running for other Federal and state offices than doing the jobs they were elected to." He has pledged "not to seek any other elective office."

Coppola termed Clough "the kind of reformer with a tendency to want to abolish everything," and said Danehy "has never been a good lobbyist or a fighter . . . He's right to suggest Dever and Connors were more responsible for the courthouse, but his own role was just to be there (on the commission)."

"Running the county like a business" is the main theme of Coppola's campaign, and he has promised to be "a leader in attracting new business into the county, which would provide additional jobs and a lower tax base to the residents."

Clough reserves particular scorn for the operations of the county Engineering Dept. (often called the "highway department"), which he says has been "Danehy's special area for patronage jobs" and an agency which "serves no function except the duplication of the work performed by the (state) Department of Public Works and local DPWs."

Between 1965 and 1972,

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# 46 firings an issue in Middlesex

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Clough said, "the number of political appointees in this department increased from 37 to 128 and the costs increased from \$300,000 to \$1.55 million, while the actual miles of roads declined 50 percent. The reform slate (Ralph and Tsongas) immediately dismissed 46 of the least productive employees, almost all of whom had their employment contracts signed by Danehy."

Danehy agreed that the department "needed some weeding out" but maintained that the 46 firings were "unjust." He said the state and city highway departments "can't keep up with all the work they have" and the county department "offers them valuable technical assistance" as well as aiding "the towns, most of which don't have their own highway agencies."

Calls for abolition of county government "are really empty phrases which ignore basic reality," Danehy added. He envisions transforming the county structure into "a regional service district providing leadership and collective response to problems of quality education, transportation planning, solid waste disposal, land-use planning, public safety and even in such fundamental areas as public finance and collective purchasing."

Among the other candidates, Clements and McManus have never before sought public office and Doherty, a 27-year-old New England Telephone employee, cites his two terms on the Everett Council as "the experience that enhances me."

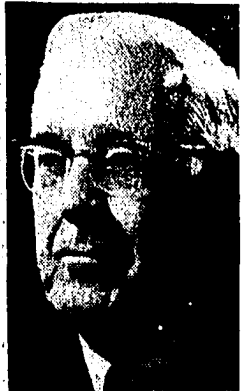
In one brief conversation with a reporter last week, McManus stressed he is "the only attorney running." He did not return three subsequent calls requesting lengthier interviews.

Clements called for "Civil Service protection" for county employees who tend to "lose their jobs when new people get elected," and, while criticizing his opponents, added: "I don't know if I could do any better. Rome wasn't built in a day."

In the only other contested Middlesex race, Sheriff John J. Buckley, a Republican, and Cambridge Mayor Walter J. Sullivan, a Democrat and a "conservative" by his own description, have no primary opposition. Both will appear on their parties' ballots Tuesday, but their campaigns necessarily are more directed toward the final balloting in November.

Buckley, who emphasizes reforms he has implemented at the Billerica House of Correction, calls himself a "progressive," while Sullivan, who lost the 1970 primary election for the Democrats' sheriff nomination to former County Comr. Dever, characterizes Buckley as "too permissive and too liberal."

Dist. Atty. John Droney is unopposed in his reelection bid, both in the Democratic primary and in the final race.



Erwin D. Canham, editor emeritus of the Christian Science Monitor, will address the Purchasing Management Assn. of Boston's September meeting tomorrow night at Hillcrest in Waltham. Dinner meeting, scheduled for 6:15 p.m., will follow a workshop which starts at 4:30.