

Michigan Political History Society NEWS

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Winter 2003-2004

Book Event Celebrates Career of Emil Lockwood

by Mary Anne Ford

Political history enthusiasts and friends of the late Emil Lockwood, legendary for his leadership of the Michigan Senate during the late 1960s, gathered June 9 at the Michigan Catholic Conference for an MPHS sponsored book talk and signing, moderated by Kevin Kelly. The book, *Man In Motion: Michigan's Legendary Senate Majority Leader Emil Lockwood* by Stanley and Marilyn Fedewa, chronicles Lockwood's life and political career, and offers insight into the qualities and character that earned Lockwood his reputation as he led the Senate through the difficult issues of fiscal reform and open housing, and

founded the state's first bipartisan, multiclient lobbying firm. The Fedewas signed copies of their books and answered questions about Lockwood and their research.

The Fedewas initiated the project after Lockwood approached them to write his biography late in 1999. Their research explored Lockwood's youth and family, his military service, his entry into politics, career as a lobbyist and retirement activities. Marilyn Fedewa researched Lockwood's life through his entry into state politics in the early 1960s, while Stanley Fedewa did the research on Lockwood's political career and achievements.

Lockwood died in August 2002, after the Fedewas completed work on their manuscript, but before publication of the book. The book's epilogue, "Portrait of a Farewell," features excerpts from eulogies delivered at Lockwood's Lansing memorial service, including these comments from coauthor Marilyn Fedewa:

"We believe he sensed last year that his own passing was near and that his urgency about our completing the book was a direct result of computing his own odds – and accurately, at that..."

"Fortunately, he was able to read the finished manuscript while he still could

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Recalling 1983

by Mary Anne Ford

On October 7, as California voters continued to cast their votes in that state's recall election, MPHS members gathered at the Michigan Catholic Conference for

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a panel discussion on the recall of two Michigan State Senators in 1983.

Two Democratic state senators – David Serotkin of Mount Clemens and Phillip Mastin of Pontiac – were recalled in November 1983, following their support of an income tax hike aimed at reducing a state budget deficit of \$1.7 billion. Special elections two months later resulted in the election of

two Republicans to fill the vacancies, shifting control of the Senate to Republicans,

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Photo by Mary Anne Ford



Patrick McCollough and Douglas Cruce, colleagues in the Michigan Senate during the political turbulence of the 1980s, share their views on recall reform.

Book Event

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respond to it – a very rewarding experience for him and for us. Because we knew that despite his haste, Emil was just being himself – a gregarious, likable Alpha Male who kept his own counsel and developed his own homespun brand of fairness from an early age.”

Fedewa’s comments about computing odds underscore Lockwood’s well-known ability to count votes and determine the odds of legislative success. During the book signing, she connected this skill with Lockwood’s early experience watching his grandmother play poker, and learning to count cards and read lips.

Much of the evening’s discussion focused on Lockwood’s leadership in two issues that would define his term as Senate Majority Leader – passage of tax reforms proposed by Governor Romney in 1967, and passage of the state’s Open Housing law in 1968. With 20 seats, Republicans had the slimmest of majorities possible – Roger Lane of the *Detroit Free Press* is quoted in the book observing that Lockwood “wins with his wits, rather than the force of Republican numbers.” Indeed, Lockwood did not always have the support of his own party on the issues he championed. He succeeded in passing the open housing



Photos by Mary Anne Ford

Coauthors Stan and Marilyn Fedewa read excerpts from their biography of Emil Lockwood before signing copies of the book for MPHS members.

law with only 22 votes – two more than necessary for passage. Even more amazing, Stan Fedewa recounted, was that the bill passed with 11 Republican votes and 11 Democratic votes.

Lockwood left the Senate to run, unsuccessfully, for Secretary of State. In 1971 he founded, with Jerry Coomes, the state’s first bipartisan, multiclient lobbying firm. As Executive Director of the Michigan Catholic Conference, Coomes had worked with Lockwood on several issues. Their plan to meet client needs with their bipartisan backgrounds, complementary skills and broader view of lobbying, proved successful for their

clients and for the business that continues to operate today.

It was fitting that the new Michigan Catholic Conference headquarters provided the venue for the book event – it was there that Coomes and Lockwood met and that Stan Fedewa worked as legislative liaison. Fedewa went on to serve as chief of staff for two House Speakers and as Legislative Director for Governor Blanchard. Coauthor Marilyn Fedewa was in development for Michigan State University and served as Vice President of Olivet College. The couple operates a writing and consulting firm, Cambridge Connections, in Lansing.

Man in Motion Recommended Reading

Commentary by George Weeks

Having served in the state Senate and a quarter century on Capitol Hill, ex U.S. Representative Guy Vanderjagt, R-Luther, knows what it takes to be an effective majority leader.

So it’s worthy of note when he says: “What Lyndon Johnson was to the U.S. Senate, Emil Lockwood was to the Michigan Senate – the very best there ever was.”

That high tribute is in a new book that is more than a biography of the lawmaker who once had his coat lapels inadvertently ripped off in 1967 by Governor George Romney in a heated talk; it is a highly readable manual on

do’s and don’ts of legislative leadership.

Ex-Governor John Engler, himself a shrewd Senate majority leader says of his late fellow Republican: “I am highly indebted to him because he set the standard for what a good Senate majority leader should be. (He) won the respect...of both parties. He will be remembered as one of the finest in Michigan’s political pantheon.”

The book is *Man in Motion: Michigan’s Legendary Senate Majority Leader Emil Lockwood* by Stan and Marilyn Fedewa, published by Lumina Press.

One of its fascinating accounts is how this Republican from rural Michigan, after the post-Detroit-riot unrest, engineered narrow passage of the historic 1968 Open Housing bill opposed by half of his own caucus. He said, “it was the only fair thing to do.”

Lockwood, of St. Louis, was the 1965-66 Senate Minority Leader and then Majority Leader until 1970, when he was the unsuccessful Republican nominee for Secretary of State.

Nineteen of Michigan’s governors previously were state senators. Several

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Recalling 1983

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and propelling John Engler to the position of Senate Majority Leader.

Featured panelists at the October event included journalist David Waymire, who covered the recall as a reporter for the *Flint Journal*, Tom Shields of MRG, who worked with state Republicans as an informal advisor to the leaders of the recall effort, former Democratic Senator Patrick McCollough, a target of an unsuccessful recall effort, former Republican Senator Douglas Cruce, and Ed Burley, who led Senator Serotkin's effort against his recall. Michigan Public Television's *Off the Record* host Tim Skubick led a question and answer session.

Panelists disagreed about the extent to which the Republican Party was an active force behind the recall itself, after Shields described a grass roots effort, to which he and

1983 and the possible consequences of budget cuts. He never faced a recall election following his support of the tax increase, because he successfully challenged methods used to gather petition signatures.

Photo by Mary Anne Ford



MPHS member Kendra Howard asks a question of the panel during the Q&A session moderated by Tim Skubick.

Recalling the event seemed to recall some of the tensions and emotions that pervaded the atmosphere in 1983.

other Republican advisors only offered procedural advice. But all agreed that the recall was a seminal event in Michigan's political history.

McCollough, who was the target of a recall effort in his Dearborn district, reminded the audience about the severity of the economic crisis facing the state in

Audience comments and questions highlighted many issues. Did the media fuel the anti-tax sentiment with its characterization of the tax hike – from 4.6 percent to 6.35 percent – as a “38 percent” income tax increase? Should the state revisit its recall laws, so that recall becomes an option only in cases involving malfeasance or illegal conduct? To what extent does the specter of 1983 inhibit the response to the state's current fiscal crisis? Recalling the event seemed to recall some of the tensions and emotions that pervaded the atmosphere in 1983. ■

Man in Motion

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nominees for governor previously served as their party's leader in the Senate, including 2002 Republican nominee Dick Posthumus.

Lockwood's success after the Senate was as co-founder of Michigan's first bipartisan, multiclient lobbying firm. The book provides insights and intriguing nuggets about this influential craft.

But my interest is in Lockwood's legacy in the Senate, where he was “a moral giant” according to Jerry Coomes, co-founder and Lockwood partner in Public Affairs Associates. “He not only insisted – but he fought ferociously to assure that our laws treated all persons as equals.”

Why was he so successful?

Because he did his homework, on issues and seemed, Engler-like, a step ahead of the opposition; developed good relations on both sides of the aisle – and

“His wizardry lies in putting together endlessly different combinations of Republicans and Democrats to win.”

knew what the hot button issues were for individuals on both sides; was more pragmatic than partisan in his trading and deal-making; kept his word; and spoke with disarming frankness – a trait admired in my craft.

As observed by Roger Lane, a former Associated Press and Free Press Capitol correspondent: “His wizardry lies in putting together endlessly different combinations of Republicans and Democrats to win.”

One Democrat who served in the Senate with Lockwood, the late Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, told him, “I have always found your word to be your bond.”

All in all, *Man in Motion* is recommended reading for all those many new lawmakers just getting under way as both chambers feel the full effects of term limits.

George Weeks is the Detroit News' politics columnist. This commentary was excerpted from his column on July 29, 2003. ■

Now it Can be Told: How Gus Scholle Led the Michigan CIO into the Michigan Democratic Party

by Tom Downs

Editor's note: The following are excerpts from an article by Tom Downs, an 87-year-old retired attorney, who was on the staff of Gus Scholle. Downs, a founding member of the Michigan Political History Society, wrote this article from memory, sharing his reflections on the changes in the Michigan Democratic Party in the 1940s. The article was originally published in two parts in BRIEFS, the monthly newspaper of the Ingham County Bar Association.

The story starts with John L. Lewis, who formed the original Congress of Industrial Unions (CIO). He was elected the first president in 1936.

“ Scholle went on to say all his life he had fought the idea that employers could tell their employees how to vote, and that he was not about to let his boss, John L. Lewis, tell him how to vote. ”

Lewis was a Republican and he was authoritarian. In 1940 he not only personally supported Wendell Wilkie against Franklin Delano Roosevelt, but also ordered all CIO organizers to do the same. Most, if not all, quietly ignored him. But not Gus Scholle.

Scholle stated in union meetings that Lewis had no authority as President of the CIO to unilaterally endorse

Wilkie and order CIO staff members to do the same, since neither the CIO Convention nor Executive Board had endorsed Wilkie. He went on to say all his life he had fought the idea that employers could tell their employees how to vote, and that he was not about to let his boss, John L. Lewis, tell him how to vote.

Scholle had been the third person hired by the CIO and was Regional Director for Michigan. His friends, like Ken Morris, who became a Regional Director of the UAW, and Emil Mazey, who became Secretary of the UAW, became concerned that Scholle would be without a paycheck, and that he would be silenced since he would no longer have the platform of being a CIO Regional Director. Mazey and Morris had a simple but effective strategy to protect Scholle's paycheck and voice. They organized a caucus to elect him as President of the Michigan CIO. They succeeded. Gus Scholle became President of the Michigan CIO in 1940. Rank and file delegates to the Michigan CIO State Convention, over which Lewis had no control, elected him.

Lewis had said if that if Wilkie did not defeat Roosevelt in 1940, he would resign as President of the CIO. Roosevelt won and Lewis did resign as President of the CIO, but continued as President of the United Mine Workers union. In 1948, Scholle led the Michigan CIO into the Democratic Party.

(Downs describes the weakness of the Democratic Party in 1946, when the

Michigan party needed to be revitalized following election of 21 Republican State Representatives from the traditionally Democratic Wayne County. Downs recalls Scholle being snubbed while testifying on legislation regarding unemployment compensation, and its role in his resolve to make the CIO active in the Democratic Party).

How Gus Scholle led the Michigan CIO into the Democratic Party

During the long hours driving between union meetings, Gus and I

“ Gus naturally operated boldly and directly, not by stealth. ”

discussed what the political role of labor should be. We concluded that trying to work within the Michigan Republican Party was a waste of time and limited resources.

Gus had several serious problems in leading the Michigan CIO members into the Democratic Party. First and foremost was the suspicion of rank and file members of the political process. The sayings, “keep the union out of politics and politics out of the union,” and, “don't trouble trouble until trouble troubles me,” expressed the attitude of many, if not most, union members.

In almost every speech, Walter Reuther, in his inimitable way, would stress the connection between “the ballot box and the bread box.” By the

1940s, an overwhelming majority of the union leadership and much of the rank and file saw the need for political action and realized in Michigan the practical means was joining and strengthening the Michigan Democratic Party.

But how? I had done some research for Gus. I showed him the building

“ Gus added, ‘How many of you [school teachers] are precinct delegates?’ Their response was a question: ‘What is a precinct delegate?’ ”

blocks of power within the Michigan Democratic Party were the elected precinct delegates.

Labor had two problems in publicly advocating going into the Democratic Party. One was that the publicity would alert the political opposition. Gus correctly preferred that CIO precinct delegate candidates run for office and surprise their opponents. The second problem was that publicly participating in the Democratic Party would subject labor to the charge that Gus Scholle was trying to steal the Democratic Party.

His primary objective was to have official policy of the CIO be to get involved in the Michigan Democratic Party. He wanted to minimize press criticism and not alert his political opponents to what he was doing. Gus naturally operated boldly and directly, not by stealth. Gus adopted the strategy of boldly stating his position in the Michigan CIO state convention.

He had the Michigan CIO Convention of June 1948 pass a resolution encouraging CIO members and their friends to run as Democratic precinct delegates. He appointed Ken Morris, UAW co-director of the east side of Detroit, chair of the Resolutions Committee. The language of the

A hitch occurred between the action of the Resolutions Committee and approval by the convention. Emil Mazey (a supporter of an Independent Labor Party), secretary-treasurer of the UAW and the highest official of the UAW who came to the convention to speak, told Gus he would have to

Photo by Mary Anne Ford



Tom Downs (right) was named Michigan's leading political lawyer in an MPHS survey. At a recent MPHS event, Downs and runner-up Richard McLellan shared stories.

resolution pertaining to electing precinct delegates read as follows:

Michigan CIO members are encouraged to cooperate with the American Federation of Labor, Railroad Brotherhoods, Americans for Democratic Action, and progressive elements within the Democratic Party with the immediate emphasis on the election of progressive precinct delegates to the Democratic Party and the selection of progressive candidates.

oppose the resolution. Gus asked me to meet with Emil and see if “something” could be worked out. I knew Gus and Emil were close friends. I also knew Emil accepted the conventional wisdom that both Harry Truman and G. Mennen (Soapy) Williams, gubernatorial candidate, would be defeated. Gus believed both Truman and Williams would win. We developed an additional clause for the resolution that satisfied both Emil and Gus. It resolved:

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Gus Scholle

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A thorough and objective study be made of the results of this policy in both the primary and general elections in Michigan, with the understanding if this program has been unsuccessful that the Michigan CIO then recommend to the national CIO Convention which meets in November 1948, that action be taken to unite the AF of L, Railroad Brotherhoods and other progressive groups for the formation of a new political party based upon a progressive political program and independent of existing political parties.

The resolution was adopted with the Mazey-Scholle Amendment. Gus' political intuition was correct. Neither the media nor the political opposition attacked Gus publicly for the Convention Resolution encouraging CIO members and their friends to become precinct delegates. Truman and Williams won. Gus was vindicated.

The Consequences of Gus Scholle Leading the Michigan CIO into the Democratic Party

Some consequences were short term, others long term. I well remember the day some outraged teachers met with Gus complaining that an incumbent Democratic official up for reelection was against public education. Gus asked, "Who is your candidate?" The teachers didn't have a candidate. Gus responded, "You can't beat someone with no one." Gus added, "How many of you are precinct delegates?" Their response was a question: "What is a precinct delegate?" Gus patiently answered and advised them to become precinct

delegates, be active in the Democratic Party and then come back and see him.

This they did. They went one step further. They formed an educators' caucus at the Democratic conventions. They didn't always get their candidates nominated, but no candidate against public education was nominated.

To prevent the selling of political endorsements by unscrupulous congressional district chairs, Gus Scholle and Neil Staebler developed the procedure of holding a *midnight caucus* the night before the convention.

Various groups in the Michigan Democratic Party formed caucuses—labor, African-American, women, educators, youth, and others. Any two delegates could form a caucus and have a meeting room assigned to them at the Democratic State Convention. Adelaide Hart, a member of the teachers union and later vice-chair of the Democratic Party, organized fashion shows to encourage women to be active.

(Downs recounts stories of tensions as the party grew and became more open)

To prevent the selling of political endorsements by unscrupulous congressional district chairs, Gus Scholle and Neil Staebler developed the procedure of holding a *midnight caucus* the night before the convention. Congressional district chairs and a few activists like me attended this caucus.

The purpose was to prepare a ticket balanced by race, gender and interest groups. At the first caucus, one unscrupulous district chair said, "I won't participate. I can't then make any deals on the floor of the convention." Neal Staebler responded in a stage whisper: "That is the purpose of the caucus."

Gus led a full, vigorous, curious and creative life. His devoted wife, Kathleen, died shortly before he died. He left two supportive daughters Susan Scholle Connor and Kathleen Scholle. In Michigan, Gus Scholle and Neil Staebler were the architects of a political confluence of the best of the labor movement with the best of the Democratic Party. ■

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Michigan Hall of Justice is Setting for MPHS Book Talk: *A Matter of Right*

by Mary Anne Ford

Political historian Charles Harmon, author of *A Matter of Right: A History of the Michigan Court of Appeals* spoke to an audience of political history and court watchers at the MPHS sponsored event on August 12 at the Michigan Hall of Justice in Lansing. Harmon's book was commissioned by the court and produced by the Michigan Historical Center

“**Persons and institutions simply do not make a habit of organizing materials for historical purposes.**”

Foundation with assistance from *Michigan History Magazine*.

While the book offers insight on the court's history and administration, Harmon's talk also highlighted the rewards and obstacles inherent in political history research. The court's Chief Judge, William Whitbeck, approached Harmon to write the history, which many feared losing to retirements and to deaths of some early members.

Harmon's research included 35 interviews, examination of court records and statistics, review of the Constitutional Convention proceedings and inspection of state documents and records at the State Library. The court's first clerk, Ron Dzerbicki, had produced annual reports that made Harmon's research on the first 10 years fairly simple. After that, he found information related to the court's operation was harder to access.

“Persons and institutions simply do not make a habit of organizing materials for historical purposes,” Harmon noted during his talk.

Learning about the court's operations was important, but Harmon needed

information about the people. “Political history is political biography,” he said. “The history of the court was no exception. With all of the successes and problems that the book deals with, the book is about people – from Con Con to today.”

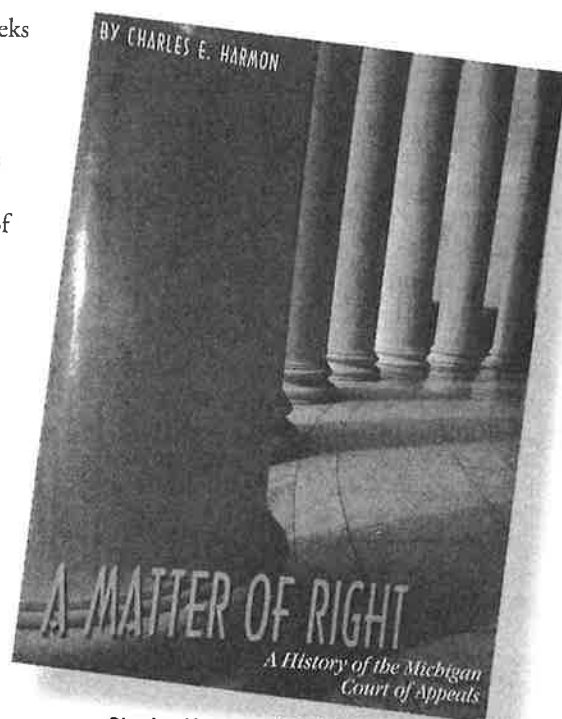
The court organized in eight weeks following election of the first nine judges in 1964, and the Republican leaning court picked Democrat T. John Lesinski to lead the court in its first years. On the court's first day, 365 cases were waiting; by the end of the year 1,200 cases had been filed. Since 1964, the size of the court has grown – from nine to 28 judges – and voters have acted to allow appointment of judges when vacancies occur mid-term. Harmon shared his insights on these organizational issues and on crises facing the court. The most notable one, Harmon suggested, was the 1975 Supreme Court ruling that appeals to the court as a matter of right extended to guilty pleas in felonies. That

“**Political history is political biography... With all of the successes and problems that the book deals with, the book is about people – from Con Con to today.**”

ruling led to a 24 percent jump in the number of cases the first year and continued to keep the court, in Judge Harold Hood's words, “awash in cases.” In 1994, voters did away with the right to appeal guilty pleas.

Harmon said that, for him, the first

decade of the court was the most interesting. He cited “The method in which the court was created by the Constitutional Convention, including the trade off after the convention agreed not to elect the Supreme Court from



Charles Harmon's book talk recounted research challenges as well as insights into the administration of the Michigan Court of Appeals.

districts, and the inclusion of the language making one appeal in all civil and criminal cases ‘a matter of right.’”

Harmon said that language also led to an important decision about the book. “One afternoon I called Roger Rosentreter, who edited the book, and suggested we meet to discuss a title for the book. When I arrived with my idea, he said he had one as well. We sat across from each other with our titles concealed on pads and then turned them around. We both had the same title – *A Matter of Right*.” ■

From the President – Barbara J. Sawyer-Koch



Barbara J. Sawyer-Koch

The MPHS has had an extremely active program agenda for the current year. We have achieved increasing levels of attendance and participation at all events and have received excellent ratings for the quality of both the programs and the reception appetizers and desserts. The fact that we are now being sought as the sponsor of events related to political history is a tribute to the organization.

As we maintain our strategy of pricing events at a “break-even” point, your continued membership helps to sustain the newsletter. If you have not yet renewed your membership, please consider doing so and encourage others to consider joining as well.

The *Michigan Political History News* undergoes a change with this issue. To allow more time with her other professional and personal tasks, our previous

Editor, **Delores Rauscher**, has temporarily retired as Editor. Delores brought new levels of professionalism to the *MPHS News* and we appreciate the fine research and quality she achieved during her two-year tenure as Editor.

One of the issues she produced reported on the MPHS member survey of leaders in Michigan politics, the results of which were noted in *Gongwer* and the *Detroit News*. Our new Editor, **Mary Anne Ford**, has focused on many of the top leaders identified when developing this Winter 2003-2004 issue: Emil Lockwood, Gus Scholle, Tom Downs, George Weeks, and others.

Also featured in this issue is another former editor of the *Michigan Political History News* – Charles Harmon, whose book, “A Matter of Right: A History of the Michigan Court of Appeals” was featured at an August MPHS event at the Hall of Justice.

We encourage past, current and future leaders in Michigan politics to write articles for *MPHS News*. For detailed information on submissions,

send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the editor, Mary Anne Ford, 217 Abbott Woods Drive, East Lansing, MI 48823. You can also request the information electronically at manneford@att.net.

Coming Events

Join MPHS at coming events exploring events and people that shaped Michigan's politics and government.

Members can learn more about the history of the Michigan Supreme Court and visit the state's largest Abraham Lincoln exhibit on January 8, when former Attorney General Frank Kelley and U.S. Court of Appeals Judge James Ryan will moderate discussion of the court's history at the Plymouth Historical Museum.

A tribute to the contributions of women in political leadership and policy-making roles is being planned for spring, 2004.

Members will receive more information on these and other events in the mail.

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