

Society Update

FROM THE MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Fall 2002

Society Receives Historic Artifact

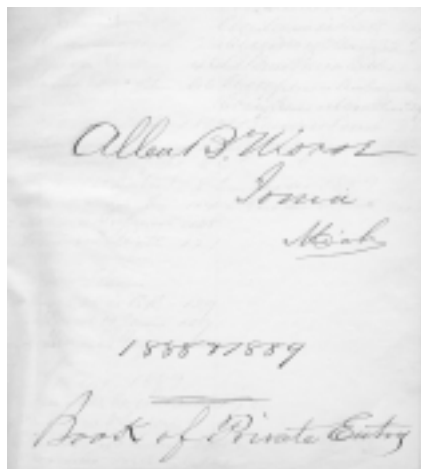
Dan Gemuend, a former Ionia resident made a significant historical discovery while inventorying materials once belonging to his father, the late Robert Gemuend. Among the items, Gemuend came across a leather-bound, hand-written, personal docket of former Michigan Supreme Court Justice Allen B. Morse.

The docket, written between 1888 and 1889, outlines cases overseen by Morse while serving as the 29th Justice of the Court. The docket also contains some of Morse's personal reflections and thoughts regarding the cases he observed.

Gemuend speculates that Morse's docket must have somehow passed from the Justice to Harry Gemuend, Dan's grandfather, who began practicing law in Ionia during the latter part of Morse's life. The docket must have then passed to Gemuend's father, Robert, who was also an Ionia attorney and a former Ionia County Prosecutor.

The journal eventually found its way into an old storage box where Gemuend found it early last year.

After discovering what he had in his possession and realizing what the journal must be worth both financially and historically,



Cover page of the Personal Docket of Allen B. Morse

Gemuend began to question what he would do with the journal.

Believing that the writings would serve a better purpose if they were made available to the public for further research,

Gemuend decided to contact the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society to explore the donation of the docket.

Since the Society itself does not have archival facilities, Executive Director Angela Bergman contacted the State Archives of Michigan regarding the docket. The Archives and the Society came to an agreement regarding the docket and similar future donations. The Archives would house the materials, making sure that they were properly stored and maintained, and would make the materials available for research under the heading of the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society.

In order to accept the donation and to give Gemuend proper recognition for the donation of the docket, the Society facilitated an appraisal of the book. The Archive Book Store, located in East Lansing, appraised the docket at \$4,500.00.

Gemuend believes that the docket will be a useful tool for

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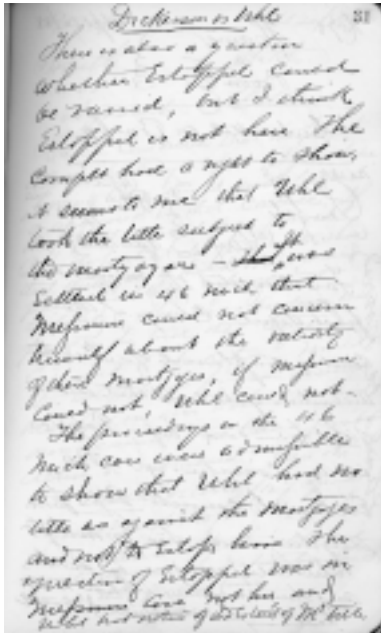
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greater understanding and recognition of Justice Morse.

“I thought there would be more value in expanding people’s knowledge of this particular person. It will serve the people better in public hands versus private hands,”



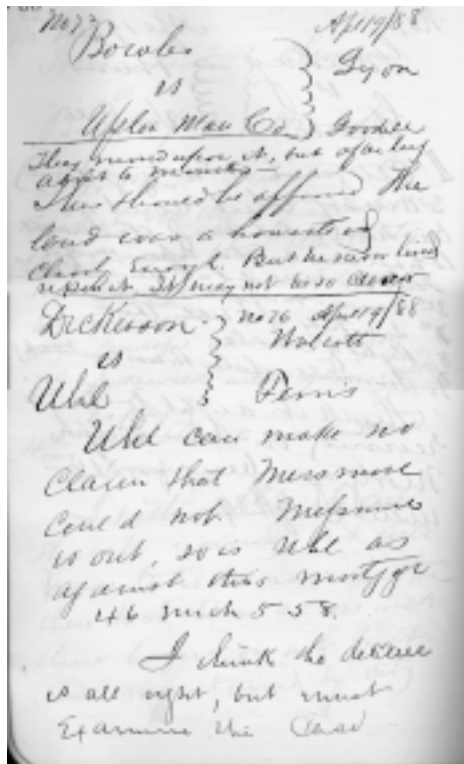
A page from the interior of the Personal Docket of Allen B. Morse.

Gemuend said. “It’s a connection between the past and the present.”

Allen B. Morse, who served from 1885 through 1892, was born on January 7, 1839, in Ostico, Michigan. He studied for two years at Michigan Agricultural College prior to teaching school. In 1860, he began studying the law but left to enlist in the Union Army.

Morse served in a number of different

capacities during the Civil War as a member of Michigan’s 16th Infantry. While engaged in battle during the Battle of Gettysburg, he was wounded and lost his left arm. His superior, F.T. Sherman, described Morse as, “Ever at the post of duty, either in the office or on the field, he won the esteem and confidence of his superior officers and the love and respect of his juniors. (Reed, George I. Bench and Bar of Michigan: A



Another interior page.

History and Biography. Chicago: The Century Publishing and Engraving Co., 1897.) Following his military service, Morse resumed his law studies and subsequently began practicing law in Ionia County.

The first public office that Morse held was Prosecuting Attorney for Ionia County. He served from 1867 until 1871. In 1875, he was elected to the Michigan State Senate. In 1882, he served as the Mayor of Ionia.



Justice Allen B. Morse

Morse’s service on the Michigan Supreme Court began when he filled the vacancy left by Thomas Cooley in 1885. He served an eight-year term. Justice John Champlin commented that, “As an associate of Judge Morse upon the bench, I can certify to his unfailing industry and untiring zeal to get at the pith of the controversy, without favor or prejudice toward either of the parties[‘] litigant.” (Michigan Supreme Court. Michigan Reports: Cases Decided by the Supreme Court of Michigan. Chicago: Callaghan and Co., 1879—1949, Vol. 113.)

Following his service on the Bench, Morse was appointed United States Consul in Glasgow, Scotland in 1893. On top of his public service activities, Morse enjoyed the recreation that his native state of Michigan offered, such as hunting and fishing. Overall, it has been deemed that Morse was of strong character. (Reed.)

Allen B. Morse died on July 1, 1921 and is buried in Ionia’s Highland Park Cemetery.

Dan Gemuend currently resides in Palatine, Illinois, where works as Director of Sales Operations for ADP Dealer Services. He has been made a Life Member of the Society for his generous donation.

Save the Dates!

Join in an Historic Celebration of the Opening of the Michigan Hall of Justice

Dedication of the Building to Take Place on
October 8, 2002

Beginning at 11:00 a.m. on the Steps of the Hall of Justice
For information please call: 517-346-6419



Foundations of Justice Fundraising Dinner
To benefit the Learning Center of the Hall of Justice, an
innovative, interactive educational environment for
Michigan's schoolchildren and the public
Saturday Evening, October 12, 2002

Mark Your Calendars Today
For information please call: 734-354-3607

DeMystifying the Judiciary:

New Learning Center will spotlight how the justice system works

The judiciary comes under the magnifying glass in a pioneering place called the Learning Center, on the first floor of the new \$88 million Hall of Justice in Lansing. A mix of artifacts, graphics, videos, hands-on interactives, computer programs, photographs, and text will interface in the 3,800-square-foot gallery space to create the kind of environment that will arouse interest, encourage curiosity, and promote understanding of how the justice system works.

In reaching out to the public and to schoolchildren in this way, Michigan is charting new territory, according to Vicky Kruckeberg, Learning Center coordinator. Although Hawaii does have a gallery and wonderful programming, Kruckeberg points out that the focus there is on the unique culture and how the laws apply to that culture. Similarly, the American Bar Association's exhibit in Chicago is aimed more at the legal community itself, rather than the general public. "We're breaking ground here with something that hasn't been explored before. This really is a model and several states are watching us to see how this is going to work out."

The idea to undertake such a project came from the Supreme Court Justices themselves, especially Justice Elizabeth A. Weaver, according to Justice Michael F. Cavanagh, who heads a planning team for the Learning Center. "It developed while we were in the process of developing plans for the [Hall of Justice]. There is kind of a tour loop that includes the State Capitol and the State Historical Museum and Library and we have tours through the courtroom here in the [G. Mennen Williams Building] and the Learning Center, it was felt, would be a natural and ideal extension of that tour and would be very attractive and appealing primarily to school children," Cavanagh explained.

When visitors walk into the gallery, they will encounter dozens of hands-on displays. Press a button or two and get an education about traffic violations—one of the most common interactions that people have with the law. "The exhibits are inviting, engaging, and in some ways, even a little playful," said Jeff Bernstein of Exhibition Design Incorporated, a Kalamazoo firm responsible for the set up. There are photo opportunities—sit in a jury box and get your picture taken. Spend a day in court and learn



what it is like to be a member of the prosecution, the defense, the judge, or the jury.

"Part of this is to get visitors to understand the players and their responsibilities and the thought process that these individuals go through in their roles," explained Kruckeberg. "We expect our primary audience to be schoolchildren, so we're designing this to show them how the judicial branch applies to them." An example she cites is a school locker with a sign that proclaims "does your principal have the right to search your locker? Open the locker to find out." But the exhibits aren't just for children. Adults will also find them interesting and educational.

Other exhibits will trace the history of the judicial system and how a case proceeds from a trial court through the appellate system all the way to the Michigan Supreme Court. A large plasma screen will show "live" proceedings in the Supreme Court when it's in session. One area of the gallery will focus on issues and specific cases. For example, if a visitor is interested in finding out more about American Indian rights and tribal sovereignty, a video of Judge Michael Petoskey from Traverse City explaining tribal systems in Michigan can be accessed



immediately. Specific initiatives like alternative dispute programs, mediation, domestic violence interactive programs, drug court, and teen court will also be highlighted to remind people that there are alternative ways of settling disputes and resolving problems.

“The judicial branch of government affects people’s lives and they need to understand it better,” Kruckeberg stressed. “When they become a jury member, they will have a better understanding of their rights and responsibilities: if they have a case that goes through the court system, they will have a better understanding of what that’s all about; if they decide to have a career in the legal profession, this will give them some ideas of the roles involved in the legal profession.”

A good deal of research and preparation has gone into this effort. Educators, consulting lawyers, computer and video experts, and designers have all been involved. Kruckeberg herself has a museum background, having worked in the field for almost 25 years. Before taking on this challenge, she was the director of the Detroit Historical Museum. As part of her job, she will also be conduct-



ing distance learning classes and workshops for teachers in remote parts of the state who are unable to bring their students to Lansing. For those who can make the trip, curriculum materials are being developed to help teachers prepare their students for the visit to the facility. Special consideration is being given to fourth and fifth grade students as they prepare for their Michigan Education Assessment Program.

“What we’re hoping for is that they come away with a real understanding of our system, its principles, what it stands for, and importantly, have a hands-on experience that enables them to really understand how the system

operates,” Justice Cavanagh said. “I think that’s something that just doesn’t jump out at students out of textbooks. I think the variety that the Learning Center will contain ought to hold their attention and leave some lasting impression on them and they come away with the understanding that we are operating under a Constitution, and a legislature enacts the laws, and courts have all these different functions, and there are this many justices on the Supreme Court, things of that nature, that will hopefully leave a lasting impression,” he added.

Kruckeberg estimates that in the very first year of operation, the Learning Center should get about 10,000 visitors or more. Without a facility, the court already serves 6,000 visitors annually. The first tours through the center, which cost just under a million, will be on November 1st. An opening ceremony for the Hall of Justice will take place on October 8th. Docents will be needed to guide groups of visitors through the gallery and volunteers are being sought for a training program that will begin in late August or early September. Teachers and others who possess good public speaking skills and who are willing to guide groups of people through the facility are needed. Knowledge of the judiciary is not necessary. To volunteer, call 517-373-3449 for more information.

- The Michigan Hall of Justice is located at 925 W. Ottawa Street, Lansing, MI.
- The Learning Center is located on the first floor of the Hall of Justice at the corner of Allegan Street and Martin Luther King Boulevard.
- Admission is free. Everyone is welcome.
- Hours: Monday–Friday, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
- Parking facilities are located on the east side of the Michigan Hall of Justice.
- Groups of eight or more should call ahead for reservations to ensure the availability of a tour guide.
- For reservations call 517-373-5027 or 517-373-3449.
- Check the Michigan Supreme Court website at www.courts.Michigan.gov.

This article was reprinted with permission of the State Bar from the August 2002 Michigan Bar Journal. The article was written staff writer Naseem Stecker.

In Recent News.....

New micourthistory.org Up and Running

After nearly four months of hard work, the new Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society website was made live on August 27. The site, which features brighter, bolder colors, an easy navigation bar, and a “tracking” system so visitors won’t get lost on interior pages, will continue to experience some growing pains over the next month or so.

Our primary goal in redesigning the site was to make it more attractive to visitors and easier to navigate. We wanted a self-explanatory navigation bar that would help



The new site features and easy to read, readily available navigation bar with drop down menus.

visitors get directly where they were going. “I really think that we’ve accomplished that goal,” says Executive Director Angela Bergman. “I am very pleased with how this turned out and hope we can continue to get feedback on ways to improve the site.”

Other general additions to the site include:

- Information about various internships and volunteer opportunities



- On-line donation forms for open portrait funds and other donation opportunities

- A calendar of upcoming events



- Speeches and vignettes given at various Society functions on a variety of topics
- Most recent news stories on the front page
- A page for educators from which they can download the High School and Junior High School Lesson Plans



- Various PowerPoint presentations created by former interns
- A link to the Oral Histories on the Vincent Voice Library Website

Please visit our website and e-mail any feedback to Angela Bergman at abergman@micourthistory.org

The Society’s site was redesigned with the help and hard work of Jeffrey Zacharski. Jeff is a graduate of Michigan State University, having been awarded a degree in Telecommunications with a Computer Science Background.

Jeff has moved to Boulder, Colorado, to pursue his Master’s Degree in Information Technology Systems at the University of Colorado.

Justice Boyle Oral History Nearing Completion

After three sessions of interviews with Justice Boyle, oral historian Glenn Ruggles is almost finished with the interview process. One more two-hour interview is scheduled to take place this fall, and then the interview portion of the Justice Boyle's oral history will be complete. We will soon be seeking volunteers to transcribe the audio tapes into word documents.

Oral Histories On-line by October

This year's Coleman Intern project has taken longer than expected to complete. The original plan was to have all of the existing oral histories on-line through the Vincent Voice Library's website by the end of August. That dead-line has now been pushed back until mid-October.

Michelle Martin, the intern working on the project, explained that "the digitalization and division of the sound files took longer than expected because we ran into several snags along the way." "The plan now is to finish one complete file at a time and make them live as they are completed. We should have them all up by October 18."

To see and hear the histories that are currently available, visit <http://digital.lib.msu.edu/onlinecolls/collection>

Society Prepares for Move to the Hall of Justice

It's official. The Hall of Justice construction project seems to be on schedule and the moving plans are being finalized even as this newsletter goes to print.

The Society's biggest job relating to the move will be to oversee the move of the 52 Court portraits that hang in the G Mennen Williams Law Building and other state buildings in Lansing. The move of the portraits is scheduled to begin on Wednesday, October 2. Approximately half of the portraits will be moved on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th. Another group will be packed and transferred on the 9th, 10th, and 11th, and the final portraits, those to hang in Justices' suites, will be moved on the 24th and 25th.

With the generous help and planning of Linda Clewley and Mike Murray, a plan for the placement of the portraits in the new building has been made and should make the transfer very smooth.

After considering a suggestion made by Mike Murray, a Supreme Court Commissioner, the Society approved a proposal to create plaques displaying the biographies of each justice and to arrange to hang the plaques next to the portraits.

The plaques will be simple--holders made of clear acrylic will contain a print-out of the biography as seen in the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Reference Guide. "The idea is that most of the portraits will be displayed in public areas within the new building and those who are just walking by will know the stories behind the portraits rather than just seeing them," says Angela Bergman.

The Historical Society office is scheduled to be moved to the new building on October 21. The Society will keep it's current address and phone numbers through October to help reduce the amount of "lost" mail and phone calls.

Beginning on October 28, 2002, the Society's new address will be:

Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society
1st Floor, Hall of Justice
925 Ottawa Street
Lansing, MI 48915

Phone: 517-373-7589

Fax: 517-373-7592

The website and e-mail addresses will remain unchanged:

Website: www.micourthistory.org

E-mail: abergman@micourthistory.org

Dont' forget that the following funds are currently open and accepting donations.

2002 General Fund (Membership Dues)

James H. Brickley Portrait Fund

Conrad L. Mallet Portrait Fund

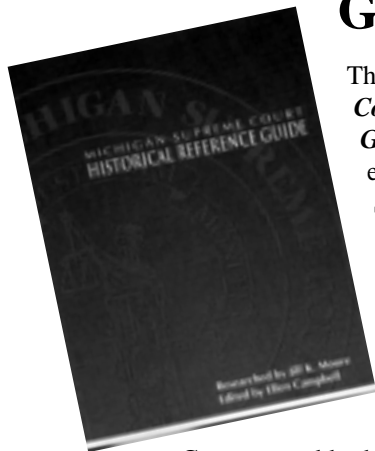
Learning Center Fund

Big Four Writing and Research Fund

To contribute to any of these funds, send your check or money order to the Society at 306 Townsend Street, Lansing, MI 48933. Please be sure to designate the fund to which you are donating.

You may also pay by credit card by calling Angela Bergman at 517-346-6419.

Order the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Reference Guide



The *Michigan Supreme Court Historical Reference Guide* tells the stories of each of Michigan's first 100 Supreme Court Justices, from 1805 to 1998. Illustrated with photos of each Justice, this fascinating, 273-page volume also contains an index of special sessions of the Michigan Supreme

Court, sorted both by honorees and speakers, as well as a factual chart of the Court by years that lists the Court's composition each year since 1805.

Call 517-346-6419 to order your copy!

Mission Statement

The Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated to preserving documents, records and memorabilia relating to the Michigan Supreme Court. The Society produces publications, special events and other projects to achieve its goals in education and restoration. Current officers and directors are:

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Society Update is published quarterly by the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society. Writing submissions, article ideas, news and announcements are encouraged. Contact the Society at: 306 Townsend Street, Lansing, MI 48933; Ph. (517) 346-6419; Fax (517) 372-2716;

E-mail MSCHS@MICOURTHISTORY.ORG; Web site: WWW.MICOURTHISTORY.ORG



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