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County hospital board member resigns; cites politics as reason

By Barbara J. Durkin
Staff Writer

Disturbed about the politics surrounding the Westchester County Medical Center, 12-year hospital board member Ellen Popper has resigned.

In a letter to Westchester County Executive Andrew O'Rourke, Popper said she was resigning effective May 1 because she felt that she no longer could give her best to the Valhalla hospital after many years of service. She would have been up for reappointment at the end of 1992.

"This past year has been a very difficult one for so many of

us and as a result I feel I no longer have the stamina nor the will to fight for what I believe to be the needs of the patients, the center and the taxpayers who support it," Popper said.

The hospital board has been in upheaval since last year, when it opposed the confirmation of Mack Carter to run the medical center. Carter won that confirmation by the Board of Legislators, but several hospital board members lost their posts when O'Rourke did not reappoint them.

Two longtime members who had opposed Carter, chairwoman Carol Farkas and vice chairman Arthur Litt, were the first to be

removed. O'Rourke then replaced members Richard Berensen and Earl Moore.

Popper said that Carter had had her full support since confirmation and that his appointment did not play a role in her departure. The impetus, she said, was the removal of other hospital board members who had worked "with the highest sense of integrity."

County Legislator Sandra Galef, D-Ossining, was among many who said Popper's resignation would be a major blow.

"Ellen has been a consistent fighter to make sure that facility was the best," said Galef.

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