

Recall effort fails against county district attorney

Signature drive falls short

By MAY WONG
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SANTA CRUZ — An effort to put an initiative on the March ballot to recall District Attorney Art Danner has failed.

Thursday was the deadline to submit the recall petitions. Elections officials had recommended that proponents collect at least 18,000 signatures to garner the 14,047 valid signatures needed.

But by this week, the Coalition to Recall Danner had collected only about 10,000 signatures, said Bob Lamonica, a Santa Cruz resident who spearheaded the campaign.

Lamonica vowed Thursday to renew the effort in January.

"The fact that we got 10,000 signatures is significant



Danner

and meaningful," Lamonica said. "It was a remarkable accomplishment, and everyone involved, every one who signed the petition deserves accolades. It was an act of courage to stand up against the abuse of power in one's own community."

Lamonica contends that Danner abused his authority in numerous incidents, including his dismissal of prosecutor Catherine Gardner last year after she admitted using drugs. Danner had kept Gardner on the payroll for three months before firing her, raising questions about a possible violation of county policies.

The county Board of Supervisors later cleared Danner of any wrongdoing and voted to clarify payroll policies.

Lamonica said he would not have launched the recall had the supervisors taken action against Danner.

Danner, who has been the county's district attorney since 1978, said Thursday he believed from the outset that the recall effort would fail.

"I want to thank everyone out there for their support and for rejecting something like this that doesn't have a place in the criminal justice system," he said.

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