The following text was written by 2001 Coleman Intern Melissa Witcher to accompany a PowerPoint presentation. This article encompasses the second half of the presentation dealing with Native-American rights, the first portion discussed cases involving the rights of African Americans and was published in our previous newsletter. To view a copy of the PowerPoint presentation, please contact Angela Bergman at 517-346-6419 or abergman@micourthistory.org

There are 12 federally recognized Native-American tribes in Michigan: Bay Mills Indian Community; Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians; Hannahville Potawatomi Indian Community; Huron Potawatomi, Inc.; Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Tribal; Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians; Little River Band of Ottawa Indians; Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians; Pokagon Band of Potawatomi; Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe; Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians; and the Matchebenashshewish Band of Potawatomi.

The 2000 census calculates the American Indian population of Michigan to be 58,479, making it the state with the tenth largest population of Native Americans (http://factfinder.census.gov and The Michigan Commission on Indian Affairs: Annual Report 1998). This number is believed to be an underestimation, with the population being cited by the governor and others at closer to 65,000. The numbers constitute less than one percent of the entire population in Michigan, but Native Americans are an ethnic minority that has had an enormous impact on social organization and legal interpretation. They are a people, however few or many, who have left an indelible mark on Michigan society and law.

19th Century Treaties

During the 19th Century, seven treaties were signed that constituted the basis for the creation of the state of Michigan. In November of 1807, the Chippewa, Potawatomi, Ottawa, et al. Nation signed a treaty that ceded the Detroit area to the United States. In September of 1819, a treaty was signed by the Chippewa relinquishing mid-Michigan and nearly half of eastern northern Michigan. In 1821 the Chippewa, Ottawa, Potawatomi signed a treaty relating to lower western Michigan. The Potawatomi signed a treaty in September of 1828 concerning the western most tip of lower Michigan. The Ottawa, Chippewa, signed a treaty completing the formation of the lower peninsula. Two treaties signed in 1836 by the Menomini Nation and then the Ottawa, Chippewa, followed by the final treaty in 1842 with the Chippewa of the Miss. and Lake Superior finalized the state boundaries by adding the Upper Peninsula (The Michigan Commission on Indian Affairs: 1998 Annual Report).

“Each of the Treaties had a specific purpose related to the cession of Indian-owned land, to the United States, for the purpose of establishing the state. In 1837, the sovereign state of Michigan became a reality as a direct result of the Treaties” (Michigan Commission on Indian Affairs 1998). Signed nearly 200 years ago, these treaties were not only the foundation for the creation of the state, but they continue to be a strong factor in deciding issues such as tribal sovereignty, reparations, fishing rights, and gambling.
Tribes have also come to play an enormous role in the relations between Native Americans and state and federal governments. In *United States v Michigan*, 1979, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a “treaty with Indians must be construsted as the Indians would have understood it…(it) must be construsted liberally in favor of Indians so that

United States v Michigan, 1979 ruled that a “treaty with Indians must be construsted as the Indians would have understood it…(it) must be construsted liberally in favor of Indians so that

Indians are not wholly disadvantaged by the strength and resources of the United States” (471 F.Supp 192). In essence, when any legal case involving treaties and the rights of Native Americans is decided by a court, how Native Americans intended the treaty is a factor, but never the sole determinant.

State and federal legal proceedings of the last part of the 20th century have greatly affected not only Native Americans but all citizens of the state of Michigan. There has been great anger and tension, especially concerning fishing rights, between non-tribal citizens and Native Americans. Understanding what rights are in place and their legal foundation can foster greater acceptance and peace between all races.

**Tribal Sovereignty**

All interactions between Native-American tribes and the United States government are based on the concept of tribal sovereignty. The Legislative Research Division defined tribal sovereignty as “the inherent right of the tribe to govern itself.” It further explained that:

*This right is predicated on the fact that prior to European colonization, tribes conducted their own affairs and needed no outside source to legitimate* their powers or actions. Once the Europeans arrived in North America, they claimed dominion over the lands they found, thus violating the sovereignty of the tribes already living there. As a consequence, Native Americans in Michigan retain a host of special rights, including gaming, hunting and fishing, and higher education tuition waivers.

With the foundation of tribal sovereignty, a firmly entrenched legal reality upheld repeatedly by the U.S. Supreme Court, Native Americans have the grounds to address a wide variety of other issues.

**Fishing and Hunting Rights**

One of the greatest struggles between Native Americans and the Michigan government comes from the controversy over fishing rights. This issue is of special importance in Michigan because of the profitability of the industry to the state. There has long been friction between the state and Native-American fishers who have resisted attempts to be regulated. The following cases indicate “the severity of the clash between private rights and the state’s power to reasonably regulate the exercise of such rights for the public good and the environment” (26 WnL 796).

One of the first cases involving fishing and hunting rights was *People v Chosa* in 1930. Northern Michigan waters were, and are, a renowned tourist location for fishing and white citizens were concerned by the presence and actions of Native Americans. James L. Chosa and Basil Attikons, both Chippewa, were convicted of violating state fish and game laws on Keweenaw Bay on Lake Superior. Based on the treaties of 1836, 1842, and 1855 the defendants argued that Chippewas retained the right to fish and hunt off-reservation. Their claim was that only the President of the United States could limit Indian hunting and fishing rights. The Michigan Supreme Court ruled that although treaties established the rights of the Indians to hunt and fish on reservation land, they were subject to the game laws of the state and that game regulation was an exercise of the sovereignty of the state, not the President. (Michigan Indian Rights Controversy and 252 Mich 160). The decision utilized a very rigid interpretation of the treaties and minimized the validity of treaties for Native Americans. The state and sport fisherman were relieved to know that Michigan had dominion over the actions of Native Americans in the Great Lakes.

In 1971, the ruling in *People v Jondreau* overturned the ruling given in *People v Chosa*. William Jondreau had been convicted for illegally catching four trout from the same Bay that Chosa and Attikons had fished. The Court held “that the state’s fish and game regulations could not be applied to the Chippewa and Ottawa Indians protected by the treaties of 1836 and 1855 whether on or off the reservation because these treaty rights took precedence over state
laws by the virtue of the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution.” Significantly, treaties were interpreted by the Court to take into consideration what Native Americans had intended or desired at the time of signing, rather than by the strict wording of the document. (MIRC and 364 Mich 539). Two questions remained: did treaty rights apply to off-reservation sites and when treaties did not specifically mention fishing rights did Native Americans still retain them? This controversy demanded further legal action for resolution.

**The 1970s**

The early 70s would intensify the controversy when the Department of Natural Resources banned gill nets, the most common method of fishing for Native Americans, in an attempt to conserve the commercial game fishing industry. Albert LeBlanc was arrested for using a gill net and fishing without a commercial license and found guilty in a local district court; the court of appeals reversed the decision. The case ultimately went to the Michigan Supreme Court, which upheld the reversal. There were several questions raised by this case: 1) the license requirement, 2) regulation of treaty rights, and 3) state prohibition of gill nets. It was found that the license requirement did violate treaty rights but the ramifications and scope of state regulation were not addressed. (MIRC and 399 Mich 31).

The legal battle culminated in United States v State of Michigan. Judge Noel Fox of the Federal court ruled in a fashion that was considered stunning. Michigan Out-of-Doors summarized the case by stating, “Litigation leading to the landmark decision dates to 1973 when the federal government filed suit on behalf of the Chippewas against Michigan, alleging that the state was interfering with the Indians’ right to fish under 19th century treaties by arresting them for violating state fishing regulations” (July 1979 p32). The decision expanded the provisions set forth in People v LeBlanc. Where the Michigan Supreme Court had been wary to tread in 1976, Judge Noel Fox boldly forged ahead in “what has been called the most far-reaching Indian rights decision” (MIRC/8). Fox concurred with Native Americans, ruling that they had never given up their fishing rights through treaties and that their rights took precedence over the state’s right to regulate fishing. This decision did little to rectify the tensions and suspicions between Native Americans and sports fisherman. It was a complicated case that involved great legal maneuvering, but ultimately the United States Supreme Court refused the case and the decision stood.

**Gill Nets**

Gill nets have been used in the Great Lakes since before Western settlement. Discussions of Native-American fishing rights inevitably lead to the topic of gill nets. They are undoubtedly the traditional tool of Native Americans, but commercial and sports fisherman, along with the DNR, see the tool as having many adverse affects on the environment and fish populations. The main argument against the use of gill nets is that they are non-selective and are believed to lead to depletion of certain fish species.

### Consent Agreement

The Consent Agreement of 1985 afforded the most hope for future relations between Native Americans and sports fisherman. “The agreement sought to achieve the following aims: accommodation of Indian rights, protection of the fishery, and cessation of Indian-white hostilities” (MIRC/11). To date, the Agreement has been mostly successful and was renewed in 2000, demonstrating that tribes and the State seem to have reached a tentative peace.

**Gambling**

Another issue of particular concern in the state of Michigan is the question of gaming rights. In the past five years, casinos have become a commonplace sight in the state, but many residents vaguely remember the conflict and difficulty that preceded their existence. Establishing casinos on reservations within Michigan was a complicated process that involved not only the U.S. Supreme Court but also a 1988 act of Congress known as the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA). The nuances of the compact between the states and tribes were just recently questioned.
with the establishment of the three private casinos in Detroit. Whether you gamble or not, there is little doubt that this issue affects everyone in Michigan.

The dilemma began with an innocent enough game, Bingo. The state of Michigan decided to take certain tribes to court for failure to obtain a license for high stakes Bingo. Once again, the foundation of the suit was to explore what rights the state had to regulate tribal activities. The gambling issue was based less on specific treaties, as in the fishing suit, and more on the intrinsic concept of tribal sovereignty. While Michigan attempted to resolve the issue, the same question was being asked on a national level. It would be the federal government that would assist each state in answering the question of the extent of tribal sovereignty in two ways: first with the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *California v Cabazon Band of Mission Indians* and second with the Congressional Act that resulted in IGRA.

The *Cabazon* decision allowed for Native Americans to participate in gambling without interference from the state as long as the activity was allowed by the state. In Michigan, Bingo was legal and therefore Native Americans were allowed to conduct high stake games. IGRA classifies gambling in three categories. Class III prohibits casino gambling unless it is legal in the state and the tribe enters into a compact with the state (Gaming & Casino Oversight 1). IGRA forced the state of Michigan, which allowed gambling, to enter into good faith negotiations with tribes. The combination of Cabazon and IGRA on the national level made it possible for tribe-sponsored gambling in Michigan.

**Negotiations**

In the state of Michigan, compact negotiations began in 1989 and took almost four years to resolve due to a disagreement in the use and legality of slot machines. Governor Blanchard, followed by Governor Engler, refused to “allow electronic games of chance in the compacts. Both Administrations believed that these games did not meet the test of being authorized by State law” (Griffin 2). It would be a case that did not involve Native Americans that would effectively allow for games of chance to be included in negotiations. *Primages v Liquor Control Commission* confirmed that electronic games of chance were legal in the state of Michigan. That *Primages* decision gave compact negotiations the resolution needed to conclude amicably on August 30, 1993. Though IGRA forbade states to impose taxes beyond the deferment of regulation, the tribes agreed to pay state and local government eight percent of the “net win, the amount wagered minus the payout to the players” (Gaming & Casino Oversight 2). Native Americans negotiated casinos with slot machines and conceded to share the profits as long as they had the exclusive right to operate slot machines.

**Detroit Casinos**

Detroit casinos further added to the complex nature of state and tribal interaction. The governor refused to permit off-site casinos for tribes so a vote, for the fourth time, went before the city of Detroit to allow private casinos. The proposal was passed and three licenses were issued for casinos in the city. With three private casinos now allowed to operate, all with games of chance, the question arose as to whether tribes still had to pay the eight percent of net win to the state. *Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians v Engler* in 1998 stated that “Michigan Indian tribes still hold the exclusive right to operate electronic games of chance in Michigan despite enactment of the Michigan Gaming Control and Revenue Act authorizing and the granting of up to three licenses for casino gambling in Detroit” (146 F.3d 367). For the time being, there seems to...
be another lull in the struggle between tribes and the State.

**CONCLUSION**

Issues such as tribal sovereignty, fishing rights, and gambling extend beyond the realm of Native American concerns. There are many others affected by the issues discussed in this presentation. The decisions of the Michigan Supreme Court, as well as the U.S. Supreme Court, have ramifications far beyond the tribal community. There can be little doubt that understanding the basis for the status quo can help enlighten all members of our society and might aid in greater peace between Native Americans and non-Indian people. The Michigan Supreme Court has and continues to play a vital role in the lives of each and every citizen in Michigan, and Native American rights are just another lens through which to view the magnitude of that role.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**CASES**

2. *People v Chosa*; 252 Mich 154, 1930

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**Portrait Fund Established for Justice Conrad L. Mallett**

The Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society is pleased to announce that fundraising efforts have commenced for the official Court portrait of Justice Conrad L. Mallett, Jr.

Justice Mallett, who received his B.A. from UCLA in 1975 and his M.P.A. and J.D. from the University of Southern California in 1979, served on the Court from 1990 until 1999 as its 97th Justice. He was the first African-American to serve as Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court.

Donations of any amount are entirely tax-deductible and can be made to the Society by sending a check or money order to the Justice Conrad L. Mallett, Jr. Portrait Fund, Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society, 306 Townsend Street, Lansing, MI 48933.

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**Other Portrait Funds**

A portrait fund has also been established for Justice James H. Brickley. Justice Brickley, who retired from the Court in 1999 and passed away in 2001, served the Court as its 92nd Justice and as Chief Justice from 1995 to 1996. He completed both his Bachelor's and his law degree at the University of Detroit, continuing on to earn a Master's Degree in Law from New York University.

Donations are tax-deductible and can be made by sending a check or money order to the Justice James H. Brickley Portrait Fund.

Donations to either fund can also be made over the phone using a credit card. To complete the transaction by phone, please call 517-346-6419. We look forward to the completion and dedication of these two important portraits in the upcoming year.
President's Message: Tragedies and Triumphs

The past year has been filled with both heartbreak and pride, with tragedy and triumph. On the national level, the events of September 11 left all of us reeling. The double-edged sword of humanity is our constant desire to out-do ourselves, and just when we think that we’ve seen the worst human nature has to offer someone comes along to prove us wrong. As proven time and again throughout history, even the most horrible events give rise to some level of good. Everyday citizens stepped up to become heroes. A renewed sense of patriotism swept the nation. A willingness to give, seldom seen at such levels, helped to ensure the financial survival of the survivors.

On a more local level, 2001 brought the loss of cherished friends and outstanding jurists. Chief Justice James H. Brickley, who served on the Court from 1983 until 1999, passed away in September. Chief Justice Mary S. Coleman, who served on the Court from 1973 until 1982 passed away on November 27. The Society lost a boardmember in the person of Thomas A. McNish, who passed away on December 16. The Court lost an additional supporter in December in the person of Professor Joseph Grano, husband of Chief Justice Maura D. Corrigan. Their voices and their presence will be missed.

In the midst of all that has happened, the Society has had a strong and productive year. In April, former Chief Justice Thomas E. Brennan delivered a speech recounting both the history of the chief justiceship and his own experiences as chief justice of the Court to a crowd of over 120 Annual Luncheon attendees. On October 9, with the help of former Justice and Detroit Mayor Dennis W. Archer, the Court honored Detroit’s 300th birthday. In November, the Society continued its tradition of dedicating portraits of retired justices to the Court with a ceremony dedicating the portrait of Justice Patricia J. Boyle.

In 2001, the Society received its first-ever grant for its Education Project and welcomed 54 new members. We continued to oversee the transfer of our existing oral histories onto CD-rom and will soon see them available to everyone on the World Wide Web. The Coleman intern completed several small research projects and created a PowerPoint presentation and accompanying speech on the Michigan Supreme Court’s role in the civil rights struggle. We published and distributed the 1999 Coleman intern’s research in the form of a booklet entitled “A Brief History of the Michigan Supreme Court.” 2001 brought with it the completion of the posthumous portraits of Justices Reid and Sharpe, which complete the Court’s collection of portraits of 20th Century jurists.

While there has been much to mourn this year, there has also been much to celebrate. I thank each and every one of our members for your ongoing support of the Society’s various projects and for your recognition of the importance of our work.

- Wallace D. Riley, President

Have you paid your 2002 Dues?

For your convenience, the Society accepts Visa, MasterCard, and American Express. Please call (517) 346-6419 to make your payment by phone, or complete and mail or fax the following information to: Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society, 306 Townsend Street, Lansing, MI 48933, Fax (517) 372-2716.

Name ________________________________ [ ] Check enclosed [ ] Credit Card (Circle one)
Address ________________________________ Visa MasterCard American Express
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Name on Card ____________________________
Acct. No. ____________________________
Exp. Date _________________
Signature ____________________________

Total Payment $___________
Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society, Inc.
Statements of Activities - Cash Basis
Years Ended December 31, 2001 and 2000

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* A significant amount of dues dollars for 2001 were pre-paid in December 2000.
On the Horizon

The year ahead will be filled with many exciting events and opportunities. The Society will continue to concentrate on “getting our name out there” and on making the information we collect and distribute accessible to more and more Michiganders. We will begin the year with a concentration on making more information easily accessible on the world wide web and by working to update and upgrade our website.

Here are just some of the exciting programs you can look for in the upcoming year:

**Publications**

The *Society Update* will continue to be produced quarterly. Past issues of the *Update* are available on our website and contain vignettes and stories for use by anyone interested in the history of the Court.

All of the information contained in our “Michigan Supreme Court Historical Reference Guide” is also available on the website. We hope to soon add a printable copy of the “Brief History of the Michigan Supreme Court,” a collection of speeches and vignettes given by Society members over the years, and all of the research and information available in our lesson plans.

**Website**

The Society’s website, www.micourthistory.org, is online and is already an excellent source of information for the public. In 2002, we plan to complete a general redesign and update of the site, making it easier to search, easier to explore, and easier to use.

Part of our task in updating the site will include adding more information such as legal vignettes and recent historical events, as well as making the links more effective.

Please take a look at the site and let me hear your comments and suggestions. Any feedback on the usefulness and content of the site is welcome.

**Portrait Collection**

The Society is currently working with former Chief Justice Mallett to begin the process of commissioning his portrait. (Tax-deductible contributions are being accepted for the project.) We anticipate having the portrait completed by the fall of this year.

The Society is continuing to pursue the commission of a portrait for Chief Justice James H. Brickley, and we continue to look forward to its completion and dedication.

**Membership Luncheon**

This year’s annual Membership Luncheon will again be held at the Detroit Athletic Club and will take place on April 18th. All Society members and their guests are encouraged to attend this event to mingle with Michigan Supreme Court justices past and present and to interact with fellow members.

**Coleman Internship**

This year’s Coleman Intern will be working directly with the Vincent Voice Library at Michigan State University. The assignment will be to index the existing oral histories so that both the audio and textual versions can be easily searched. In addition, this year’s intern will be a key component in making sure that the oral histories are available to both libraries and the public by the end of the year.

**Education Project**

The lesson plan packets are assembled and ready for use. The early part of 2002 will be spent marketing the packets to teachers and obtaining feedback on their usefulness, content, and effectiveness. We plan to have all of the plans and supporting materials available on the website in the near future.
**Oral Histories**

The oral history project, which was started by Roger Lane in the 90s, has officially been revived and will be well underway by early 2002. An oral historian has been retained to begin interviewing retired justices and we anticipate having complete oral histories for Justices Levin and Boyle by the end of the year. These interviews will be transcribed and will be added to the collection at the Vincent Voice Library.

**Hall of Justice**

Last, but certainly not least, the dedication of the new Hall of Justice and the move into the new building will dominate the Society’s calendar early this fall. The Society is actively involved in the planning of the dedication and will be involved in nearly all of the events surrounding the October dedication.

The Society office will be relocated to the new building sometime in October, and I am looking forward to being in closer proximity to the members of the Court staff that I work with on a regular basis.

I thank all of you, once again, for your continued membership in and support of the Historical Society. The Society’s continued improvement and our ability to offer new programs and information hinges on your belief in what we are doing. As with most nonprofit organizations, we are only as strong as our members, and that makes the Historical Society very strong indeed.

Angela Bergman serves as the Executive Director of the Society.

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**In Recent News.......**

**Society Hires 2002 Coleman Intern**

The Historical Society is proud to welcome Henry Lau as its 2002 Coleman Intern.

Henry, a junior at Michigan State University, is a native Michigander—born in Pontiac and raised in Sterling Heights. Through James Madison College at MSU, Henry is pursuing a B.A. in International Relations and is enrolled in area studies in the Asian Studies Program, focusing particularly on East Asia. Henry’s plans after graduation are not concrete. “My hopes after graduation are to either enter a private sector business involved in Asia or to move on to an M.A. at UC-Berkeley,” Henry explains.

Henry was chosen for this position in cooperation with Michigan State’s Vincent Voice Library. Through the facilities at the Library, he will be working on indexing the Society’s existing oral histories and placing both the textual and audio versions of the histories online for any and all to enjoy. His interest in historical studies, as well as his expertise working with transcription and the unique programs utilized by the Library made him an excellent fit to this project.

**Justices Neil E. Reid and Edward M. Sharpe Honored by the Historical Society**

Former Michigan Supreme Court Justices Neil E. Reid and Edward M. Sharpe were honored during a special session of the Michigan Supreme Court on January 23, 2002. The portraits of the Justices, both of whom served on the Court in the mid-1900s, were dedicated to the Court in a brief ceremony.

Speaking on behalf of the Society, Society vice-president Frederick G. Beusser, III offered brief remarks presenting the portrait of Justice Reid to the Court. Justice Reid, who served from 1944 through 1956, was the 67th Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court and served as Chief Justice of the Court in 1951.

Thomas Mayer, a former law clerk of Justice Sharpe, presented Justice Sharpe’s portrait to the Court on behalf of the Society. Justice Sharpe served the Court from 1934 through 1957 and served as three separate terms as Chief Justice of the Court.

To view the portraits, which were both completed by Robert Maniscalco of Detroit, or to read the text of the presentations, please go to the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society website at www.micourthistory.org and click on the Recent News button.
Membership Roster

The Society groups its members into three categories: Life Members, which includes the categories of Benefactor, Major Sponsor, and Sponsor; Annual Members, containing the categories of Contributing, Sustaining, Patron, and Student; and Corporate/Law Firm Members. The year listed after each member’s name indicates the year he/she joined the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society.

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- John S. Brennan, 1993
- Paula L. Boyle, 1993
- N. Otto Stockmeyer, Jr., 1990
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- John E. Riecker, 1989
- Richard D. Reed, 1989
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- Ronna Stevens Gold, 1993
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- Bruce A. Miller, 1994
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- Dennis C. Kolenda, 1997
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- Marcia A. McBriar, 1995
- Victor M. Norris, 2001
- Christine D. Oldani, 1998

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- Maura D. Corrigan, 1993
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- Robert J. Danchoff, 1989
- Martin D. Corrigan, 1993
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- Patrick J. Duggan, 1993
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- Elaine Fieldman, 1997
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- Gerald R. Ford, 1994
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- John W. Noonan, 1994
- Walter H. North, 1997
- Patrick J. O’Brien, 1993
- Rolland R. O’Hare, 1994
- Jerome F. O’Rourke, 1995
- Roland L. Olszak, 1991
- Alice McCann Osborn, 1994
- William D. Parsley, 1997
- William Patterson, 1989
- Dennis J. Pheney, 1994
- David L. Porteous, 1992
- Wendy L. Potts, 1993
- Clayton E. Preisel, 1989
- Richard E. Rassel, 1994
- Maureen Pulte Reilly, 1993
- Thomas Roumell, 1994
- Charles Rutherford, Jr., 1997
- John F. Schafer, 1996
- Thomas R. Schultz, 1996
- Alan E. Schwartz, 1996
- John E. Scott, 1995
- Erwin S. Simon, 1990
- Myzell Sowell, 1995
- Harry S. Stark, 1994
- Jo Ann C. Stevenson, 1993
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at

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Detroit, Michigan

Hosted by the
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