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Stargel Wins House Primary



Kelli Stargel

By [Robin Williams Adams](#)

THE LEDGER

Published: Tuesday, August 26, 2008 at 1:38 p.m.

Last Modified: Tuesday, August 26, 2008 at 11:45 p.m.

LAKELAND | Barring an unlikely upset by a write-in candidate, Kelli Stargel is bound for Tallahassee.

She easily won the Republican primary for State House District 64 on Tuesday over two opponents.

No Democrats entered the race for the seat. Two write-in candidates are in the race but their names won't appear on the November ballot.

With all 41 precincts reporting, Stargel had 3,949 votes, or 52 percent. Jack English had 2,060 votes, or 27 percent, and Phillip Walker had 1,646 votes, or 22 percent.

"I'm honored, humbled, amazed, a whole bunch of emotions going on," Stargel, 42, said Tuesday evening.

"I thought it would be much closer. All three of us were good candidates."

Stargel was only one of the three candidates, all from Lakeland, who has always been a Republican.

She will be the second Stargel to win that seat, which has an annual salary of \$31,932.

Her husband, Circuit Judge John Stargel, held it before leaving in 2006 to run for the position he now holds.

Walker, 54, said he and his supporters ran a good race and that he feels he "touched the lives of many people."

English said he was frustrated by negative attacks made against him near the end of the campaign.

"I tried to be courteous and ethical," he said.

English, 57, said he is through with political campaigns after what happened in this one.

"I'm the only one with a record (in elective office) ... That record was turned against me."

Walker kept the campaign civil and issue-focused, he said, but others made the attacks personal.

The primary race began as a hard-fought, but polite, competition to replace outgoing state Rep. Dennis Ross, but it grew heated near the end:

A national group that supports charter schools sent anti-English mailings.

A Stargel ad contended that her opponents couldn't help solve the property insurance crisis because of their connections to the insurance industry.

English, a retired insurance agency owner, and Walker, who operates an insurance agency, took the opposite tack, contending familiarity with the intricacies of the issue made them better equipped to tackle it.

Walker and Stargel supported vouchers for children to go to private schools. English, a former Polk County School Board member, opposed vouchers.

The mailings sent by the national group criticized English's opposition to two charter school applications and his previous contributions to Democrats.

English said he contributed to Republicans also and doesn't oppose all charter schools.

Stargel had the most money, with \$91,947 in campaign contributions. She reported expenditures of \$61,715 through last week.

Walker, with \$85,353, spent \$74,808. English, who had \$41,409, spent \$36,069.

[Robin Williams Adams can be reached at robin.adams@theledger.com or 863-802-7558.]

[Stargel Wins House Primary](#) By [ROBIN WILLIAMS ADAMS](#)



Kelli Stargel

[TheLedger.com](#) August 26, 2008 11:45 PM

LAKELAND | Barring an unlikely upset by a write-in candidate, Kelli Stargel is bound for Tallahassee. She easily won the Republican primary for State House District 64 on Tuesday over two opponents. No Democrats entered the race for the seat. Two write-in candidates are in the race but their names won't appear on the November ballot. With all 41 precincts reporting, Stargel had 3,949 votes, or 52 percent. Jack English had 2,060 votes, or 27 percent, and Phillip Walker had 1,646 votes, or 22 percent. "I'm honored, humbled, amazed, a whole bunch of emotions going on," Stargel, 42, said Tuesday evening. "I thought it would be much closer. All three of us were good candidates." Stargel was only one of the three candidates, all from Lakeland, who has always been a Republican. She will be the second Stargel to win that seat, which has an annual

salary of \$31,932. Her husband, Circuit Judge John Stargel, held it before leaving in 2006 to run for the position he now holds. Walker, 54, said he and his supporters ran a good race and that he feels he "touched the lives of many people." English said he was frustrated by negative attacks made against him near the end of the campaign. "I tried to be courteous and ethical," he said. English, 57, said he is through with political campaigns after what happened in this one. "I'm the only one with a record (in elective office) ... That record was turned against me." Walker kept the campaign civil and issue-focused, he said, but others made the attacks personal. The primary race began as a hard-fought, but polite, competition to replace outgoing state Rep. Dennis Ross, but it grew heated near the end: A national group that supports charter schools sent anti-English mailings. A Stargel ad contended that her opponents couldn't help solve the property insurance crisis because of their connections to the insurance industry. English, a retired insurance agency owner, and Walker, who operates an insurance agency, took the opposite tack, contending familiarity with the intricacies of the issue made them better equipped to tackle it. Walker and Stargel supported vouchers for children to go to private schools. English, a former Polk County School Board member, opposed vouchers. The mailings sent by the national group criticized English's opposition to two charter school applications and his previous contributions to Democrats. English said he contributed to Republicans also and doesn't oppose all charter schools. Stargel had the most money, with \$91,947 in campaign contributions. She reported expenditures of \$61,715 through last week. Walker, with \$85,353, spent \$74,808. English, who had \$41,409, spent \$36,069. [Robin Williams Adams can be reached at robin.adams@theledger.com or 863-802-7558.]

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