

Michigan Political History Society NEWS

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Fall 2005

The Impact of Term Limits

by Mary Anne Ford, MPHS News Editor

The MPHS sponsored a forum, *The Real Impact of Term Limits*, on May 13 in Lansing. The featured speaker was Majorie Sarbaugh-Thompson, a political scientist at Wayne State University. Sarbaugh-Thompson and her colleagues spent six years examining the impact of term limits on the Michigan Legislature, and have recently published their findings in the book, *The Political and Institutional Effects of Term Limits*. She spoke with MPHS News editor Mary Anne Ford about her research and her findings.

What motivated you and your colleagues to research this topic?
As social scientists, we rarely find what are called naturally occurring experiments, where you have a before and after that you can look at in an experimental intervention. Because we knew term limits were going to

take effect in advance of their having impact, then we could gather baseline data about how the Legislature was operating before term limits and then ask the same questions and follow the same kinds of themes after term limits took effect. Because term limits took effect in the House before they took effect in the Senate, we were able to look at some things, particularly campaign finance issues, and have the Senate as a controlled comparison. So we have before and after, and a control group before and after that didn't get the experimental treatment. For a social scientist, it was the sort of thing that we rarely – if ever – have an opportunity to do.

Michigan is one of several states in the country with limits on terms

of office – what do states that have adopted term limits have in common and how do Michigan term limits compare to those in other states?

The key difference between the states that have term limits and the ones that do not is whether or not those states permit voters to change the constitution through ballot initiative. By and large, the ballot initiative states have term limits and those without power to change the constitution through ballot initiative do not.

The thing that really makes us distinctive, in terms of other term-limited states is the severity of Michigan term limits. The other thing that makes us very unique is that there are only two professionalized

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From the MPHS President

Kevin A. Kelly

In his April 10, 2005 column, *Detroit News* columnist George Weeks wrote:

“The bipartisan Board of the Michigan Political History Society includes directors who earlier had bit roles in shaping such history. So it figures they would do more than stage stuffy seminars to ponder the past.

“The society holds provocative forums on how current happenings are changing state politics and policymaking.”

George Weeks framed a very important aspect of the goals of the Michigan Political History Society as we bring political history to life.

Recently, the MPHS had its 10th Annual Meeting, where we brainstormed several possible activities for MPHS in the near future. These included: an oral history on John Dingell; tribute events for Paul Hillegonds and John Dingell; completion of an oral history with Libby Maynard; and continued pursuit of oral

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President, *Continued from page 1*
histories with Governor William
Milliken and Lieutenant Governor
Connie Binsfeld.

We also discussed the possible
topics for future programs, such
as Conversations with Living
Speakers; History of the Michigan
Catholic Conference, Gasoline Lil
and Successors, a history of women
lobbyists; an overview of the Executive
Organization Act of 1965, journalists
and writers: how they shape our lives;
a review of the State Capitol history

by Jerry Lawler; and co-sponsorship
of future programs with the Michigan
Political Leadership program.

As you can see, there is no lack of
ideas for future programs and efforts
for the Michigan Political History
Society. We would be very interested
in your ideas on future topics, oral
histories, and projects that you think
the Michigan Political History Society
could properly bring to life!

We all continue to appreciate
and to be a part of Michigan political
history.

Political History Quiz: Who Did What When?

Identify the person and year associated with these events related to women's
suffrage in Michigan and women in Michigan politics. Some years have more
than one event. Answers on page 3.

1. This Michigan woman was arrested while picketing the White House in support of woman suffrage and sentenced to 60 days hard labor in prison.
2. She was the first woman elected to Congress from Michigan AND the first female member of the House Judiciary Committee.
3. This Senator from Michigan is said to have made the first speech in the United States Senate supporting women's suffrage.
4. She was the first woman to chair a major political party in Michigan.
5. She was the first African American woman elected to the Michigan House of Representatives.
6. This Governor signed the bill putting a referendum on the ballot allowing Michigan women to vote in Presidential Elections.
7. She was the first woman elected to serve in the Michigan Legislature.
8. She was the first African American woman elected to the Michigan Senate.
9. Her colleagues elected her as the first female Speaker Pro Tempore of the Michigan House of Representatives.
10. With her appointment to the US District Court of the Eastern District of Michigan, she was the first woman to be a federal judge.

Who?

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| A. Cornelia Kennedy | F. Charline Rainey White |
| B. Thomas W. Palmer | G. Elly Peterson |
| C. Cora Mae Brown | H. Teola Hunter |
| D. Eva McCall Hamilton | I. Betsy Graves Reyneau |
| E. Ruth Thompson | J. Albert Sleeper |

When?

- 1884
- 1917
- 1921
- 1950
- 1952
- 1965
- 1970
- 1987

Source: *Michigan Women's Studies Association Michigan Women:
First and Founders, Volume II*

Impact, *Continued from page 1*

legislatures in the country that have term limits. That is very, very different than many of the other states in the country and only California and Michigan among the term limited states have the full array of professionalized accoutrements. That makes a huge difference in where and whether and to what extent term limits are likely to impact a state's governing system.

You learned some interesting things about the influence of special interests and how campaigns are financed since term limits became effective. Were you surprised by these findings?

For better or worse, the fact is that there's a lot more money floating around, and elections costs more and a lot of that money has links to special interests. The public might be alarmed by the ranking of the lobbyist as the source of information when making decisions about how to vote, which went up to second place after term limits. In terms of substantive institutional memory, lobbyists are people with a lot of information. They can go to staff, they can go to bureaucrats, they can go to lobbyists, but it's very hard for them to go to each other, which they would have done previously.

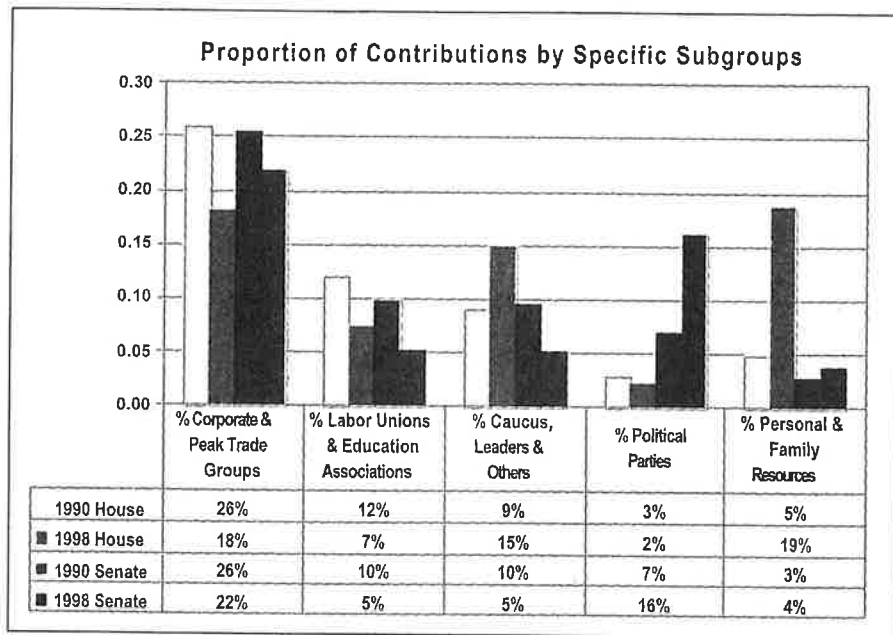
On the issue of campaign finance, there was a great increase in money that's coming from personal and family resources, and that I had not anticipated at all. I was utterly astonished. We regard that finding as one that really isolated the impact of term limits, since we have the information prior to the term being approved by voters, and after they had affected the House but not yet affected the Senate in 1998. We converted all of those dollars to 1990 dollars, so none of the shift has to do with inflation. The fact that caucus money went up as much as it did, and personal resource contributions went up as they much as it did tells a real story about things that have happened with term limits. The personal wealth – the whole notion that the wealthy can

run their own campaign doesn't strike people as very democratic.

In a Detroit News column, George Weeks suggested that people opposed to term limits don't have a compelling "exhibit A" to present to a public jury. Based on your findings, if you were to be selling the idea of either

drive back and forth, who live in the community still, who really are more local. So, that is the education that needs to happen.

Wayne State University did a survey through the Center for Urban Studies and in that survey, they asked: "if you believed that term limits weakened the Legislature compared to bureaucrats,



The impact of term limits on how campaigns are financed: In the House, contributions from caucus sources and personal contributions increased dramatically between 1990 and 1998; this increase was not apparent in the Senate, where term limits had not had impact in 1998.

lengthening term limits or abolishing them altogether, what are some arguments that you would present?

I think some education of the public is required before you can make effective arguments and one of the things that anyone who wants to run an effective campaign against term limits is going to have to do is educate the public at a very basic level. When we passed term limits as a state, there was a provision – and this was true for most states that passed term limits – that would have limited service in Congress in Washington. The Supreme Court ruled that provision unconstitutional, so that provision disappeared. I would suspect a lot of voters didn't understand that you have these more local people who

would you think this is a good thing?"

A lot of people are uncertain, but a lot more say it's bad than say it's good. So there's some public understanding that you don't want the legislature weakened vis-à-vis the system of checks and balances that we have in place. The system of checks and balances is, I think, sufficiently drilled into the public consciousness and would provide a way to talk to people that would help them to understand what term limits have done. ★

Answers:

1. I – 1917; 2. E – 1950; 3. B – 1884;
4. G – 1965; 5. F – 1950; 6. J – 1917;
7. D – 1921; 8. C – 1952; 9. H – 1987;
10. A – 1970

For Libby Maynard, It's Issues That Count

by Elizabeth Homer

The Michigan Political History Society's newest oral history features Libby Maynard, former Chair of the Michigan Democratic Party, two-time candidate for Lieutenant Governor, current President of the Michigan Prospect and a member of the University of Michigan Board of Regents. Michigan Prospect Executive Director Lynn Jondahl interviews her. Elizabeth Homer viewed the oral history, and shares highlights from the conversation covering Maynard's involvement in over five decades of Michigan politics.

To borrow the oral history, contact Joyce Crum at (517) 336-5742 or at jcrum@msms.org.

During the initial stages of the second wave of the Women's Movement, feminists had an idealistic vision. They hoped women politicians would be kinder, gentler, stronger, more caring, ethical, honest and frugal than their male counterparts. It hasn't always worked out that way, but Libby Maynard has proved a shining example of what they had in mind.

Libby Maynard got her start in politics in civil rights just a few years ahead of when the women's movement was starting to take form in Michigan. She was active in the Flint area with the issue of Open Housing and, in 1966, was asked by Zolten Ferency to run for Democratic Party Recording Secretary. But her interest in politics and social justice began much earlier.

Early Years

Olivia Proctor Benedict was born in Cincinnati in 1936 into an Episcopalian Republican (she says the two went together) family. By age 12, she was already showing signs of being a systemic thinker, and was getting into arguments with her father at the dinner table about how Jews were treated or the causes of poverty in Cincinnati. Her earliest acquaintance

with people of color and different economic status was as her family's household employees, which kindled insights, affection and loyalty that were key to igniting her lifelong pursuit of social justice.

Her parents were active in politics and she helped leaflet and make phone calls with her mother, working for Republican candidates. With several generations of Episcopalian ministers in her family, she would have likely pursued this path, but the Episcopalians did not ordain women.

Instead, she sought a degree in political science, changed her party to Democrat, and when she married an Episcopal minister, they moved to Flint and became active in the Social Justice Community of protestant ministers and their spouses.

At the point of graduating from college, Maynard might have gone on to another degree, but says that she never had the courage to go on to law

school and not get married. When she read Betty Friedan's *The Feminist Mystique*, she said, "Yes, I know



exactly what they are saying." She did not pursue her Social Work degree at the University of Michigan until 1968, after her three children were born. Not surprisingly, her specialization was in policy and administration.

Like many activists of that time, Maynard was influenced by the work of Saul Alinsky, who was influential in American politics as a community organizer. By the time she was elected Corresponding Secretary of the Democratic Party, she had helped to pass a Fair Housing ordinance in Flint and worked with HOME, Inc., an organization dedicated to bring about housing integration. Her children were veterans in picket lines for social justice issues.

Continued on page 5

SAVE THE DATE: MPHS Presents a Tribute to Paul Hillegonds

Thursday, November 17 at the Country Club of Lansing

Hillegonds served in the Michigan House of Representatives from 1979 to 1996, and served as Republican Leader, Co-Speaker of the House and Speaker of the House. He then was president of Detroit Renaissance until spring of 2005, when he joined DTE Energy as senior vice president of corporate affairs and communications.

Maynard, *Continued from page 4* Into Democratic Party Politics

In 1968, the Ferency-backed slate had some success against the Democratic Party incumbents. Maynard carried her passion for social justice and empowering people into the party, but as a party officer, her role had to be more conservative. She says that, along with her strong support for the anti-war movement, "was always a bit of a conflict." She soon gained a reputation statewide in the party for her ethics, fairness and the hard work she did to honor the counties and work with the leaders at the local level. She was embarked on a career that would be instrumental in guiding the Michigan Democratic Party through some of its most turbulent years.

At times there were conflicts between social justice and party building and Maynard still ruminates over some of her decisions. She recalls the battle over the open primary issue at a State Central Committee held at Michigan State University. The party was split, with labor wanting a closed primary. Most social activists supported the open primary, believing it would be empowering, and fairer, if more people could have a say in choosing the party candidates. The issue passed by one vote and Maynard voted with the majority. "I thought Sam Fishman would kill me. Sam was the Community Action Program director for the UAW," says Maynard. But looking back she says, "You can argue both sides, but today I would prefer that those who say they are Democrats or say they are Republicans, make the decisions and move things to the next level."

When questioned about party discipline and whether the parties are strengthened or weakened by it, Maynard did not think it was a problem. "Discipline is sometimes a substitute for control and power," she says, "and the politicians I dislike the most are those who are in it

for the power and control. I prefer the opportunity for discussion and discourse, though not everyone is in agreement."

The Fitzgerald Campaign

Maynard broke new ground in 1978 as the running mate of William Fitzgerald, campaigning against the widely popular incumbent governor, William Milliken. The Women's Movement had brought the issue of choice onto the political agenda, and it was agreed that Fitzgerald needed a running mate with a pro-choice position to balance his anti-choice position. Maynard was seen as knowledgeable and articulate, and one who could hold her own in debate with Lieutenant Governor James Brickley.

Maynard recalls that Milliken had "been a moderate and had reached out, there were no issues so inflammatory that citizens of Michigan were willing to turn him out. The PBB chemical pollution of cow feed was a crisis, but Milliken was not blamed for it."

As the first woman to run for Lieutenant Governor, "they sent me everywhere, not just some groups and not others."

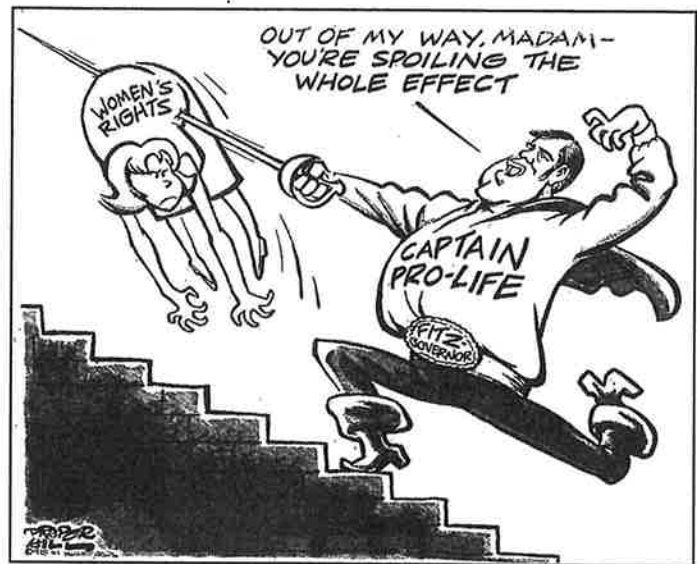
After the election, Maynard says she had no regrets. She believed it was an opportunity to pioneer as a woman candidate. She had worked very hard, but hadn't expected they would win.

Chair of the Party

In 1979, Maynard became the first – and remains the only – woman to chair the Democratic Party. She was elected unopposed after serving since 1973 as Vice Chair. The Women's Caucus was just getting started, and support

of women by women leaders was not always a given. "Some would basically shun you," says Maynard. There were few role models for Maynard, who says there was "a lot of time when you are your own counsel."

Maynard's focus on issues and "what happens to the state and nation" helped her bring the Democrats together because "we all believed that if Democrats got elected, we



The Detroit News ran this cartoon about balance in the Democratic ticket on September 25, 1978.

could make a difference." She guided the party through the elections of President Carter and Governor James Blanchard. When Maynard stepped down as Chair, the Democrats held the majority in both the House and the Senate and had won all educational post campaigns.

The Blanchard Years

From 1983 through 1990, Maynard served as Director of the Office on Aging with the Blanchard administration. This was a position she relished because it gave her an opportunity to direct policies for the aging in the field of her educational expertise, gerontology. "Sometimes you were in the cabinet and sometimes you weren't. It just depended on how the Governor was feeling. He never interfered. I could develop the policy for the elderly of the state. If it got

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Maynard, *Continued from page 5* political, then I would talk with him.”

During her tenure, she brought political direction to the bureau, which is what led to the successful negotiation of funding distribution and increases in the bureau’s share of the state budget. She also brought an educational background that introduced the importance of the science of geriatric medicine and gerontological social work to the agency. But then there was a turn of events.

Maynard remembered the time when Blanchard asked her to run as Lieutenant Governor in 1990: “I had just read Paula Blanchard’s book and I said ‘That’s it.’” She told her husband, Olie Karlstrom, that she was getting out of politics. Olie said, “I don’t

“I can’t teach a class without talking about systems and change. (Social workers) must study what impact policy has on individuals,” says Maynard. “Jane Hull was not just into feeding the hungry, but also looking at what was going on in Chicago that was causing this. What are the social constraints out there and how do I change that?”

Interviewer Lynn Jondahl pointed out the U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow also has a Social Worker background. When he asked if social work uniquely prepares politicians, Maynard said, “The better legislators are those who have thoughts about it in other than just in terms of power.”

Maynard was elected to the University of Michigan Board of Regents in 1996 and recently re-

Director. “We study how government and citizens can work together to solve problems that are here in the State of Michigan: education, social justice, campaign finance reform. It is why I originally got into politics, to focus on issues.”

She recalls a high school teacher who required the students write for two hours on *the existence of a nation is a daily plebiscite*. “That’s really what it is all about. It (politics) is an honorable profession, if you choose to make it that way.”

The issue of civility in political life has been a concern of the Michigan Political History Society since its inception in 1994, and Maynard and Jondahl closed their taped conversation reflecting on the changing political climate. Jondahl winds up the

Libby Maynard will be inducted into the Michigan Women’s Hall of Fame at a ceremony on October 25th at the Kellogg Center at Michigan State University. For more information, call (517) 372-9772, or email michiganwomen@sbcglobal.net.

think so, Libby.” When probed for specifics of the book, Maynard said she didn’t remember, “but things happen in politics, it rang true. It made me recognize I wanted a personal life.”

“Yes,” Maynard says, when asked if she enjoyed campaigning for Lieutenant Governor a second time, but “We lost when we were expected to win. Polls didn’t show it was because of Martha Griffith. Coleman didn’t get his troops out. Up until 10 days out, it was there. So it was a harder loss than in 1978.” By 1990, “there was much more acceptance of women running, a lot of women had run and won. Senator Connie Binsfield was on the Engler slate, it was almost a political necessity to have a woman at the top of the ticket,” says Maynard.

After the 1990 Race

After the 1990 race, Maynard taught gerontology at Lansing Community College, and the Michigan State University and University of Michigan Schools of Social Work.

elected, “Public higher education is under stress today. I don’t think legislators and state governments really appreciate the value of public higher education to the quality of life. I think tough times are here for a while,” she says. She also serves on the C.S. Mott Foundation board, Planned Parenthood of Michigan and the Michigan Council of Foundations.

Maynard also talked briefly about Michigan Prospect, a progressive think tank dealing with policy issues that impact the state, of which she is President and Jondahl is Executive

interview by asking Maynard, “Does politics seem more divisive? Is politics *done* differently than it used to be?”

“There doesn’t seem to be an appreciation for the other person’s point of view,” replies Maynard. “When people can’t reason together, it doesn’t bode well. So, young people, get involved! Do it in a more civil way.” ★

The author is curator of the Turner-Dodge House & Heritage Center, a MPHS board member and a member of the Michigan Veteran Feminists of America Oral History Project.

MPHS Members in the News

Governor Jennifer Granholm has named **Thomas M. Farrell**, a long time member and supporter of the Michigan Political History Society, to the Michigan Historical Commission. Farrell, a retired journalist, was appointed to represent the general public for a term expiring May 21, 2009. He succeeds Thomas Truscott whose term has expired. The Michigan Historical Commission advises the director of the Department of History, Arts and Libraries, approves Michigan Historical Markers, and works to preserve and protect Michigan’s history.

The Michigan Political History Society offers its congratulations to Tom!!

Governor Milliken Speaks to Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce Mackinac Policy Conference

The Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce opened the third day of its annual Mackinac Policy Conference with remarks from Governor William Milliken. To see a webcast of the speech, visit the chamber's website at www.detroitchamber.com. Following are excerpts.

Though 24 years have passed since the Chamber first met here on the island, some of the issues that we confront have not changed.

In looking back over a history of this conference, I noted that it was 20 years ago that the Big Four agreed to reorganize what was then the Southeast Michigan Transportation Authority. Nineteen years ago they agreed that transportation is a key concern for the region. It still is.

The fact is transportation has been a major concern for the region going back much further than 1985. Some of you may remember that in 1976, Transportation Secretary William Coleman committed \$600 million toward a regional transportation system if Detroit and its neighbors could reach an agreement on a system.

But there was never an agreement. Politics, in the worst sense of the kind of divisive politics that have Balkanized southeast Michigan for so long, took precedence over good public policy.

If anything, the political climate – whether in the Detroit area, in Lansing or in Washington – has deteriorated over the past 25 years. We have seen a growth of meanness, of bitterness and of excessive partnership, which can only work to the detriment of the region, the state and the nation. Sadly, too many have lost sight of the fact that, in the end, we're all in this together. This is Michigan we are talking about, a great state that helped build a nation, served as the arsenal of democracy and is home to some of the most magnificent natural resources on the planet. This is Detroit we are talking about, whether we refer to the city itself or the region that surrounds it. We go up or down together.

Yet you would think from the tone

of the public debate that it's a win-lose game between people in Michigan. We ought to be focused on identifying the strategy that would be a win for all of Michigan or for all of Detroit. If we don't, the rest of the nation and world will leave us all in the dust. We need to develop a dynamic where progress is more important than turf and where developing responsible public policy is more important than scoring "spin" points.

That does not mean you don't have differences. When I was in Lansing we had our differences, to be sure. They could be intense at times. But we were able to resolve them in a climate that maintained a sense of civility and mutual respect.

It wasn't that there was a shortage of strong-willed people or people who felt passionately about the issues with which they were dealing. People like Coleman Young, Dan Murphy, Bill Ryan and Bob VanderLaan had very firmly held views, which didn't always coincide.

But they were able to disagree one day on one issue and agree the next day on another. They were able to sense when the time had come to compromise, to blend their ideas with those of others, to settle for what they could get and live to fight another day. They knew that 20 years after they left office people would remember not the political fights they were in, but rather the sum total of what they did to move the state or the region forward.

They exemplified the spirit of moderation described by Judge Learned Hand in these words: "It is the temper which does not press a partisan advantage to its bitter end, which can understand and respect the other side, which feels a unity between all citizens – real and not the fictitious product of propaganda – which recognizes their common fate and their common aspirations; in a word, which has faith in the sacredness of the individual."

Building a legacy should be the primary objective of everyone serving

in public office.

We remember the legacy of Lincoln, FDR and Teddy Roosevelt, not for the elections they won, but what they did for the country. We

remember G. Mennen Williams for the bridge he built connecting our peninsulas. We remember George Romney for the constitution and improved government he left us.

Unfortunately, Detroit bashing was a part of the political dialogue when I was in politics. And it still rears its ugly head in today's political debate. It is still easier to make Detroit the villain than to put the time and effort into making hard decisions and developing good public policy that serves to benefit all.

How much better off we all would be if that time and energy was spent on more productive pursuits dealing with the issues that confront a region whose 20th Century economy was based on heavy industry but that needs to adjust to compete effectively in the 21st Century.

If Michigan is to thrive in the 21st Century, good public policy has to start trumping shortsighted, self-serving politics.

When an election is over, it is over. There is nothing in the U.S. or state constitutions that calls upon elected officials to be total partisans. Instead, those documents implore us to recognize that if we hold public office we should be about the people's business, and not personal, partisan agendas.

One hundred and fifty years ago Lincoln told a nation that "a house divided against itself cannot stand." In the 21st Century, a Michigan divided against itself cannot stand.

Thank you. ★



Courtesy of Detroit Chamber of Commerce

Politics and Higher Education: Key Events in Michigan State University's 150 Years

by Bruce McCristal

Michigan State University was born of political action between 1849 and 1855. The school was nearly shot down and closed six times by political passions between 1859 and 1869. And...it has been entwined in political-educational issues throughout its 150-year history.

When Michigan State moved to change its name from College to University in 1954, the University of Michigan Regents objected. Michigan State withdrew its request to the legislature...and then responded with an onslaught of alumni, faculty and student petitions to the State House and Senate. The naming battle was won in 1955...the school's centennial year.

The establishment of the home-and-home football series between MSU



and the U of M--starting in 1958--was a legislative decision. Previously, virtually all of the games were played in Ann Arbor.

The election of MSU's Board of Trustees—as opposed to a governor's appointment—resulted from political decisions made at the State's 1962 Constitutional Convention. This included the U of M Regents and the Wayne State Governors. It has been one of the most controversial

educational-political decisions in state history because of the lack of voter knowledge of candidates on “bedsheet” ballots. This decision may be revisited someday.

From student enrollment and tuition to university funding to athletics and governance, Michigan State University is part of an interactive web of political issues, discussions, and actions.

★

The author is a retired General Motors Executive who wrote The Spirit of Michigan State, a comprehensive history of the University. Learn more about it at www.spiritofmichiganstate.com. MPHS News will feature more political highlights of MSU's 150 years in the January 2006 issue.

SPECIAL THANKS: MPHS is partnering with *michigan lobbyist* magazine to bring this newsletter to magazine readers. Special thanks to Tom Scott, Editor and Publisher of *michigan lobbyist*, for working with MPHS and for sharing his magazine with our members.

MICHIGAN POLITICAL HISTORY SOCIETY 2005 Membership Application

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