

Michigan Political History
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NEWS

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Summer 2008

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PLEASE JOIN MPHS FOR A TRIBUTE TO

Governor William G. Milliken



*TUESDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 18--LAUREL MANOR, LIVONIA.
WE WILL BE SENDING INVITATIONS VERY SOON!*

MPHS looks at Capital Press Corps history

By Sheila O'Brien Schimpf

The Michigan Political History Society hosted a panel discussion on The History of the Michigan Capital Press Corps in the 1950's-60's June 16 at the Michigan Chamber of Commerce. The panel was the first of three events examining the history of Michigan's capital press corps. Future panels will look at the press corps in the seventies through the nineties.

Four journalists who worked in the Michigan Capital Press Corps during the 1950's and 60's emphasized just how different life in the Capitol was then but most recalled it as a good time in their career.

Roberta Stanley, MPHS Board Member and former Gongwer News reporter, was the moderator for the event. She introduced the panel by saying the reporters started at small town dailies in Michigan communities -- Mt. Pleasant, Albion, Ypsilanti, Coldwater -- and went on to work for wire services, both AP and UPI, and bigger newspapers. "Every single one of us went to Michigan State University, most of us attending the Journalism School," she said. "It was an honor and a professional measure of success to be named to a slot in the Capital Press Corps."

The panelists included:

- Dick Milliman (Lansing State Journal; Press Secretary for George Romney)
- Pat McCarthy (Lansing State Journal)
- Marcia Van Ness (Lansing State Journal)
- Dale Arnold (United Press International)

Dick Milliman began the discussion by noting how different the capital of the 1950's was from the capital of today. "There were two state government buildings and the Capitol. That was state government, period," Milliman, who covered the capital for the Lansing State Journal in the 1950s, remembered. Even the Supreme Court was in the Capitol Building then. Reporters could walk into state offices in the Capitol and interview legislators and agency heads in person, according to Milliman. Legislators had few staff members.

Michigan Government was not only smaller and its political officials more accessible, but the Michigan Legislature met on a part-time basis. This allowed reporters to use the off-season to do research and write detailed stories on other aspects of government. For example, Milliman thought that tracking the budget would be a smart thing for a reporter to do, and in the early 1950s, he wrote a series on the Michigan budget called "A Billion Dollar Business." (To put that number in perspective, Michi-



Marcia Van Ness responds to a question from the audience.



Dick Milliman, MPHS President David Murley, Panel Moderator Roberta Stanley, Pat McCarthy, Marcia Van Ness, Dale Arnold.

gan spent \$46.1 billion during fiscal year 2007, according to the state web site.)

Broadcast reporters began to arrive in the 1960s, Milliman said, bringing with them a few built-in conflicts with the print reporters who had always thought of the capital as their beat.

Government may have been smaller but it still had the need to communicate with the press. Milliman, who became Gov. George Romney's press secretary after his election in 1962, said Gov. G. Mennen Williams had two press conferences a day -- one for papers with morning deadlines and one for papers with afternoon deadlines. Newspapers had more space for capital news back then, Milliman noted, and the public paid closer attention. As state government grew larger and more important to people's lives, the capital press corps also grew larger. It numbered about 17 people in 1953-54, increased to 20 people in 1959-60, until, according to Marcia Van Ness, it reached 44 people (29 print and 15 broadcast members) by 1971-72. Today, noted audience member and AP bureau chief Kathy Barks Hoffman, only 11 reporters for six companies, plus

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the Gongwer and MIRS reporters, are capital regulars.

Marcia Van Ness, who began covering the Capital in 1969, was one of few women reporters assigned to the Capitol, and was regarded as something of a novelty. "Legislators would address everyone as 'gentlemen,'" she remembered. Many assumed she was not a reporter; for example, sometimes people would ask Bill Baird, the Lansing State Journal bureau chief, whether Van Ness was his assistant. "Bill Baird was an outstanding gentleman in every way," Van Ness said. "He would say, 'No, she's my colleague.'"

While Van Ness was one of the few women capitol reporters during her time, she could never claim to be the first. That distinction belonged to a pioneering woman reporter in the 1940s, Roberta Applegate, whose name was sometimes changed by copy editors to "Robert."

Access to elected officials was much different back then, Van Ness noted. For example, if she stood outside the governor's office on the second floor in the Capitol, she could sometimes see him at work at his desk, a feat security has made impossible today. "That was a different era," she said.

One interesting phenomenon Van Ness discussed was the conflict that arose between "traditional" print media and "modern" television media. One area of conflict was competition for space. Van Ness remembered huge cameras showing up at press conferences that were usually held in small spaces. "It would be a solid wall of cameras," Van Ness said, "and we were behind them and we were there first. That was the beginning of 'how are we going to work this out.'"

Print reporters routinely covered a meeting or a story until the end. As they were leaving a committee hearing or a session, broadcast media would just be coming in. "And they would say, what went on in there?" Van Ness said.

Dale Arnold, United Press reporter, remembered that state government was so small, one secretary worked for four or five legislators. Still it was a thrill to be assigned to Lansing, he said. As Arnold, who came to Lansing as a United Press reporter from Albion in the 1950s, put it, "Coming to the capital was really a big deal for me."

Arnold, a United Press reporter, said his bureau wanted to beat the Associated Press on every story. "I worked with George Weeks for two years about '58," Arnold said. Once when the state Supreme Court was expected to hand down an important opinion, Arnold and Weeks wrote two leads, one upholding the lower court ruling and one overturning it. In those days Supreme Court opinions were

dumped on a table in the Capitol. Weeks went to get the ruling and Arnold stayed in the press room that was off the Senate chamber. "George read enough to know it was a 'no,'" Arnold said. "George was in the balcony."

Arnold was supposed to watch for Weeks' signal -- thumb up or down-- and send the already-written story over the teletype machine, minutes ahead of AP. Weeks wanted to make sure Arnold saw the thumbs down and leaned over the railing. "I thought he was going to fall over," Arnold said. They beat the AP.

Pat McCarthy, who was a reporter for the Lansing State Journal for 25 years including two five-year stints on the Capital Beat, said covering the Capital was fun.

"There was a certain sense of competition," he said. "Some people would go around hiding things so you couldn't see them."

Sometimes legislators would run ideas past reporters as a test balloon, McCarthy said, and sometimes at Christmas, a bottle of whiskey showed up with a reporter's name on it, a gift from a lobbyist that ethics codes today do not allow. "That was a nice little unreported payment for the job," McCarthy joked.

Committee meetings were sometimes held in secret, McCarthy said, behind locked doors. "One day we took a picture of the Ways & Means Committee through a window and ran it. The next day they had a newspaper up over the window."

McCarthy said when interest in capital news began to wane, it was hurried by an attitude among editors, attributed to Al Neuharth, that "Government is boring."

"That type of thinking did permeate down through the system," McCarthy said.

McCarthy covered the state's Constitutional Convention in the early 1960s. He discussed Romney's role as chief advocate for the convention and noted that some legislators were nervous not only because of the complete overhaul in the Constitution (including new legislative apportionment and election cycles), but also because each member of the constitutional delegation represented competition for their seats.

After the program concluded, former Attorney General Frank Kelley agreed with the journalists that things today are much different from when he took office in 1962. "If you called a press conference, you had it in your office, set up six or eight chairs," Kelley said. The reporters who came were all male, and no television or radio reporters came. "And," he said, "you got much more space in the papers."

FRANKENMUTH'S HIDDEN GEM

When you mention Frankenmuth to most people in Michigan, certain destinations come to mind. For those who love fine German food, they think of Bavarian Inn or Zehnder's. Perhaps their thoughts focus on Bronner's, the world's largest Christmas store. Those more inclined to spend the day shopping may think of Frankenmuth's neighbor to the west, Birch Run, which is home to one of the Midwest's largest outlet malls.

But for those who love history, there is another reason to visit Frankenmuth--Michigan's Own Military & Space Museum. The museum, founded and run by Stan Bozich, contains hundreds of pictures, uniforms, medals, and weapons. But make no mistake--this museum is not about artifacts; it is about the people--including our neighbors, uncles, fathers, brothers (and yes, even some mothers and sisters) who have sacrificed on our behalf. Each display contains the story behind the soldier--a city kid wounded at the Battle of the Bulge, a farmer's son who served in Vietnam, or a recent college graduate hurt in Afghanistan. The museum is not limited to military conflicts; as the name implies, it also emphasizes Michigan's role in our nation's space program. Many of the stories are quite moving, and all are fascinating.

There are two factors that set Michigan's Own from other military museums. The first, of course, is its Michigan focus. The second is its large collection of materials and information on the Polar Bears. The Polar Bears were a unit of several thousand soldiers, mostly from Michigan, which was dispatched by President Wilson to support the Russian "White" Army against the Bolshevik "Red" Army during the Russian Civil War. Unfortunately, most people today do not realize the important role that thousands of Michigan's sons played in one of the most important ideological conflicts of the Twentieth Century.

Interesting, you say, but what does this have to do with Michigan's Political History? Let me answer that in two parts. First, although we are the Michigan Political History Society, we are glad to credit our fellow historical groups, museums, publications, etc. that discuss, promote, and preserve history.

Second, Michigan's Own does not ignore political history. Indeed, at the entrance to the museum, visitors are greeted by a large display of five Michigan Governors and their role in past military conflicts. The displays include each of the Governor's military uniforms, pictures of them while in the service, various medals and proclamations, and other material. The Michigan Governors honored with the displays include Governors Milliken, Swainson, and Williams (World War II); Wilbur Brucker (World War I); and Fred W. Green (Spanish-American War).

So the next time you decide to visit Frankenmuth, go ahead, stop by Birch Run on your way there. Get your Christmas goods at Bronner's. But before you stop for a heavy German meal, make sure that you visit Michigan's Own. You will be glad that you did.



Display honoring Fred Green, Spanish-American War Veteran and Governor of Michigan



Michigan Own's has a very large collection of military and space gear. It also has several displays describing the ordeals of the "Polar Bear" expedition to Russia.



Display honoring John Swainson, World War II veteran and Governor of Michigan.

Catching up with . . . GEORGE MCMANUS

By Tim Alberta

In the 1930s, an average boy raised on a northern Michigan farm could ask for little more than good health, a good woman and, someday, a farm of their own.

But George McManus was anything but average.

Growing up penniless on a remote farm during the Great Depression made McManus, a former Republican state senator from Traverse City, appreciate the value of a hard day's work. He once watched his father, who worked as a hired hand on a neighbor's farm until George was five, get the family through a bitter Michigan winter on only \$50.

"I remember the toughest winter we had, we lived on two dollars a week," McManus recalled. "Dad had fifty dollars to get us by from fall until spring. We had cows, pigs, horses and chickens, so we had our own milk and meat, and we made cheese and butter.

"We didn't ask for money because everyone just scraped by."

McManus said in Archie, where he grew up, children knew nothing of their own poverty because they saw no signs of economic inequality between them.

"Everyone else did same thing—we didn't know we were poor, because everyone else was in same boat as us," he

said.

Despite having great respect for his father and the agricultural way of life that sustained his family for generations, McManus wanted more. As much as those Depression years made him appreciate hard work on the farm, they also made him determined to get an education, certain that he could avoid his family's plight if he went to college.

But one glaring obstacle stood in the way: College was for the wealthy, and George McManus was a self-described "poor kid."

McManus's grandfather, a member of the rural school board, saw to it that George and his classmates had quality teachers despite living far from the city. After completing seventh grade, McManus began attending a nearby catholic high school with his cousin. During that time, his grades were so outstanding that he was offered a senatorial scholarship.

"At that time, the board of trustees at Michigan State College (MSC, now Michigan State University) issued two scholarships per senatorial district in the state," he said. "I won one, which paid my tuition for four years."

Although McManus had succeeded in academics and moved away from the farm, he still felt pressure from his father, who saw no point in higher education.



*George McManus served as a
Senator from 1991-2002*

"My dad didn't want me to go to college or high school—he thought it was a waste of time," McManus said. "He had this idea in his head that all five boys would farm with him one day.

"Then he found out there was a horticulture school at MSC and he convinced me that I should take a look at the horticulture department," McManus said. "So I went back, switched from math to horticulture, and took agricultural economics as a minor."

McManus said even though his father initially was opposed to his schooling, he checked his son's grades regularly and always made sure he was behaving. "My father always checked my report card, and I had to get all As...he figured if you're in school, you might as well get As," McManus remembered. "He pushed hard but it served me well."

After college, McManus returned home to help his father maintain their cherry farm from 1953 to 1956. Three years as a cherry farmer convinced McManus that he should put his degree to use, so he accepted a position with the Michigan State University Cooperative Extension, where he worked for six years.

In the years that followed, McManus served in numerous capacities with organizations like the Traverse City Rotary Club, Traverse City Chamber of Commerce, Michigan Agricultural Commission and various public service organizations throughout the state.

During that time, McManus also began raising a family with his wife, Clara Belle, on their cherry farm in Traverse City that they bought in 1955 and still live on to this day. The couple, who will celebrate

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*George McManus today, holding his new book, "The Boy from Archie"
(Photo by Carol South)*

McManus from Page 4

59 years of marriage this August, raised nine children and are now the proud grandparents of 23 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

But his real calling came unexpectedly in 1990 when a friend urged him to run for the state Senate. McManus said that despite having very little experience or interest in politics, he "ended up doing it" because of his love for public service.

"It's something I never intended to do," he said. "I wasn't into partisan politics. My dad was a big fan of FDR in the 1930s and was active in the Democratic Party, so politics wasn't a foreign subject to me...I just didn't have any big desire to get into it myself."

McManus served as a GOP senator until he was term-limited in 2002. One of his proudest accomplishments was helping to prevent capital punishment from being implemented in Michigan. McManus brought to Lansing Sister Helen Prejean, the nun who had authored the book *Dead Man Walking*, the true story of a death row convict who realized the evil of his ways and repented before being put to death. She testified before the Legislature about her experiences with the death penalty.

"I had a finger in making sure we didn't institute capital punishment in Michigan," he said, noting his pride in the state's historic opposition to the death penalty since 1837.

McManus never lost sight of his "roots" during his 12-year run in politics, however. Always a farm boy at heart, McManus was one of the most vocal advocates of the farming community and their agricultural interests during his time in the Legislature. Along with serving on multiple other committees, McManus chaired the standing committee on Agriculture and also chaired the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture.

McManus said the toughest part of his political career was making tough decisions on issues that were anything but black and white. "I tried being as fair and impartial about everything as possible, but with politics, you can't be impartial," McManus

said.

"A decision is never 100 percent one way and zero the other, more like 51-49. The problem with politics is that you can't use the scientific method to reach a conclusion. There's a lot of judgment that comes into the equation, and that's based on education and experience."

Since his retirement from the Senate, McManus has kept busy with a number of organizations and charities to which he devotes much of his time and energy. He's back on the farm now, living with his son on their cherry farm in Traverse City.

As he grew older and watched as his childhood home was transformed into a highway, McManus said he felt the need to leave something behind for future generations to come.

The Boy From Archie, McManus's newly published autobiography, endeavors to do just that, mixing family genealogy and land history with political experiences and stories from trips back to his ancestors' homeland of Ireland.

"It's a lot of stories that need to be passed on to our kids, their kids and the future generations...I didn't want them to get lost," he said. "I also wanted to bring back to the community some memories of the settlement of old mission peninsula and grand traverse community.

"*The Boy From Archie* was titled that way because most people forgot that community even existed."

McManus said he hopes to teach future generations about not only their history, but also the code of conduct that he adhered to as a young man.

"The thread throughout the book is the importance of getting an education, and getting as much out of that education as you can," McManus said. "But it also emphasizes keeping up your reputation so you're in good position for the future.

"It's about learning, but not just book learning. You can learn a lot of different things from a lot of different places."

In Memory

The Michigan Political History Society has decided to include a new section in the newsletter, one that informs readers about MPHS members and/or significant figures in Michigan political history that have passed away since the publication of the last newsletter. These brief notices are intended to inform readers, and are not intended to be comprehensive explanations of the person's life or career.

Please let MPHS know if we have inadvertently left anyone from this list. Further, please contact us in the future if you have obituary information on members and/or significant political figures which you believe should be included in future newsletters.

TOM DOWNS--Tom over time became the "go to" fix it man in the country for Democrats embroiled in election recounts, whether they be state or federal, having established himself in the famous Soapy Williams recounts of 1950 and 1952. In his relatively small private practice, he tutored several accomplished election law specialists, like Mike Farrell, John Pirich, and

Mike Hodge, who would also become pre-eminent in election law. Previously he served as a counsel for the Michigan AFL-CIO, and as a delegate to the Michigan Constitutional Convention of 1961-62. As one of the founding members of MPHS, he acted as its legal counsel for nearly 15 years. Tom's interview with Michigan State Chamber of Commerce Vice President Bob LaBrant is now part of the Blanchard Living Library Series.

MILO RADULOVICH--Milo's prominent role in history was to help derail the Red Scare in the 1950's. Milo, a U.S. Air Force reservist, was deemed a security risk and stripped of his commission, even though the Air Force failed to provide any evidence of Radulovich's alleged nefarious activities. CBS fabled broadcaster, Edward R. Murrow highlighted Radulovich's plight on his award-winning news show, "See It Now." As a result of Murrow's broadcast, Radulovich's Air Force status was restored. One of his legal team was MPHS member Kenneth Sanborn; and MPHS member Mike Ranville chronicled Milo's plight in his excellent book, "To Strike at a King." Milo's story was also featured in the film, "Good Night and Good Luck."

JOHN C. MACKIE--John was a trained engineer who served as Genesee County Surveyor prior to a stint as Michigan's last elected Highway Commissioner in 1956. The 1963 Constitution made

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In Memory

Continued

it an appointive position, with the title of Director, Department of Transportation, thereby encompassing aeronautics, rail, and marine services. Mackie ran for Congress and was elected in 1964, as part of the great Goldwater Landslide. Two years later, he was defeated by Donald R. Riegle, then a Republican, along with four other first-term Michigan Democrats, in the landslide elections of 1966.

ELLY PETERSON--Elly was a torch bearer and feminist pioneer in Michigan. She was the GOP nominee for the U.S. Senate against Phil Hart in 1964. Shortly after that campaign, she became the Chair of the State GOP, serving in that office until 1969. In the 1970's, she became Vice Chair of the GOP National Committee, and was very active in the Equal Rights Amendment ratification process. MPHS's interview with Elly Peterson is now part of its Blanchard Living Library collection.

WILLIAM B. FITZGERALD, JR.--AKA "Billy Fitz"--was one of the Michigan Democratic Party's political stars of the 1970's. Elected in a midterm special election to his late father's Detroit state house seat in 1970, Fitzgerald then ran for--and won--the Senate seat vacated by his uncle in 1974. He was subsequently elected Senate Majority Leader in 1974, at age 32, thus becoming the youngest Senate Majority Leader in Michigan history. He was later deposed as majority leader by Senator Bill Faust in 1976, but then captured the Democratic nomination for Governor in 1978, eventually losing to incumbent William G. Milliken in the November election.

ALSHORT--Al began his career as a federal Peace Corps volunteer and then was a teacher in the Jackson County Vandercook Lake School District. He began working for the Michigan Education Association in 1971. As the MEA's tenacious and exceptionally knowledgeable Director of Government Affairs, Al became known to the Capital area for his passionate advocacy of public education and his skill in making the MEA one of Michigan's most formidable political organizations.

IRVING BLUESTONE--Irving, the son of Lithuanian immigrants, was born in Brooklyn in 1917 and joined the United Auto Workers in the early 1940's. In the 1950's, he rose to become the assistant to UAW Vice President and, from 1961-1970, became personal assistant to UAW President Walter Reuther. He served as UAW Vice President from 1972-80, before retiring to teach Industrial Relations at Wayne State University. Irving's interview with MPHS is now part of the Blanchard Living Library Collection.

JERRY LAWLER--A native of Iowa, Jerry came to Michigan in 1968 to work for the Legislative Service Bureau. A dedicated public servant, he served as Executive Director of the Michigan Capitol Committee from 1989. He oversaw the restoration of the Capitol from 1989-1992. He, and MPHS member Joe Schwarz, were two influential motivators behind the beautiful and award-winning state Capitol project.

HUGH MASTERSON--As the chief lobbyist in Lansing for Ford Motor Company, and later their overseer for state government relations throughout the United States, Hugh was one of the primary architects of Michigan's Single Business Tax. Well known as perhaps the "classiest lobbyist" in town, Hugh mentored a number of multi-client lobbyists and set a standard for tough-minded, thoughtful business representation in the Capitol. He was highly regarded in the Executive Branch by every Governor who served during his Lansing tenure, and earned the widespread respect of the Capital Press Corps.

JOHN "JOE" COLLINS--Chair of John Swainson's campaign for Governor in 1960. Following Swainson's election as Governor in 1960 Collins replaced Neil Staebler as Chair of the Michigan Democratic Party. He was only 26 years old when he replaced Staebler, and was the youngest state chairman in the nation at that time. Collins was also one of the original founders of the Jackson National Life Insurance Company.

JOE McCALL--Joe served as the longtime Public Information Director of the Michigan Department of Mental Health. Before that, he owned a weekly newspaper in Oakland County. Journalism was in his blood; he was from a well-known newspaper family that owned several daily and weekly newspapers in Western and Central Michigan. His wife, Margaret, was Public Information Director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture for many years prior to her death.

TOM SHAWVER--Tom worked as an Associated Press Correspondent, Detroit Free Press politics writer and Public Information Director for the Michigan Department of Transportation for 24 years. He was part of a group of Free Press journalists who shared a Pulitzer Prize for their coverage of the 1967 Detroit riots. He also covered the 1957 opening of the Mackinac Bridge and last November took part in ceremonies celebrating the 50th anniversary of that event.

Tom also was a member of the "Soapy Singers," a group of Lansing Press Corps reporters who performed at several farewell events for Gov. G. Mennen Williams when he left office at the end of 1960.

JOE SUTTON--Like so many people who have built successful careers around Lansing, Joe started as a janitor at the Capitol while still a student at MSU. He earned his law degree while working for the Department of Treasury and, several years after graduation, joined the Department of Attorney General. Joe worked in many divisions of that office, including Health Care Fraud, Corporations and Securities, and Revenue, before Attorney General Frank Kelley chose him as his Deputy Attorney General in 1997. A recognized expert on elder law, Joe worked with his brother Jerry at Sutton Financial Advisors after retirement from the state.

DON GARDNER--Don, who died in April at the age of 96, had the distinction of being the oldest living member of the Lansing Press Corps. He covered the legislature for both the Detroit News and the Detroit Times, and was instrumental in the passage of Michigan's "Reporter Shield Law," which protects reporters from the forced disclosure of sources and information. After service in World War II, Don founded a public relations firm and later had a successful career as a lobbyist.

INTERESTING HOBBY:

Two Capitol Veterans Pay Their Respects to Michigan's Governors

By Phyllis Washburn

Some people aspire to visit every baseball stadium, others to visit every state. But two veteran Lansing hands have started an adventure to visit the gravesite of every deceased Michigan governor.

Scott Bean and Don Cooper together have visited 23 of the 41 deceased governor's gravesites. They have also visited the gravesites of five of Michigan's territorial governors. They started their quest in Detroit on Memorial Day 2006, observing the gravesites of former Govs. Cass, Alger, McClelland, Baldwin, Woodbridge and Porter at Evergreen Cemetery and Govs. Pingree and Groesbeck at Woodlawn Cemetery.

"The gravesites give little snapshots of Michigan history," said Cooper, public policy analyst for the Center for Charter Schools at Central Michigan University. "They show the evolution of how civilization views death, and inevitably, we always find the graves of other notables."

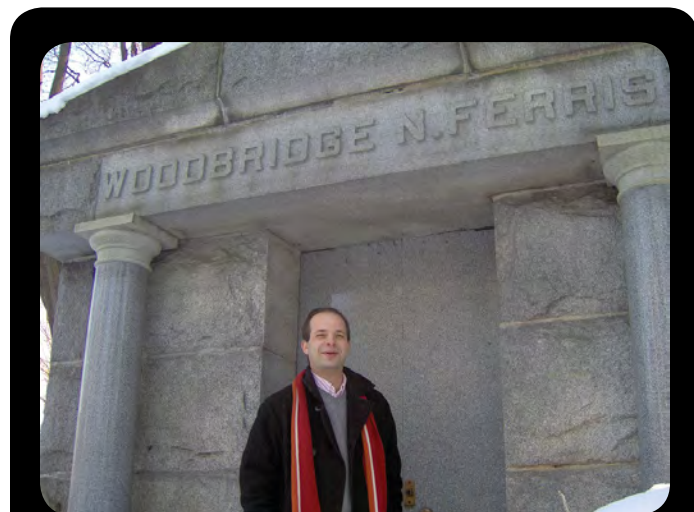
How the adventure began

Cooper said his interest in cemeteries began at a young age, as he enjoyed the art and variety of the architecture found in cemeteries.

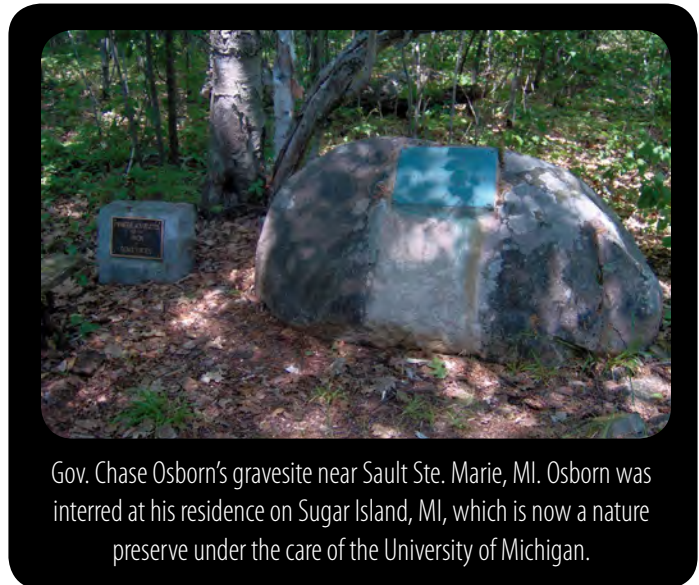
His interest for visiting the graves of Michigan governors began after he visited the burial sites of important Civil War era figures, such as President Abraham Lincoln, Dred Scott and General Sherman. Cooper's interest spiked when he noticed the differences in how each was treated after death. Cooper became fascinated with uncovering how famous Michiganians were treated in this regard.

Bean, chief of staff for state Sen. Randy Richardville, R-Monroe, said his career in politics and love of history made his newfound hobby obvious.

"I have always enjoyed history - especially local history. Working in state politics makes it easy to combine and connect



Don Cooper at Gov. Woodbridge Ferris's mausoleum in Big Rapids, MI. Governor of Michigan from 1913-17, Ferris also served in the United States Senate and died in office in 1928.



Gov. Chase Osborn's gravesite near Sault Ste. Marie, MI. Osborn was interred at his residence on Sugar Island, MI, which is now a nature preserve under the care of the University of Michigan.

the two," Bean said.

"We examine the social aspects and history of the time frame for each governor's service," Cooper said. "Their circumstances are an interesting lesson in state history."

Differences in style

Calling their quest an adventure that keeps growing, Bean expressed his interest in the differences in the graves.

"Some governors are interred in small mausoleums, and some have larger monuments," Bean said. "Many others are in small, simple graves that do not indicate their service to our state."

The pair use the websites www.politicalgraveyard.com and www.findagrave.com to help them locate the cemeteries where the governors lay.

Bean referenced Gov. Fred Warner's stone in Farmington Hills, which does not mention his gubernatorial service, and Gov. Luren Dickinson in Charlotte, who has a very simple and easy-to-miss marker obscured by an overgrown shrub.

"It is interesting to see the differences between how prominent figures viewed death," Cooper suggested. "The gravestone reflected how they lived, and what was important to them. It also strongly suggests how prominent of a role their job as governor played in their life."

For example, Gov. Dickinson only served the state in the capacity of governor for two years, but he had a rich career outside of his governorship.

The differences in the graves, according to Cooper, also is the reflection of how American society viewed death at the time. "The styles evolve over time," Cooper noted.

Governors not in Michigan

Then there's the handful of Michigan's deceased governors who are not interred in the State.

Earlier last summer, Bean ventured to Washington D.C. to visit the grave of a Michigan governor who was laid to rest outside of the state. The grave of Gov. Wilber Brucker, who

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INTERESTING HOBBY CONTINUED...



In addition to having an interest in Michigan Governors gravesites, Scott and Don are both interested in monuments for other notable political figures. Pictured here is Scott Bean at the gravesite of former president James Monroe in Richmond, VA.

also served as secretary of the United States Army, is located across the Potomac River in Arlington National Cemetery.

His grave is a familiar white marker with his name on one side and his offices listed on the other. Being in Arlington and surrounded by history is what made that grave special for Bean.

One unfound gravesite is that of Gov. James Wright Gordon, who later served as the United States Consul to Brazil. Gordon fell to his death from a two-story building, and his body mysteriously disappeared. It is speculated that his body was improperly buried in an unmarked location at the time. Cooper and Bean are searching historical documents in an attempt to discover a monument dedicated to Gordon in Michigan.

Favorite gravesites

The pair, of course, have some favorites, as well.

Perhaps Cooper's favorite gravesite is that of Gov. Chase Osborn, who is buried near his family's cottage on an island off the Upper Peninsula. Gov. Osborn donated a great amount of land to serve as a state park, which was near Cooper's home as a child. The grave is marked by a simple plaque on a rock.

A favorite of Bean is that of Gov. Lewis Cass, who has his memorial in Elmwood Cemetery in Detroit. His grave contains a large casket-shaped monument with the state seal carved on

the sides, which Bean called remarkable.

Gov. Frank D. Fitzgerald's grave in Grand Ledge has a personal attachment for Bean, who worked for his grandson, the late Frank Fitzgerald, in the Michigan House of Representatives. Bean's former boss is interred at the site, along with his father, Justice John W. Fitzgerald and grandfather.

"The site is a stately and dignified grave, and fitting for the three generations of honest service and hard work for the people of Michigan," Bean declared.

Grave leads to activism

Bean and Cooper's quest has also led to a bit of activism from a visit to the grave of former Gov. Stevens T. Mason.

Mason was Michigan's last territorial governor and conversely became Michigan's first state governor after it was granted statehood in 1837. Mason was governor during the Toledo War, and is interred in Detroit's Capitol Park, the site of the state's first capitol. He died in New York at the young age of 31, and the highlight of his gravesite is a statue of the "boy governor" whose base contains his remains.

Despite classifying Mason's site as a favorite, the travelers acknowledged that its condition is "appalling and ill-maintained."

"When the park was dedicated in 1908, it was a focal point of downtown Detroit," Bean said. "Unfortunately, it has fallen into disrepair - the ground is littered with trash, the bushes are overgrown and covering part of the base, and the statue is covered in bird feces. That is not a very fitting tribute for our state's first governor."

When Mason's original gravesite in New York was threatened, the Michigan legislature created a funeral committee to determine the best method for recovering his remains. They recommended the movement of his body from New York and appropriated the \$10,000 to erect the statue in his honor.

The dedication of the statue was a great honor at the time, and Mason's sister and daughter were present at the event.

"The site doesn't suggest a burial site of a revered Michigan governor who played a prominent role in our state's history," Cooper suggested.

Mason's statue celebrated its centennial birthday May 20, 2008, which sparked Bean and Cooper to encourage its preservation in a letter to the city advocating for it to improve Mason's gravesite.

"Michigan's gubernatorial graves are an obscure but forgotten piece of Michigan history," Cooper said. "We should memorialize the stewards of our state and commemorate their service."

Bean and Cooper's end goal? They simply want a little recognition for these men who served our state - even if just by the family, friends and co-workers of the pair.

Future plans

Next on the agenda for the travelers is a road trip through Flint, Saginaw, Lapeer and into the thumb-area. On the trip, they will visit the gravesites of several former governors, including Frank Murphy, John T. Rich, Henry Crapo, Aaron Bliss and Josiah Begole.

The duo is very willing to share their passion with the public and is working on compiling the history they've accumulated onto a Web site.

"Before we travel to each gravesite, we research the governor and their era," Cooper said. "It's a great history lesson for us that provides a glimpse into the governor's life and personality, not to mention their role in shaping Michigan's history."

New Life Members

The Michigan Political History Society re-introduced its life membership plan last year. A life membership plan--which runs \$300 for an individual or family--relieves a person from ever again having to pay dues to MPHS. The life membership fee is invested in the MPHS Endowment, the interest from which helps to support MPHS's mission. Thus, when you join as a life member, your gift helps support MPHS today, and for many years in the future.

Interested in joining as a life member? Please contact Linda Cleary at Linda.Cleary@sbcglobal.net or (517) 333-7996. You may also purchase a life membership for another person, or join as a life member in honor of another person. A full list of our life members can be found at www.miphs.com/lifetimemembership.doc.

We would like to thank the following persons for joining as life members in 2008:

Representative Steve Bieda
Senate Majority Leader Michael Bishop
Francie Brown
Larry Lindemer
Robert J. McDonald
David Plawecki
Michael Ranville

ANNUAL APPEAL

Two years ago, MPHS started its annual appeal program. The program, which is entirely voluntary, allows members to make an additional contribution to MPHS to help fund its operating budget. We would like to thank the following members for contributing to MPHS's 2007-2008 Annual Appeal:

Representative (\$0-\$50)

Carol Conn
Honorable Robert Danhof
Nell Kuhnmuensch
Sister Monica Kostielney
Patrick McCollough
Charles Press

Senator (\$51-\$100)

Stephen Adamini
Thomas Cleary, Sr.
Honorable Avern Cohn
Mitch Irwin
Hank and Liesel Meijer

Governor (\$101-\$250)

Ben Baldus
Douglas Drake

President (Over \$250)

Kevin A. Kelly
Peter Kuhnmuensch

Blanchard Living Library of Michigan Political History

In October 2007, MPHS held the largest, most successful event in its history--the tribute to Governor James J. Blanchard. That event not only celebrated his tenure as Governor, but also led to the creation of the James J. Blanchard Living Library of Michigan Political History.

The purpose of the library is to record the stories of the men and women who shaped Michigan's political landscape and played a vital role in forming the policies of our state. The interviews, which are conducted by Lynn Jondahl and Bill Ballenger, are recorded on DVD. These DVD interviews will then be sent to the major university

libraries, the State Library of Michigan, Michigan Government Television, and offered to the Michigan Cable Association so that they may provide it to its local affiliates. Copies of particular interviews will also be made available to interested MPHS members or members of the public.

We would like to thank Wiener & Associates and Foster Swift Collins & Smith for donating the use of their offices to record these interviews.

For a complete list of our oral histories, please visit our website at Miphs.com



Lynn Jondahl interviews Bobby Crim



MPHS President Dave Murley, Bob Traxler, and Bill Ballenger



Bobby Crim



Larry Lindemer



Roman Gribbs, Bill Ballenger

Interviews conducted this year include:

LARRY LINDEMÉR
(GOP Chair and Supreme Court Justice)

BOBBY CRIM
(Speaker of the House)

BOB TRAXLER
(State Representative and US Congressman)

ROMAN GRIBBS
(Detroit Mayor and Court of Appeals Judge)

President Gerald R. Ford to represent Michigan in Capitol Rotunda

In our last issue, we featured a Michigan Senate debate over the question: Who should represent Michigan in our nation's Capitol? Each state is permitted to place two statues in the Capitol, statutes of individuals "illustrious for their historic renown or for their distinguished civic or military service." Michigan has been represented in the Capitol by former Governor Lewis Cass (since 1889) and former Senator and GOP founder Zachariah Chandler (since 1913). After several months of deliberation and debate, the state of Michigan has decided to replace the statue of Chandler with one on President Ford.

HISTORY

The Michigan House of Representatives considered a resolution, sponsored by Speaker Pro Tem Michael Sak (D-Grand Rapids), requesting that the Congressional Joint Committee on the Library of Congress to replace the Chandler statue with one of President Gerald Ford. The resolution passed without opposition on June 28, 2007. Speaker Pro Tem Sak, when asked why he sponsored the resolution, said, "It is a unique and special opportunity to recognize and honor Grand Rapids' President. He was one of our own, and I feel that it is appropriate to place his statue in the Capitol Rotunda in Washington. I look forward to the special day when we dedicate the statue in honor of President Ford, and his family, and the citizens of Michigan."

When the Michigan Political History Society newsletter went to press last year, the Senate was still debating the Ford/Chandler issue. Senator Bill Hardiman (R-Kentwood) had sponsored a Resolution which also requested the Congressional Joint Committee to replace the Chandler statue with the Ford statue. The resolution was sent to the Senate Commerce Committee in July 2007. While Gerald Ford Foundation Executive Director Marty Allen and Senator Hardiman spoke in favor of the resolution, two Senators--Tom George and Cameron Brown--spoke in favor of keeping the Zachariah Chandler statue in the Capitol. (See the last MPHS Newsletter for Senator George's argument regarding why he thought Michigan should keep Zachariah Chandler in Statuary Hall.) The Commerce Committee adjourned without taking a vote on the resolution.

The logjam was finally broken on December 13, 2007, when the Senate passed the Resolution favoring the Ford statue. "President Ford brought our nation together during difficult times," Senator Hardiman said. "I am thankful for the support and cooperation of all those involved in this effort to recognize his strong leadership and unshakeable commitment to duty."

The Resolution was sent to Governor Granholm and she,



Speaker Pro Tem Sak and Senator Hardiman stand before the Ford Portrait in the State Capitol

too, added a letter in support of the change. The resolutions and letter were then transmitted to the Congressional Joint Committee on the Library of Congress. With the help of U.S. Representative Vern Ehlers--the former chair, and a current member, of the Committee--Michigan's request was approved. On March 6, 2008, the agreement between the State of Michigan and the Capitol Architect was signed, calling for the eventual removal of the Chandler statue from Statuary Hall and the placement of the Ford Statue in the Capitol Rotunda.

WHAT NEXT?

According to Gerald Ford Foundation Executive Director Marty Allen, the Foundation is still in the process of interviewing artists to design the Ford statue. Ideally, the

(See **President Ford**, Page 13)

President Ford *from Page 12*

statue would be created and placed in the Capitol Rotunda by next year. The Gerald R. Ford Foundation is paying for the expenses to create the Ford statue and for placement in the United States Capitol Rotunda. In addition, the Foundation is paying the cost to remove the Zachariah Chandler statue from the Capitol and to transport the Chandler statue to the Detroit Historical Museum.

CONSIDERING AN IMPORTANT QUESTION

The debate over who should represent Michigan in our nation's capitol raised several important questions, not limited to the question of Ford v. Chandler. Should Michigan be represented by a political figure? Not all states choose to be represented by political figures; Hawaii, for example, is represented by Father Damien the Leper, while North Dakota is represented by Sacajawea, who served with the Lewis and Cass expedition.

The debate also led several legislators to suggest their own nominees to represent Michigan. What about Henry Ford? suggested State Representative Chuck Moss, R-Birmingham. After all, few individuals were more important in shaping Michigan's identity in the Twentieth Century than Henry Ford. And when discussing the automobile industry, no discussion is complete without reference to Walter Reuther. Indeed, Representative Fred Miller, D-Mt. Clemens, introduced a resolution calling for Michigan to be represented in our nation's Capitol by Mr. Reuther.

CONCLUSION

We at the Michigan Political History Society wish to congratulate Speaker Pro Tem Sak, Senator Hardiman, Governor Granholm, and Congressman Ehlers for working together to get the resolution passed and the agreement with the Capitol Architect signed. While the Michigan Political History Society did not, and does not, take an official position in the President Ford

v. Senator Chandler debate, or even the question of which two of Michigan's sons or daughters should represent Michigan in the Capitol, we are pleased that Michigan's political leaders took the time to consider an important matter of political history and the question of how Michigan should represent itself to the rest of the country. We also must applaud the bi-partisan cooperation from the two Democrats and two Republicans who were instrumental in making the Ford statue in the Rotunda a reality.

The Michigan Political History Society is also pleased that a person of the stature and character of President Ford will once again be representing Michigan in our nation's Capitol. Congratulations, President Ford!



PRESIDENT
GERALD R. FORD



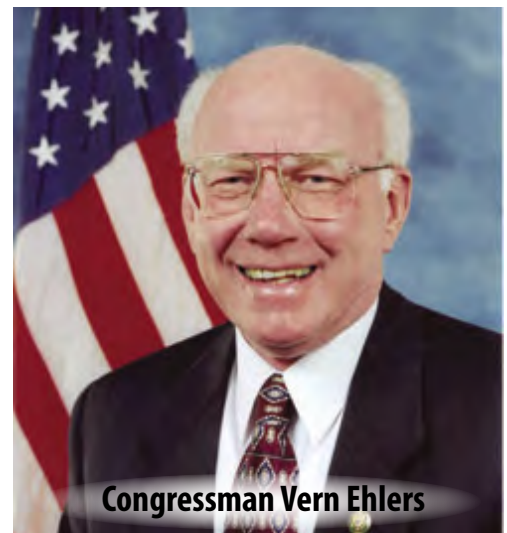
Sen. Bill Hardiman



Speaker Pro Tem Michael Sak



Gov. Jennifer Granholm



Congressman Vern Ehlers