2007 Michigan Recreation and Park Association Hall of Fame Banquet

Thursday, October 11th
Summit on the Park
Canton, MI

Creating community through people, parks and programs
The 2007 Class of the MRPA Hall of Fame

Thomas Chappelle  
~Sterling Heights~

David Ewalt  
~Pontiac~

Anthony Filippis, Sr.  
~Wright and Filippis~

Kerry Kammer  
~Former State Senator~  
(Clarkston)

Charles Oxley  
~Ann Arbor~

William Sherman  
~Huron–Clinton Metropolitan Authority~

Kenneth Smithee  
~Genesee County~

Thomas Washington  
~Michigan United Conservation Clubs~

2007 MRPA Hall of Fame Banquet

Welcome  
Bruce Ross, MRPA President

Invocation  
Hurley Coleman, Master of Ceremonies

~DINNER~

Introduction of Dignitaries  
Hurley Coleman, Master of Ceremonies

History of Establishing the MRPA Hall of Fame  
Mike Maisner, MRPA Executive Director

~INDUCTION CEREMONIES~

Announcements  
Hurley Coleman, Master of Ceremonies

Special Thanks to our Host  
Bruce Ross, MRPA President

Tour of the MRPA Hall of Fame  
Bruce Ross, MRPA President  
Stu Alderman, MRPA Hall of Fame Committee Chair  
Mike Maisner, MRPA Executive Director

~DESSERT~
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~DESSERT~
### 2005 Inductees
- Dr. Jim Bristor
  ~Michigan State University~
- Harry Burns
  ~Grand Rapids~
- Arch Flannery
  ~Battle Creek~
- Herb Jennings
  ~Litchfield~
- Hubert Johnson
  ~Detroit~
- David Laidlaw
  ~Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority~
- Lawrence (Pete) Moser
  ~Kalamazoo~
- Virginia Munger
  ~Detroit~
- Karla V. Parker
  ~Grand Rapids~
- R. Eric Reickel
  ~Oakland County/ Lansing~
- Jesse Rutherford
  ~Ypsilanti~
- Joe Seavey
  ~Michigan Department of Natural Resources~
- Benjamin Yack
  ~Wyandotte~

### 2006 Inductees
- Jim Beers
  ~Michigan Department of Natural Resources~
- Jim Bruce
  ~Flint~
- John Considine
  ~Detroit~
- Jack Golden
  ~Eastpointe~
- William Kreger
  ~Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority~
- Harold Myron
  ~Highland Park~
- Jim Perry
  ~Royal Oak/Oak Park~
- James Reid
  ~Hamtramck/Midland~
- Henry Schubert
  ~Dearborn~
- Lewis Wint
  ~Oakland County~

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**Michigan Recreation and Park Association**

The Following are the names and corresponding years of the organization from its inception until the present. These acronyms are utilized throughout this program.

- **MRA** (1938-1958) Michigan Recreation Association
- **RAM** (1959-1965) Recreation Association of Michigan
- **MRPA** (1966) Michigan Recreation and Parks Association
- **MRPA** (1967– Present) Michigan Recreation and Park Association
- **NRPA** (1966– Present) National Recreation and Park Association

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**Your Help is Needed!**

The Hall of Fame Committee rigorously attempted to find significant professional information about inductees. We were limited because of the passage of time and the lack of records in our research of historic information. We will continually strive to enhance the background information, both personal and professional, of our inductees. We encourage family members, friends and colleagues to assist in this endeavor enabling us to maintain the integrity of the information being processed.
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Thomas Chappelle

Thomas (Tom) L. Chappelle’s professional career began when he became a Recreation Leader and then Community Center Supervisor in Detroit (1957). His organization and administrative skills were recognized early resulting in his becoming Deputy Superintendent- Parks, Recreation and Forestry, Oak Park, MI; Director of Parks and Recreation- Sterling Heights, MI; and retiring as Director of Community Services, Parks, Recreation and Library, Sterling Heights MI (1994). Tom served our profession for over 37 years.

Tom received his undergraduate degree from Wayne State University, B.S. degree in Recreation, an MA degree in Recreation and Park Administration from Central Michigan University. In addition, he attended the NRPA Revenue Management School, was a guest lecturer at Central Michigan University as well as Wayne State University and made numerous presentations at the MRPA conferences.

Tom became a member of MRPA (1964) and NRPA (1994). He was a very active member serving MRPA as President, Treasurer, Board of Directors (six years) and a member of the Scholarship Committee. Tom continued to broadly influence the direction of the recreation and park profession with his involvement on the Board of Directors- Detroit Amateur Softball Association Advisory Board; Central Michigan University Advisory Board; President, and Northwest Recreation and Park Association and Board of Directors- Metro Detroit/American Softball Association.

Tom was instrumental in developing 22 major and neighborhood parks in Sterling Heights. He introduced performance budgeting to the department and as a result the budget was not cut during his administration. He initiated the Special Recreation Program which is one of the most successful programs in the State of Michigan. In addition, he was responsible for significant program development including the Senior Citizens Program, the Nature Center Program and his avid interest in Youth Athletic Clubs was instrumental in their growth and success.

His dedication to the communities where he served in an administrative capacity can be seen in the overall improvements that were instituted in the Master Plan that provided recreation and park services for future generations in both active and passive activities.

His professional knowledge, dynamic personality and sense of humor played major roles in the expansion and growth of the diverse services provided. Tom was a positive role model for members of his staff as well as other young professionals. He always encouraged membership and conference participation at state and national levels. He believed that recreation programming and an extensive park system are vital to a community and contributes greatly to the quality of life for residents in that community.

Thomas Chappelle Continued

With the support of co-workers and colleagues, Tom received several awards throughout his professional career. The awards that are most important to him include the Oak Park NRPA Gold Medal Award, MRPA Fellowship Award, City of Sterling Heights Administrator of the Year Award; and, induction into the Metro Detroit Amateur Softball Hall of Fame. In addition, the City of Sterling Heights dedicated a park as the “Thomas L. Chappelle Park”.

Thomas L. Chappelle is remembered as a supervisor who always encouraged his staff while demanding the best. He expected high performance from his staff and himself. His honesty and integrity have always been impeccable, a wonderful teacher who led by example.

David Ewalt

David (Dave) R. Ewalt was recognized by his colleagues as an innovative manager and a visionary in the Recreation and Park profession for more than 32 years. He was born in Hanna City, Illinois. He graduated from Peoria Manual High School, IL and attended Western Michigan University, where he played football and baseball, graduating (1939) with a B.S. degree in Physical Education and later received his Masters degree in Recreation and Park Administration from Central Michigan University. He served in the Army during World War II. After his discharge from the Army, he moved to Pontiac, MI and was hired as a physical education teacher at the Bagley Elementary School (1945). This preceded the advent of bussing; he was a young European teacher in an African-American school.

Dave began his career in our Recreation and Park profession when he persuaded the Pontiac Optimist Club to finance an after school activity program at Bagley. When school recessed for the summer he approached the city manager about a summer position to implement these recreation activities and programs. Rather than securing a summer position he made an unexpected career change becoming the Assistant Director of Recreation for Pontiac (1946).

Dave was a most active member and supporter of our professional organization, as a member of MRA, RAM, and MRPA. He further developed the concept of unifying recreation and parks together when he along with colleagues (Art Wilcox, MSU and Nick Kipp from Kalamazoo Parks and Recreation) worked to expand the purview of MRA to include parks related professionals and agencies changing MRA and RAM to MRPA. He attended the NRPA conferences for 30 years often making presentations about various relevant topics.
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His involvement in our professional organizations, state and national was broadly based. He recognized the importance of investing time and effort in these organizations, realizing the benefits that would be accrued for the profession as a whole. This was demonstrated by his service to MRPA including President, Board of Directors, Chair and member of numerous committees; such as legislative, professional standards, conference and institute planning, municipal league, constitution and by-laws; and Michigan Amateur Baseball Association. He encouraged the professional involvement of his staff by giving them the opportunity to attend both the MRPA and NRPA conferences.

Dave had an exemplary career. Under his leadership, the department was expanded to include the city’s parks and recreation to be developed together. As Director, Pontiac Department of Parks and Recreation (1948-1970) and Superintendent, Pontiac Department of Parks and Recreation (1971-1977), he recognized the importance of adding a forestry specialist so that the parks would be developed in an effective manner. His responsibilities were expanded to include community programs and he assumed management responsibilities for the library, city cemeteries and building maintenance. In addition, Dave was the host of a radio show about the recreation services provided to the public in Pontiac and wrote a weekly column in the local newspaper about recreation programs in Pontiac. He also was President of the Optimist Club and served as both Cub Scout and Boy Scout Master.

Prior to his retiring, his leadership ability was further acknowledged when he was selected to serve as Pontiac acting City manager while a search for a full-time manager was conducted. Dave had the ability to manage the city as well as the strong personality to establish cooperative relationships with all the factions of city government during this interim period.

Dave received numerous awards for his exemplary service to our profession. He was particularly proud of three of them: the prestigious MRPA Fellowship Award, a lifetime golf pass to the Pontiac Municipal Golf Course and the City of Pontiac named a community center in his honor.

The results of his administrative decisions positively impacted the recreation and park services for all persons living in Pontiac. He was instrumental in quieting the 1967 riots by insuring the integration of sports, hiring the first minority professional in Oakland County and converting the waterworks building in to a community center with a newly constructed swimming pool in the African American community. This was the first center designated for community recreation in Pontiac, followed by his movement in Pontiac to begin constructing community centers- no community the size of Pontiac had resources to match this; building a branch library located within Aaron Perry Park; fostering a partnership with the Pontiac Schools. He also constructed the first accessible playground in Michigan located in Hawthorne Park, in collaboration with the Pontiac Jaycees; encouraged Pontiac youth to be home at a certain time on “Devil’s Night” (night before Halloween, recreation staff and Jaycees would gather in the recreation department making phone calls to students from watch Pontiac school. If the child was home at the designated time they could win bikes, watches or gift certificates donated by the Jaycees; and, created a community theatre program that still exists today.

Dave built a foundation for the Pontiac Parks and Recreation Department which services needs of all groups living in Pontiac with 22 parks, five highlighted ball diamonds, four multi-purpose community centers, two senior centers, an outdoor pool, three fishing peers and two satellite programs (one has been in existence for 45 years).

David R. Ewalt’s legacy to our profession are the persons who worked with him. He hired only young, energetic talent, as a result many he hired have developed into leadership positions with other cities’ recreation and park departments and other recreation organizations.

Anthony Filippis,

Anthony (Tony) Filippis was born September 13, 1915, a nationally-known and beloved icon in the movement to improve the live of persons with disabilities, passed away on January 23, 2007, at the age of 91.

The founder of Wright & Filippis, Inc., Michigan’s largest provider of home healthcare products and services, Tony dedicated his personal and professional life to assisting persons with disabilities. He officially retired from the company (1995) maintaining an office until the time of his death to continue his significant philanthropic efforts.

Tony experienced the frustration and heartache frequently confronted by persons with disabilities when he lost both of his legs below the knee in a train accident at the age of 13. Tony said, “I loved sports – I lived sports. Sports were always an important part of my life, and as I got older, it was going to be a way for me to reach out to people who needed a break, who needed to be active.”

“I hired in at a lot of places. But when they found out I had artificial legs, they fired me,” Tony said. Tony took his anger and frustration to Carl Wright, a friend who worked at Martin-Halstead Co. and the gentleman who had made Filippis’ artificial legs.

Wright offered Tony a job as an apprentice. Tony worked with Carl Wright for 10 years before they formed their own company - Wright & Filippis (1944), now with more than 30 facilities throughout Michigan and the Midwest.

In 1946, he formed the first bowling league for the disabled, and established a swimming program for the disabled at Detroit’s Patton Pool. He developed a variety of other
**David Ewalt Continued**

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Anthony Filippis, Sr. Continued

sports programs for both able-bodied and disabled athletes, including basketball, baseball, softball, golf, tennis, boxing, and track & field.

Tony participated in all of these sports. He won gold medals in the shot put, javelin, discus and baseball throw in the Michigan Wheelchair Athletic Association Regional Games – at the time Tony was 82 years old competing in an open division against athletes of all ages. He established state records in all four events and qualified for the national games.

For more than 25 years, Wright & Filippis has hosted “Wheelchair Daze”, a free picnic annually welcoming more than 1,200 persons with disabilities and their guests; as the official sponsor of the Detroit Free Press Marathon Disabilities Division for more than 20 years; and the Gene Filippis Memorial Golf Benefit (in memory of his son) raises more than $50,000 each year for a variety of community non-profit organizations.

Tony founded the Athletes with Disabilities Hall of Fame (ADHF) in 1999. The mission of the ADHF is to honor Michigan’s athletes with disabilities. This unique non-profit organization strives to provide support for recreation and education programs for persons with disabilities. The ADHF now supports and serves the newly-formed Adaptive Sports Coalition, and alliance of more than 20 locally-based groups which provide various recreation opportunities for persons with disabilities focusing on education, awareness and scholarship programs.

The ADHF recently developed a mentoring program in which its alumni visit classrooms and deliver motivational speeches to students throughout the state; and has also established a scholarship endowment to benefit young athletes with disabilities and youth who aspire to careers that will benefit the disabled community.

Filippis was honored many times for his significant contributions. Among his notable achievements and awards: named a 2004 Michiganian-of-the-year (presented by the Detroit News); and the 2004 Lifetime Achievement Award (the Arthritis Foundation); the 2003 da Vinci Lifetime Achievement Award (the Muscular Sclerosis Society); and the 2002 William Clay Ford Community Quarterback Award (the Detroit Lions). In addition, the 2000 Gerald Ford Sports Person of the Year Award (the Michigan Sports Hall of Fame); and Humanitarian Award (the Neuro-Muscular Institute with Providence Hospital and Medical Centers).

Anthony Filippis, Sr. is remembered for his hard work and vision that have brought hope to thousands of disabled persons, nurturing belief and filling dreams. He once said “Each generation is better off than the last, and it’s our job to see to it that we make this world a better place for everyone.”

Kerry Kammer

Kerry Kammer served the people of Michigan in several different capacities, as State of Michigan Senator from Pontiac (1975-1983), Commissioner, Michigan Natural Resources Commission, Lansing (1983-1987), and Lobbyist, Kammer/Michigan, Consultants, Inc., Clarkston, MI (1983-2004). He was born in Detroit, Michigan (1948), attended St. Frederick High School in Pontiac and graduated with a BA in English from Wayne State University. He served the recreation and park profession in Michigan and persons living in Michigan for a period of over 30 years.

Kerry was appointed City Clerk of the city of Pontiac, Michigan in 1973 and was elected to the Michigan State Senate (1974). His election at 26 years of age made him the youngest serving State Senator. His background included a strong fishing ethic, land ethic and a great love of hunting dogs. It was this great passion that carried his concern over the disappearance of recreation land around Metropolitan areas and the lack of a land ethic by many of the persons using the natural environment for a variety of recreation purposes throughout Michigan.

The first major initiative of his career was sponsorship of a bill to commit seven million dollars of the state budget to the Work Opportunity Resources Corporation (WORC). The resulting act provided cities, townships and counties with the ability to spend the money on a grant basis to hire young people for summer employment to work on conservation and environmental projects in parks and on public recreation lands.

While he was Senator, Kerry was a member of numerous committees that relate to our profession and our several needs including: Appropriations Committee; chairman of the sub-committee on School and Department of Education; chairman of sub-committee on DNR; member of the State Capital Outlay Committee; chairman, special committee to investigate pollution and toxic substances; member, special committee to study uses for hydrocarbon royalties; and member, Special Joint Committee on Aging.

As Senator he was honored as Michigan United Conservation Clubs Legislative Conservationist of the Year; recipient of VFW Service Award; Pontiac Bicentennial Honor Award; Pontiac Latino Community Service Award and the National Wildlife Federation for outstanding contribution to the wise use and management of the nation’s natural resources. He also was instrumental in establishing the Michigan Dog Field Trial grounds which has held many national championships. In addition, he was very active in his community providing recreation services for many individuals and groups through his memberships in Knights of Columbus, Pontiac Jaycees, Pontiac March of Dimes Board, Oakland County Sportsman’s Club and Oakland County Association of Retarded Citizens.
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Charles Oxley Continued

Charles (Chuck) Oxley is remembered by colleagues for his professional attitude, initiation of innovative programs and untiring work efforts as a member of MRA, RAM, and MRPA. He provided direction for the recreation and park profession for over 34 years.

Chuck was born in Pontiac, MI (1916). He played basketball in high school, played varsity baseball and basketball while attending Eastern Michigan University and received a BS degree in Physical Education (with a teaching certificate) from the same university (1942.) He accepted a teaching position (1943) at a junior high school in the Flint Public Schools system. He taught General Science and P.E. in a school without a gym and a salary of $2,200. The following year he became Assistant Director of Recreation, Highland Park (City/Schools Recreation Department) (1944-1962). He was an assistant to Harold G. Myron, a 2006 MRPA Hall of Fame recipient and continued with his academic career completing a MS degree from Wayne State University. Chuck then became Director, City of Ann Arbor (City/Schools Recreation Department, 1963) and remained in the position, retiring (1978). Chuck believed in the joint (City/Schools) Recreation Department. He often stated this system facilitates more efficient use of both school and city recreation facilities. “The recreation departments’ function is to provide facilities and guidance after the educational system has provided someone with the basics of an activity or sport”.

A mainstay of his administrative philosophy was establishing cooperative relationships with individuals and organizations that had not been considered possible. These cooperative relationships enabled innovative programs to be developed and implemented and served as exemplary programs used by other colleagues in the profession.

These innovative and exemplary programs include: the Recreation Training Program—hired 40 high school students to assist on playgrounds in the summer. As part of the program he hoped the experience would initiate an interest in our profession as a career option; created the first Sports Clinic with the University of Michigan Athletic Department (involving Johnny Orr, Herbie Benedick, Bo Shembeckler) 13,000 children participated. This sports clinic was the precursor to the present day sports camps at the University of Michigan; he established the first Senior Citizen Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan renovating a former race track building with the use of volunteers from the city, the facility is still heavily used by senior citizens; and, the Personal Development Workshop Seminars for senior citizens- a lifelong learning program involving seniors directly in the development and organization of the program.

Chuck was a very active member of our professional state organization for over 25 years. He served as President (twice), First-Vice President, Secretary (as secretary he assumed responsibility as editor and writing articles for the RAM), served on the Board of Directors, and was a chair and/or member of numerous committees including: Public Relations, Budget, Youth Development, Leadership, State Plan and Membership Recruitment.

Chuck was dedicated to service outside the profession also which is exemplified by his commitment to various community groups such as: President, Optimist Club; President, Exchange Club; Pastoral Relations and Usher, First Methodist Church; City of Berkley Recreation Commission- instrumental in the hiring of the Recreation Director; President, Senior Golf League, Ann Arbor; and member of Kiwanis.

Charles Oxley is remembered by his colleagues for his intense passion for our profession, and his cooperative strategies enabling innovative programs to flourish now and for generations to come.
Charles Oxley Continued

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William Sherman

William (Bill) P. Sherman was originally from St. Joseph, Missouri where he played football in high school taking St. Joseph to the state champions as their quarterback. He was a graduate of Northwest Missouri State University where he played varsity football and received a B.S. degree (Physical Education and Mathematics). He then earned a Masters Degree in Education from the University of Arkansas. The former Marine Corps Captain moved to Michigan (1953) after serving in Korea.

Bill was a dedicated professional and contributed to the recreation and park profession in Michigan for over 40 years. The majority of this time was spent working for the Huron Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA). His association with the HCMA began (1957) when, as a Roseville school teacher, football, basketball and baseball coach, he spent the summer working as a recreation supervisor at Metro Beach. He then became Park Superintendent at the Metro Beach (1968), Deputy Director of the HCMA system (1985) Director of the HCMA (1988-1997), when he retired. He was responsible for 13 Metroparks, 23,300 acres including over 10 million yearly visitors.

When you talk to people in our profession about Bill he is described as a true Renaissance Man. He was the “Public Policy” person, others say he was the “Aquatics Guru”, others mention him as a phenomenal resource on park maintenance issues and others mention his devotion to the Cultural Arts.

As a leader of the HCMA Bill was both an innovator and renovator, this was demonstrated through several highlights of his professional and volunteer accomplishments. His professional accomplishments included the partnership “Program in the Parks” with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, funded by J.L. Hudson (crowds of 17,000); Detroit Metropolitan Area Youth Fitness Meet held at Metro Beach (7 times), 2,500 meet contestants, 50 communities represented, 350,000 competitors began competition in their respective communities; established the first “In the Water Boat Show”, in US, recently celebrated 24 years, still maintains popularity. He also brought to the HCMA the “Adventure Boat Program” using voyager canoes and the “Dixie Bell” at Metro Beach. A major renovation too, was the installation of restroom facilities with flushing toilets, tiled floors and sinks with running water for all HCMA areas.

Bill was instrumental in implementing new facilities and areas such as: Marshlands Museum and Nature Center, Washtego Pond Activities Complex at Willow Park, new park-Wolcott Mill, activities building at Metro Beach and four golf courses. However he is most pleased with the result of his testifying before the U.S. Congress resulting in a $2,500,000 grant for hiking and biking trails. These trails now extend from Metro beach through many Macomb County communities.

His volunteer accomplishments are as varied as his professional accomplishments, including serving as Past President of the Roseville Rotary Club, Board Member of St. Thecla School, Detroit Area Council- Boy Scouts of America- Member at Large and from 1994 to present he has been a member of the Clinton Township Parks and Recreation Committee.

Bill was strongly committed to involvement in state, regional and national professional organizations. He has been a member of MRPA for 32 years, served as Board Member, Chair and member of the Legislative Committee and Chair and member of the Cultural Arts Committee; a member of Northeast Recreation and Park Association (28 years), Served as President on various committees; Special Parks District Forum (28 years), initiated concept, shared ideas with members, coordinated national meeting in HCMA Facility. Recognized for having a broad understanding of our profession as a whole, he was invited to make presentations at both the NRPA and MRPA conferences and frequently made presentations at Michigan State University and Wayne State University.

The awards that he received that were most important to him were: the MRPA Fellowship Award, the Detroit Metropolitan Youth Fitness Fellowship Award, the Past President Roseville Rotary Club and initiation into Phi Delta Kappa- national professional education fraternity.

William P. Sherman is a professional we all aspire to be, a committed and responsible servant who is involved in all areas of recreation and park services, an innovator, a collaborator, a teacher and a leader.

Kenneth Smithee

Kenneth (Ken) J. Smithee has served the Recreation and Park profession for over 34 years. Ken was a member of the Michigan Recreation and Park Association from 1967-1988. He was the first Director of the Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission, Flint, Michigan, starting (1967) and retiring (1988).

Ken was a visionary and strongly believed in establishing close working relationships with both public and private community organizations. As a result, areas such as the Holloway Reservoir Regional Park, For-Mar Nature Preserve and Arboretum, and Division Roadside Park became part of the Genesee County Parks and Recreation System. Under his direction, the Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission acquired over 10,000 acres of parkland.

Numerous facilities were planned and constructed within his tenure. These facilities still provide a broad range of recreation and park activities -examples include beaches, trails, campgrounds, the development of the Elba Equestrian Complex, Crossroads Village.
William Sherman Continued

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Kenneth Smithee Continued

and Huckleberry Railroad, the Richfield Park BMX track, the Buell Lake Radio Controlled Model Airplane Field, Mott Lake Youth Hostel and others. Ken often attributed this success in the development of the park system and recreation facilities to the cooperative relationships between his office and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, DeWalters and Mallory Charitable Trusts and the Flint Public Trust.

For two years Ken served as Public Affairs Director/County Parks and Recreation Consultant for the National Recreation and Park Association. He was responsible for preparing and presenting testimony on behalf of NRPA before committees of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, liaison to agencies and departments of the executive branch, and to national organizations representing recreation, park, historic preservation and environmental issues.

His influence on our profession and the professionals in our field is limitless. This influence has been demonstrated again and again through his personal commitment to our profession. He not only attended many MRPA and NRPA conferences, but was asked to make numerous presentations at these conferences on a variety of topics as well as being involved with several publications for the NRPA, more specifically the National Association of Counties. In addition, he taught as an adjunct faculty member at Michigan State University, Central Michigan University and Mott Community College.

Ken was actively involved in both our state and national professional organizations. He served as Second Vice President and Chair of the Legislative Committee for MRPA; and at the national level, he was President, American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration; President, Board of Trustees, (NRPA); charter member, NRPA, Council on Accreditation (Colleges and Universities); President, American Park and Recreation Society; and President and Co-founder, National Association of County Parks and Recreation Officials (NACPRO).

Ken has received numerous awards for his outstanding service to our profession. Some of these prestigious awards include Fellow Award, MRPA; Distinguished Fellow Award, American Park and Recreation Society; Fellow Award, National Association of County Parks and Recreation Officials; National Distinguished Professional Award, NRPA; and the renaming of the Administration Building by the Genesee County, Michigan Parks and Recreation Commission as the “Kenneth J. Smithee Administration Building.””

Although these prestigious awards are appreciated by Ken, he often stated “a major reason for my professional success is the contributions made by my exceptionally competent, hard working and professional staff.”

Prior to his professional experience in Genesee County, Ken was the Director of the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department in Phoenix, Arizona (1957-1965). Since his retirement (a matter of semantics) from the Genesee County Park and Recreation Commission, he and his wife have moved back to Phoenix where he continues to provide direction for various organizations involved in the provision of park and recreation services. For his untiring effort he was designated as a “Legend” of the Arizona Parks and Recreation Association.

Kenneth Smithee Continued

Kenneth J. Smithee, a highly respected professional known for his competence in establishing cooperative relationship among public and private organizations and his patience in solving problems and initiating new strategies that succeeded.

Thomas Washington

Thomas (Tom) L. Washington was born in Detroit, MI (1937) and the family moved to Dearborn, MI when he was five years old. At that time Tom indicated Dearborn was a rural area where he roamed in open fields, explored woods and caught frogs and crayfish in a creek down the street. These beginning contacts with nature instilled in Tom an interest and respect for the natural environment that followed throughout his lifetime. As a young person he was thoroughly involved with the sports of hunting and fishing which became his favorite recreation activities as an adult. In addition, he was a Boy Scout and a veteran of the U.S. Coast Guard further developing an appreciation and understanding of the relationships between natural resources and the human experience. Tom Washington was a pioneer in protecting Michigan’s natural resources; he well served the recreation and park profession and people of Michigan as an environmental advocate for over 32 years.

Tom was employed in the newspaper field in Detroit prior to joining Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) in 1963. The organization was mandated to protect and make wise use of Michigan’s natural resources. His job was to sell advertising for the monthly publication, Michigan Out-of-Doors. He moved rapidly from an independent contractor to become the magazine director; then the MUCC, Executive director, (1974). The Michigan Out-of-Doors grew from 12 pages, 55,000 circulation to 124 pages, circulation over 100,000 and a dramatically increased budget with an annual budget of $565,000 into our country’s largest conservation group, 135,000 members, a staff of 40 and a budget of over $5 million.

Fortunately, Tom was able to integrate his strong personal interests in hunting, fishing and the environment with his professional responsibilities as Executive Director of MUCC. His position gave him numerous opportunities to travel throughout the western United States and Alaska; and make excursions and safaris to places such as Canada, China and Africa. Regardless of his world travels, his visiting exotic places, the place he most appreciated was his return to his beloved Michigan, driving his family to his cottage (home) in the Upper Peninsula, surrounded by acres of land and woods being alone, together with his wife and six children. In addition, he was also recognized as a gourmet cook and wine connoisseur.
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Tom Washington Continued

Tom was widely regarded as the premier outdoor and environmental advocate in Michigan. (His position was very clear to his friends and adversaries.) He was involved in countless environmental causes and issues. Heidi, Tom’s youngest daughter indicated he was most proud of his involvement in the passage of the “bottle bill” (making deposits on non-refundable bottles and cans mandatory to keep them from ending up in road-sides, creating jobs and saving hundreds of thousands of dollars for clean-up by recreation and park departments), the creation of the Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund (over the past two decades thousands of acres of recreation land have been purchased and hundreds of recreation projects launched with money from the state’s Natural Resource Trust Fund) and his presidency at the National Rifle Association (An able and effective spokesman in support of the Second Amendment). Tom played a central role in NRA’s acquisition of a new state of the art headquarters in Fairfax, Virginia. He also was founder of NRA’s Youth Hunting Education Challenge that flourished under his tenure. In addition, he was instrumental in passage of the Sand Dunes Protection Act, the Wetlands Protection Act and initiation of the State Parks Endowment Fund, a constant advocate for public access to waterways and land resulted in our state having more public access than all other states combined and he helped obtain a bill restricting bill-boards.

Tom relied as much on his physical presence as on quick wit, political astuteness and articulation of the language related to the natural environment and natural resources in Michigan. Because of these recognized personal attributes he was asked to accept broad based responsibilities including: the appointment by Governor Milliken as charter Board Member of the Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund; NRA President (two years), Board of Directors, first and second Vice President; Board of Director-Safari Club International; Board of Directors Natural Wildlife Federation; Member- Governor’s Interim Committee on Environmental Education; Vice Chairperson Governor’s Michigan Land Inventory Committees; Member- Michigan Farmland and Open Space Presentation Act Committee; and appointed by Secretary of the Interior, James Watts to serve on the National Resources advisory group.

Tom was the recipient of numerous awards for his outstanding professional and volunteer services; including the American Motors Conservation Award, the Safari Club International Chairman Award, the Miles D. Pirnie Award- for leadership in preserving wetlands and wetlands wildlife; MRPA- Special Award for Outstanding Leadership in the Profession; State of Michigan- State Resolution No. 209- A Resolution Memorializing the Life of Tom Washington; State of Michigan Natural Resources Commission- In Memory of Tom Washington; and the U.S. Senate, Vol. 141, No. 195- The Passing of Tom Washington.

Thomas L. Washington is remembered as a person who was not intimidated by the supposedly powerful and who was willing to speak the truth to power and a committed spokesperson when the subject concerned the environment, natural resources and gun rights.
2006 MRPA Hall of Fame Inductees

Jim Beers
~Michigan Department of Natural Resources~

Jim Bruce
~Flint~

John Considine
~Detroit~

Jack Golden
~Eastpointe~

William Kreger
~Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority~

Harold Myron
~Highland Park~

Jim Perry
~Royal Oak/Oak Park~

James Reid
~Hamtramck/Midland~

Henry Schubert
~Dearborn~

Lewis Wint
~Oakland County~

2005 MRPA Hall of Fame Inductees

Dr. Jim Bristor
~Michigan State University~

Harry Burns
~Grand Rapids~

Arch Flannery
~Battle Creek~

Herb Jennings
~Litchfield~

Hubert Johnson
~Detroit~

David Laidlaw
~Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority~

Lawrence (Pete) Moser
~Kalamazoo~

Virginia Munger
~Detroit~

Karla V. Parker
~Grand Rapids~

R. Eric Reickel
~Oakland County/Lansing~

Jesse Rutherford
~Ypsilanti~

Joe Seavey
~Michigan Department of Natural Resources~

Benjamin Yack
~Wyandotte~
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