

# Michigan Political History Society NEWS

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Winter 2005

## Michigan Political History Hosts “An Evening of Tribute to Frank J. Kelley”

by Sharon Castle and Chris De Witt

*“Democracy and zealotry are incompatible and democracy cannot survive continued antagonism of zealotry. It doesn’t make a difference if zealotry is from the left or the right of the political spectrum. All views in a democracy sooner or later have to be compromised for the common good. Our forefathers knew this. Men like Jefferson and Hamilton were miles apart philosophically but they knew they had to compromise for the common good and they did so in our constitution and bill of rights. So in closing I just call upon my good friends from both parties who are here tonight and those that couldn’t make it to fight to preserve the best elements of our democracy and move our great experience of freedom forward with good will towards all.”*

Frank J. Kelley – Attorney General  
Served January 2, 1962-December 31, 1998

The Michigan Political History Society honored former Attorney General Frank J. Kelley at a dinner, November 10th at the Lansing Country Club. Showing the same vision and keen insight in which he served Michigan as Attorney General for thirty-seven years, he concluded the evening with the above quote.

The event’s speakers included: Reverend Monsignor Louis Cappo, Dennis Cawthorne, First Gentleman Dan Mulhern, Lou Anna Simon, Leon Cohan, Peter Fletcher, Frank Garrison, George Perles, Frank E. Kelley, State Representative Gretchen Whitmer, Ron Thayer, and Justice Michael F. Cavanagh. Judge James L. Ryan served as the evening’s Master of Ceremonies.

Kelley’s son, Frank E. provided a window into the early events that shaped the life of a man devoted to public service. And while many speakers cited Kelley’s infamous battles with utilities companies on behalf of the public, the number of event sponsors and audience members representing utilities clearly indicated the respect Kelley earned as the “Eternal” Attorney General. Speakers described Kelley as a “tireless

worker,” “advocate for the people,” and the epitome of a true statesman. During his thirty-seven years as Attorney General, Kelley was legal counsel for five Michigan



**Planners of the evening’s tribute join Frank Kelley. From left, event co-chairs Thomas Cleary and Sister Monica Kostielney; MPHS President Kevin Kelly.**

*Continued on page 3*

## From the MPHS President Kevin A. Kelly

As MPHS continues to bring to life events, presentations and issues that have “altered and illuminated” Michigan political history, I am very pleased to serve as President along with Dave Murley, Vice President and Carol Conn, Secretary/Treasurer.

MPHS has come a long way under the leadership of past-presidents Sharman Moore, Bob LaBrant, Peter Kuhnmuensch, Barbara Sawyer-Koch and I hope we can bring MPHS to a new level of activity and education.

The Frank J. Kelley Tribute allowed MPHS to replenish its coffers with an eye toward having the capital to develop new member programs, oral histories of Michigan’s political personalities, expand membership development, and provide proper administrative support to MPHS. Please give your suggestions for events, oral histories, etc., to any board member or myself. (See page 2, for board member names.)

Our first ten years have produced a rich texture and exposure of Michigan’s political history.

Onward to MPHS’ next 10 years!

# MPHS Remembers Three Who Made History

by Mary Anne Ford

As we compiled this issue of *MPHS News*, we learned of the deaths of three individuals who played unique roles in Michigan politics.

Richard Headlee, 1982 gubernatorial candidate and champion of constitutional amendments affecting taxes and legislative terms, died November 9, 2004 at his home in Utah. He was 74.



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Mary Anne Ford

Headlee's name will long be associated with the 1978 constitutional amendment that limits state taxes to a proportion of personal income, prohibits local government from imposing new taxes without voter approval and bans the state from imposing unfunded programs on local government. In 1992, Headlee was a key figure in passage of the constitutional amendment imposing term limits on Michigan elected officials.

The impact of both amendments continues to be felt throughout the state, and many credit Headlee's fiscal policies with reshaping the Republican party into a more conservative party during the 1980s and beyond. Friends and colleagues remembered Headlee as a champion for taxpayers and for accountability in government.

Frank Fitzgerald, former State Representative, and Financial and Insurance Services Commissioner died December 9, 2004. He was 49.

Public officials and colleagues throughout the state shared their sorrow over Fitzgerald's untimely death, praising his commitment to sound public policy, his family's legacy of service, and his civil approach to the political process. "Frank Fitzgerald was an honorable human being who upheld a long-standing family tradition of public service with honor and distinction," said Governor Granholm in a statement. "In an era when politics and government are too often rife with partisanship, he stood out as a true model of civility."

Fitzgerald followed a family tradition of public service. His father was a Michigan Supreme Court justice; his grandfather was twice elected governor, and his great-grandfather served in the House of Representatives, serving the same district that elected Fitzgerald to the seat that he held from 1987-1998. Fitzgerald was appointed as Michigan Insurance Commissioner in 1999, and as Financial and Insurance Services Commissioner in 2000. In 2003, he resigned his post to join the private sector as managing partner of the Clark Hill law firm.

Joseph Forbes, former mayor of Oak Park, state representative, and House Majority Floor Leader died December 21, 2004. He was 88.

Forbes was mayor of Oak Park from 1958 to 1970, and was elected from Oak Park to the House of Representatives from 1970 to 1984. He was the House majority floor leader from 1975 to 1981.

Oak Park residents remember Forbes' work to fashion an agreement locating the extension of Interstate 696 north of 10 Mile Road, protecting Oak Park synagogues from displacement by the new freeway. Forbes was also a key figure in passage of Michigan's Consumer Protection Act. Those who worked with him as majority floor leader remember the engaging style he brought to his duties as the chamber's calendar manager. "Joe Forbes was more than a floor leader," observed a former legislative staffer, "he was an emcee." ■

## Get Active with MPHS

### MPHS Announces Annual Meeting Date

Attend the 2005 Annual Membership Meeting, Saturday April 23 at 9:30 a.m. at the Michigan State Medical Society, 120 W. Saginaw, East Lansing. Please call Joyce Crum at (517)336-5742, or send her an email message at [jcrum@msms.org](mailto:jcrum@msms.org) if you plan to attend.

## Order Your 2003-2004 Michigan Manual

Political history buffs can order their Michigan Manual for 2003-2004. This handbook is a valuable source of historic information, and features facts on Michigan's history, elected officials, state agencies, colleges and universities, and system of government. Copies are for sale at \$25.00 and can be ordered from the Legislative Service Bureau business office, P.O. Box 30036, Lansing, MI 48909. Or, visit the bureau's website at [www.mileg.org](http://www.mileg.org) to order online.

## Tribute, *Continued from page 1*

Governors and worked with seven United States Presidents. Most remarkable were the stories of Kelley's friendship and mentoring.

Good humor and camaraderie were woven throughout the night; at one point, Master of Ceremonies Honorable James L. Ryan stated he had never seen a room so full of Democrats and Republicans working together. Others spoke of Kelley's successful entrée into the private sector after years of public service joking that he was finally receiving appropriate compensation. The highlight of the evening was long-time friend, Peter Fletcher's delightful rendition of a Gilbert and Sullivan tune and his final quote by the 17th Century philosopher in the Court of Louis the XIV, "A true friend



Courtesy of Tom Farrell

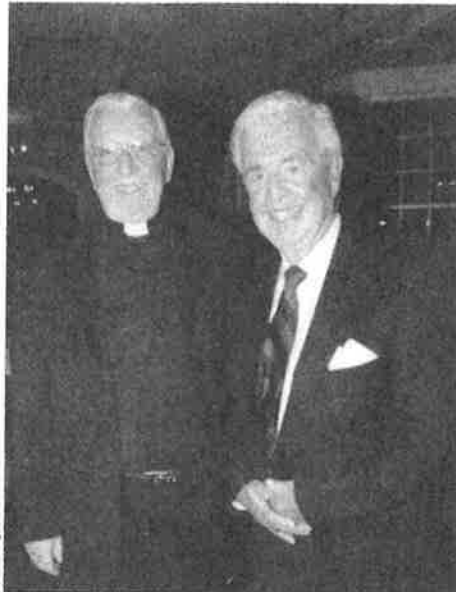
**Long time friend, Peter Fletcher, delighted Kelley and the audience with a musical tribute in the tune and tradition of Gilbert and Sullivan.**

is the greatest of all treasures. Frank, you are my greatest treasure."

True to form, Kelley began his closing remarks with accolades for others. He spoke of lifelong friendships and a passion for public service, which was inspired by his late father. The full house gave Kelley a standing ovation.

## Oral History

MPHS has just produced a new oral history, featuring an interview with Attorney General Frank Kelley, conducted by his friend and colleague, Leon Cohan and introduced by MPHS board member Tom Cleary. To borrow the CD, contact Joyce Crum at (517) 336-5742 or at [jcrum@msms.org](mailto:jcrum@msms.org).



Courtesy of Tom Farrell

**Among the many friends to share stories of Kelley's friendship and service was the Reverend Monsignor Louis Cappo, pictured here with Kelley.**

Generous supporters of the event included: Accident Fund Insurance Company of America, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, DTE Energy, Ford Motor Company, Michigan Retailers Association, Michigan State Medical Society, Consumers Energy, De Witt Communications, Dow Chemical Company, Joe and Jerry Sutton – Sutton Advisors, Kelley Cawthorne PLLC, Michigan Ophthalmological Society, and Public Sector Consultants.

Joining event Co-chairs Sister Monica Kostielney and Thomas Cleary were committee members Pat

Anderson, Carol Conn, Tony Derezinski, Chris De Witt, Tom Farrell, Kelly Keenan, Kevin Kelly, Roberta Stanley and Joe Sutton. Event Intern Coordinators were Angela Epolito and Ian Randall.

*The authors are owners of De Witt Communications, a public relations firm specializing in communications strategies.* ■

## First Ten Years, *Continued from page 4*

During our fifth anniversary year in 1999, MPHS News editor Chuck Harmon, one of Michigan's best political historians, observed in the newsletter, "If there's another organization like this one in the country, I'm not aware of it. We're doing things nobody else has done." ■

## Oral Histories

The MPHS has taped interviews with many notable political figures. To borrow and view one of these oral histories, contact Joyce Crum at (517) 336-5742, or at [jcrum@msms.org](mailto:jcrum@msms.org).

### Glenn S. Allen,

Retired Court of Appeals Judge  
Interviewed by Tom Downs  
November 22, 1999

### Irv Bluestone, Retired VP, UAW

Interviewed by Tom Downs  
April 22, 1995

### Judge Robert Danhof

Interviewed by Bob LaBrant  
September 20, 2001

### Tom Downs, Attorney at Law

Interviewed by Robert LaBrant  
August 21, 1995

### Douglas Fraser, Former President, UAW

Interviewed by Tom Downs  
April 8, 1995

### Robert P. Griffin

Interviewed by Dennis Cawthorne  
July 25, 1996

### Adelaide Hart

Interviewed by Tom Downs  
June 26, 1995

### Mildred Jeffery, Community Activist

Interviewed by Tom Downs  
December 28, 1995

### Elly Peterson

Interviewed by Bill Ballenger  
May 1, 1995

### Robert E. Waldron,

Former Speaker of the House  
Interviewed by John Kerekes  
August 11, 2000

# Our First Ten Years

by Mary Anne Ford

The Michigan Political History Society observed its ten-year anniversary in 2004. The November tribute to Frank Kelley raised funds for MPHS to continue to sponsor events that educate and illuminate, to document the contributions of leading political figures through oral histories, to work with organizations on activities that are consistent with our mission and to communicate with members through a regular newsletter.

At the Annual Membership Meeting in March 2004, outgoing President Barbara J. Sawyer-Koch observed, "In reviewing the events and activities of the past ten years, it is clear that we are meeting our mission and objectives. It is especially gratifying to receive multiple requests from outside of the organization seeking the Michigan Political History Society as the 'venue of choice' to present programs consistent with our mission."

There may be a few MPHS members too young to recall the first MPHS event in November 1993, a book talk on *Three Bullets*

*Sealed His Lips*, presented by coauthors Larry Ziewacz and Bruce Rubenstein at the English Inn on M-99 in Eaton Rapids, near the site of the book's subject, the 1945 assassination of Senator Warren Hooper. The following year, Sawyer-Koch recalled, "the Bylaws establishing the Michigan Political History Society,

“ \_\_\_\_\_  
We're doing things nobody else  
has done.  
\_\_\_\_\_ ”

prepared by attorney Tom Downs, were signed by Kevin Kelly on February 1, 1994, showing Sharman Moore as the resident agent and the Association's Charter President. It is fitting to recognize these three individuals as the cornerstones of what has become a vital organization serving the citizens of Michigan."

Dozens of events sponsored by MPHS reflect the range of our members' interest and

knowledge, and the richness of people and events that have shaped our political history. These events have paid tribute to political legends Tom Downs, Millie Jeffery, and Frank Kelley. They have offered insights into some of Michigan's most popular political personalities, through reflections on the careers of Governors Romney and Williams, and United States Senators Hart and Vandenburg. They have explored the events that shaped our political history—from the 1963 Constitutional Conventions to the 1983 recalls, and examined the organizations and institutions that have sought to influence public policy. Michigan political historians have given MPHS members the first look at their books and research work examining these people and events in detail.

In cooperation with MGTV, MPHS has taped and archived many events, and interviews with many political figures have been recorded in a series of oral histories. (See the accompanying list on page 3.)

*Continued on page 3*

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

## MICHIGAN POLITICAL HISTORY SOCIETY 2005 Membership Application

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

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Enclosed is my check for membership in the amount of:

- \$10.00 Student Membership – Annual  
 \$30.00 Regular Membership – Annual  
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