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Choice of Miers for court didn't go over well locally

By James L. Rosica
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Most local residents — 69 percent — said they thought President Bush nominated Harriet Miers to the Supreme Court “to reward her as a longtime friend and ally,” according to a new TallahasseeVoices survey released Thursday.

Other top reasons mentioned for Miers' nomination relate to Bush and Miers' friendship, the survey said. Miers had been White House counsel; she withdrew her name from consideration the same day the poll results were released.

Almost two-thirds of Leon County residents (63 percent) opposed Miers' nomination, and less than half (43 percent) opposed John Roberts' nomination to the Supreme Court. He now is chief justice.

And 58 percent think Miers was nominated because she is a woman, according to the survey.

TallahasseeVoices is an Internet survey panel sponsored by Kerr & Downs Research and the Tallahassee Democrat.

There were 430 responses to the survey, sent out Wednesday. The panel is representative of individuals with Internet access and survey results

demographics of Leon County.

In other local reaction to Miers' withdrawal Thursday, Marc W. Dunbar, a Tallahassee attorney and member of the Republican National Lawyers Association, said he had supported her.

“I had no reservations about her,” said Dunbar, who practices at the Pennington Moore law firm. “I'm sure the heat got a little too much.”

He said he didn't believe rumors that the Bush administration threw her overboard to draw attention from possible indictments this week in the CIA leak investigation.

“The Bushes are very loyal to their people; they would never do that,” Dunbar said.

Don Hinkle, president of the Tallahassee Bar Association, said the intense press coverage “had to be really hard on her.”

A recent speech of hers on “women and self-determination” also undercut her with the right, he added.

“I think they're concerned she wasn't fanatic enough,” Hinkle said. “But I really didn't know what to think about her. I was looking forward to the (Senate confirmation) hearings.”

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