

Michigan Political History Society NEWS

Vol. 6, No. 3

Michigan Political History Society • P.O. Box 4684 • East Lansing, MI 48826-4684

Winter 1999

January 25 MPHS event...

The transformation of the MEA: from professional association to political powerhouse

When Governor George Romney signed the Michigan Public Employee Relations Act in 1965, he set in motion events that caused the Michigan Education Association (MEA) to undergo a major change. In the late 1960s and '70s, the MEA transformed itself from a staid professional association of educators to a teachers' union with impressive political clout.

Four panelists will share their experiences of this tumultuous time. Attorney Ted Swift represented the MEA and many of its locals during this time period. Teacher strikes brought Swift into many colorful confrontations with the Governor's office and the courts.

Al Short, currently the Director of Governmental Affairs at the

MEA, was a classroom teacher during this time of change.

Two prominent multi-client lobbyists, Pat Laughlin and Dennis Muchmore cut their political teeth with the MEA in the '60s and '70s. Laughlin was an MEA Uniserve Director serving "Downriver" teachers in Wayne County. Muchmore was a teacher in the Warren School District in Macomb County. He also served as an MEA local officer and took his district's teachers out on strike.

The MPHS event will begin with a short documentary film, about this time period, produced by the MEA, followed by the panel's discussion.

The registration fee is \$20 for MPHS members and \$25 for non-members. Please make checks payable to Michigan Political History Society and mail them to MPHS, P.O. Box 4684, East Lansing, MI 48826-4684.

***The transformation of
the MEA: from professional
association to political
powerhouse***

January 25, 2000

**Michigan Chamber of Commerce
Conference Center
600 South Walnut Street, Lansing**

**Reception-5:30 p.m., Program-6:00 p.m.,
Afterglow-7:30 p.m.**

Call 517-371-7653 to register

Michigan's top political leaders of the past 50 years

Tom Downs and Bob LaBrant sat down recently and put together the following list of individuals who have left their mark on Michigan's political history over the past half century. The leaders are listed by decade of predominant influence. Please use the list to stimulate your memory as we invite you to fill out the "Hall of Fame" ballot on page 4. Write in your choices of the most outstanding Michiganians in each category. Please note a person is eligible to be named in only one category.

1. Governor

1950s G. Mennen Williams
1960s George Romney
1970s William Milliken
1980s James Blanchard
1990s John Engler

2. Department directors

1950s James Miller
1960s Glenn Allen
1970s Jerry Miller
1980s Bob Bowman
1990s Doug Roberts

3. Jurists

1950s John Dethmers
1960s T. John Lesinski
1970s Tom Brennan
1980s Bob Danhof
1990s Dorothy Comstock Riley

4. Other elected statewide officers

1950s Jim Hare
1960s Frank Kelley
1970s Richard Austin
1980s Martha Griffiths
1990s Connie Binsfeld

5. Local elected officials

1950s Orville Hubbard
1960s Jerome Cavanaugh
1970s Coleman Young
1980s L. Brooks Patterson
1990s Ed McNamara

6. Democratic campaign managers/political consultants

1950s Helen Bernicot
1960s Adelaide Hart
1970s Mildred Jeffrey
1980s Rick Weiner
1990s Ken Brock

7. Republican campaign managers/political consultants

1950s Larry Lindemer
1960s Art Elliott
1970s Joyce Braithwaite
1980s Tom Shields
1990s Dan Pero

8. Liberals

1950s George Sallade
1960s Perry Bullard
1970s Mary Brown
1980s Lana Pollock
1990s Lynn Johndahl

9. State party chairs

1950s Neil Stabler
1960s Elly Peterson
1970s Morey Winegrad
1980s Spencer Abraham
1990s Betsy DeVos

10. Labor leaders

1950s Gus Scholle
1960s Bill Marshall
1970s Keith Geiger
1980s Sam Fishman
1990s Frank Garrison

11. Conservatives

1950s Richard Durant
1960s D. Hale Brake
1970s Bob Huber
1980s Jack Welborn
1990s Larry Reed

12. Press secretaries

1950s Paul Weber
1960s Chuck Harmon
1970s George Weeks
1980s Rick Cole
1990s John Truscott

Continued

Michigan's top political leaders *(continued)*

13. Hell raisers

1950s Lou Gordon
1960s Zolton Ferency
1970s Bob Tisch
1980s Barbara Listing
1990s Patrick Anderson

14. Association leaders

1950s John Lovett
1960s Gil Haley
1970s Mike Franck
1980s Pat Laughlin
1990s James Barrett

15. Multi-client lobbyists

1950s Bill Doyle
1960s Tom Cleary
1970s Jimmy Karoub
1980s Jerry Coomes
1990s Dennis Muchmore

16. Political lawyers

1950s Ted Sachs
1960s Richard VanDusen
1970s Tom Downs
1980s Richard McLellan
1990s John Pirich

17. African-American political leaders

1950s Robert Mellander
1960s Charles Diggs
1970s Damon Keith
1980s Dennis Archer
1990s Morris Hood

18. Federal officials

1950s Charles Wilson
1960s Robert McNamara
1970s Gerald Ford
1980s Dave Stockman
1990s Peter Secchia

19. Political pollsters

1950s Fred Currier
1960s Walt DeVries
1970s Bob Teeter
1980s Alex Gage
1990s Ed Sarpolus

20. Political reporters

1950s Bill Kulsea
1960s Bob Longstaff
1970s Hugh McDermid
1980s Tim Skubick
1990s Bill Ballenger

21. Female public officials

1950s Ruth Thompson
1960s Lorraine Beebe
1970s Mary Coleman
1980s Teola Hunter
1990s Debbie Stabenow

22. Federal lawmakers

1950s Arthur Vandenburg
1960s Phil Hart
1970s Bob Griffin
1980s John Dingell
1990s Dave Bonior

23. GOP state representatives

1950s Allison Green
1960s Bob Waldron
1970s Dennis Cawthone
1980s Bill Bryant
1990s Paul Hillegonds

24. GOP state senators

1950s Ed Hutchinson
1960s Charlie Zollar
1970s Emil Lockwood
1980s Dick Posthumus
1990s Joe Schwarz

25. Single issue group leaders

1950s Clark Brody
1960s Dorothy Judd
1970s Doug Ross
1980s Tom Washington
1990s Sister Monica Kostielney

26. Business executives

1950s Ed Cushman
1960s Steve Nesbitt
1970s Max Fisher
1980s Richard Headlee
1990s Dick DeVos

27. DEM state representatives

1950s Ed Cary
1960s Joe Kowalski
1970s Bill Ryan
1980s Gary Owen
1990s Curtis Hertel

28. DEM state senators

1950s Garland Lane
1960s Roger Craig
1970s Basil Brown
1980s Bill Faust
1990s Art Miller

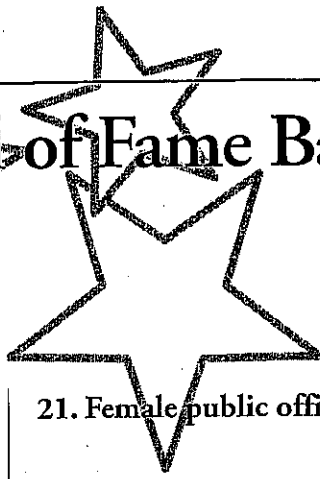
29. Labor lobbyists

1950s Otto Wendell
1960s Clint Fair
1970s Harold Julian
1980s Al Short
1990s Daryl Tennis

30. All others

1950s John Hannah
1960s John Swainson
1970s Bobby Crim
1980s Bernie Apol
1990s Dominic Jacobetti

Michigan Political History Hall of Fame Ballot



Write in your choices of the top Michiganians of political significance over the past 50 years. Please choose one person in each of the following categories:

1. Governor

2. Department director

3. Jurist

4. Other elected statewide officer

5. Local elected official

6. Democratic campaign manager/political consultant

7. Republican campaign manager/political consultant

8. Liberal

9. State party chair

10. Labor leader

11. Conservative

12. Press secretary

13. Hell raiser

14. Association leader

15. Multi-client lobbyist

16. Political lawyer

17. African-American political leader

18. Federal official

19. Political pollster

20. Political reporter

21. Female public official

22. Federal lawmaker

23. GOP state representative

24. GOP state senator

25. Single issue group leader

26. Business executive

27. DEM state representative

28. DEM state senator

29. Labor lobbyist

30. All other

Return to MPHS, P.O. Box 4684, East Lansing, MI 48826-4684

MPHS video features Glenn Allen

The Michigan Political History Society has videotaped an oral history featuring retired Court of Appeals Judge Glenn Allen.

Allen, a native of Kalamazoo, graduated from University High School and Kalamazoo College. He went to law school at Columbia University in New York City. After serving as a law clerk to two Michigan Supreme Court justices, Allen won a seat on the Kalamazoo City Council. With the outbreak of World War II, Allen went into the Army as a private and rose to the rank of captain in the Judge Advocate Generals Corps. He served with the 94th Infantry Division in Europe and under General George Patton during the Battle of the Bulge.

Returning to civilian life, Allen served as mayor of Kalamazoo from 1951 to 1959. He was president of the Michigan Municipal League in 1959. In 1960, Allen became an officer in George Romney's

group Citizens for Michigan which promoted a new constitution convention. In 1961,



after voters approved a call for a new convention, Allen ran and was elected delegate from Kalamazoo County to the 1961-62 Constitutional Convention.

In 1963, newly-elected Governor George Romney named Allen state comptroller and budget director, a post he held through the Romney administration and into the Milliken administration.

In 1970, Governor Milliken named Allen his legal adviser

and, in 1974, appointed him to the Michigan Court of Appeals to succeed John Fitzgerald who was elevated to the Michigan Supreme Court. Allen was re-elected to the Court of Appeals in 1974 and 1980. In 1986, having passed the constitutional age limit of 70, he was ineligible to seek re-election. Allen continues to serve as a designated judge on the Court of Appeals and as a visiting circuit judge in his "retirement."

Tom Downs, who served with Allen as a delegate to the constitutional convention, interviewed Judge Allen for the MPHS video. To borrow the video, contact Joyce Crum at 517-336-5742.

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is published three times each year
by the Michigan Political
History Society,
P.O. Box 4684,
East Lansing, MI 48826-4684

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Looking back at Michigan political history

By Chuck Harmon

33 years ago:

It was 1966 and George Romney was seeking his third term as governor. Under Michigan's new constitution, Romney's third term would be the first four-year term in Michigan's history. It was a period of Romney's peak political popularity, both in the state and nationally and nobody, but the staunchest Democrat, would place a bet on his opponent, Democratic State Chairman Zolton Ferency.

The national media was covering the state with the proverbial blanket, in part because Romney was a leading presidential prospect and also because of Ferency's outspoken nature. The only real issue at question was how badly Romney would beat Ferency. Then Elly Peterson, state GOP chair and fierce Romney loyalist, told a visiting columnist that in order for Romney to be considered seriously for the presidential nomination in 1968, he would have to beat Ferency by at least 500,000 votes.

It was in cold print the next day and suddenly the campaign intensified. Romney was running against a hypothetical vote count instead of his true opponent, Ferency. Romney won by 527,047 votes satisfying, at least temporarily, the skeptics.

Earlier in the year, U.S. Senator Patrick McNamara died and Romney named Congressman Robert Griffin to the post. The Dems thought they had a good chance to retain the post, and former Governor G. Mennen Williams and Detroit Mayor Jerry Cavanaugh squared off. It was a bitterly fought contest, finally won by Williams, who had taken ill during the primary. The carry over from that contest, combined with Romney's coattails, elected Griffin congressman by nearly 300,000 votes.

43 years ago:

It was 1956 and G. Mennen ("Soapy") Williams had decided to seek his fifth term as governor of Michigan. Like Romney 10 years later, Williams was reaching a point of top popularity. He had carried in the entire Democratic state slate for the first time in 1954 and he was a favored potential presidential candidate.

At the Democratic national convention in Chicago that summer the party's presidential nominee, Adlai Stevenson, threw open the selection of his running mate to the delegates. The top candidates included John Kennedy, Estes Kefauver, Hubert Humphrey and Albert Gore, Sr., all of them United States Senators. The ensuing floor battle narrowed the choices down to Kennedy and Kefauver. Fearing that a Kennedy candidacy would hurt Michigan Democrats with some lost labor and farm votes, Williams is credited with convincing Humphrey to support Kefauver, who won the nomination.

At the November election, Michigan's voters did what they have done several times in the state's election history; they split their ballots in the presidential and gubernatorial elections. President Dwight Eisenhower and Vice President Richard Nixon defeated the Stevenson-Kefauver ticket by some 353,000 votes, while Williams defeated Detroit Mayor Albert Cobo by 290,000 votes. The rest of the Democratic ticket won.

Did Kennedy remember Williams' opposition when, four years later, he failed to select "Soapy" as a member of his presidential cabinet and sent him instead to Africa as an assistant secretary of state? Probably not, but then again...

Continued

53 years ago:

It was 1946 and Harry Kelley, who was finishing his second term as governor, had decided not to seek a third term. The establishment choice to succeed him was Lt. Governor Vernon Brown, a 72-year-old Mason newspaper publisher and veteran Republican office holder.

Then Kimber (Kim) Sigler, the brash, flamboyant, 52-year-old lawyer out of Hastings came along. Sigler was a special prosecutor who had attacked graft in the state legislature with varying degrees of success and major press attention. The late political writer William Kulsea's described Sigler this way: "On a stump, he was good vaudeville...He had 21 suits, wore wide-brimmed hats, Chesterfield top-coats with velvet collars, white piping adorned his vests, and blue and grey colored suits and flaming ties were his choice. He dazzled the voters with promises of crook-free Lansing...."

Sigler beat Brown by some 48,000 votes in the GOP primary, then soundly whipped former governor Murray Van Wagoner in the general election. A maverick without a lasting political base, he served for two years.

In another noteworthy election in 1946, Arthur Vandenberg won his fourth term in the United States Senate, beating James Lee by more than 300,000 votes.

63 years ago:

It was 1936 and Governor Frank Fitzgerald was a candidate for re-election. But it was also a presidential election year and Franklin Delano Roosevelt had decided to strengthen his chances in Michigan.

Roosevelt's candidate to oppose Fitzgerald was Frank Murphy. Murphy, 43, had been in the Philippines since 1933, first as governor-general, then high commissioner. A native of Harbor Beach, he had been a Detroit Recorder's Court judge, then mayor of Detroit before going overseas. He finally agreed to return to Michigan and run.

Murphy had a few strikes against him including his Roman Catholicism, a fact not readily accepted in

farm belt Michigan. But Fitzgerald, a machine Republican, did not run an exemplary campaign against the Democratic contender. Sidney Fine, in his excellent three-volume biography of Murphy, said Fitzgerald was a "lackluster campaigner at best." Murphy was also helped by a campaign visit to Detroit by FDR in mid-October.

In the final analysis it was Roosevelt who helped Murphy, not vice versa. FDR beat Alf Landon by more than 500,000 votes while Murphy defeated Fitzgerald by 48,919 votes.

Also in 1936, the U.S. Senate race saw the end of James Couzens' political career. Couzens had served in the Senate since 1922. Essentially an independent, the Republican Couzens—who toyed with changing parties—had endorsed Roosevelt. He was soundly whipped by former governor Wilbur Brucker in the primary. Brucker, in turn, lost to Prentiss M. Brown of St. Ignace. Couzens died on October 22, a few days after leaving a hospital bed to campaign with Roosevelt.

MPHS annual meeting set for February 26

The 7th Annual MPHS Membership Meeting will be held on **Saturday, February 26**, at 9:00 a.m., at the Michigan State Medical Society, 120 West Saginaw, East Lansing.

Special progress reports, planning for the coming year and election of members of the Board of Directors and Officers will highlight the meeting agenda.

The following board member's terms will expire in 2000:

Mary Brown	Sharman Moore
Charles Harmon	Mark Murray
Kevin A. Kelly	John J.H. Schwarz, M.D.
Robert LaBrant	

Formal notice will be sent to all members prior to the meeting. Please mark your calendars now and plan to attend.

The 1982 Democratic Gubernatorial Primary Field



Six 1982 Democratic gubernatorial primary opponents face off. From left to right are James Blanchard, Zolton Ferency, William Fitzgerald, Kerry Kammer, Edward Pierce, David Plawecki and John Safran.

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