



History Explorer

Historical Society of Greater Lansing

www.LansingHistory.org

October 2018

Upcoming Events

Thanks to All for Successful Moore's River Drive Home Tour

The Historical Society of Greater Lansing held its second annual tour of homes on Moore's River Drive this past month. The event began with a brunch and tour of the Lansing Country Club underwritten by Jack and Sue Davis. Clear skies and warm temperatures greeted the hundreds of participants who took in century-old Tudors and Arts-and-Crafts-influenced homes, along with a sleek modernist home built in 2006.

Several neighborhood children helped sate participants' thirst by setting up creative lemonade stands along the tour route. Guests at the Brunch were treated to a surprise visitor when their neighbor Mayor Andy Schor made remarks about historic preservation.



The tour is a fundraiser for the HSGL and supports its efforts to create museum space to showcase Lansing's history. The fundraiser was generously hosted by the Moore's River Drive Neighborhood Association and the Riverside Home Association. HSGL extends much appreciation and thanks to the homeowners: Stephen & Karissa Purchase, Judy & John Nash, Troy Wilson, Joe & Liz Smalley, and James McClurken and Sergei Kvitko; the hosting associations; the generous sponsors; all the hardworking volunteers; and all those who supported the event by their attendance.

Double-Take: Greater Lansing in the Age of Stereographs

by Craig Whitford and Jacob McCormick

Thursday October 18, 2018 – 7:00 p.m.

Library of Michigan, 702 W. Kalamazoo, Lansing

We'll have you seeing double through the entertainment media of the late 19th and early 20th century—the stereograph. Historians Jacob McCormick and Craig Whitford will introduce you to the little-known world of greater Lansing stereoview images. They'll provide you with the history of the stereograph as well as an overview of those local and national photographers that created them. You'll be treated to a tour of images captured as a double-photograph that, when viewed with a stereoscope, produces a three-dimensional view. Many of the images Jacob and Craig will present have not been seen before.

Duffy Daugherty: A Man Ahead of His Time

by David Claerbaut

Thursday, October 25 – 7:00 p.m.

East Lansing Public Library, 950 Abbot Rd., East Lansing

Duffy Daugherty may have led the MSU Spartans to a winning record of 109 wins, 69 losses, and fives ties during his tenure from 1954-1972, but he is still remembered for a 1966 tie with Notre Dame while playing for the National Championship. Author David Claerbaut writes about the infamous tie and other highlights of Duffy's life in his new book *Duffy Daugherty: A Man Ahead of His Time*, published by Michigan State University Press. Claerbaut will join HSGL at the East Lansing Public Library for a free event to discuss and sign his new book.

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Marvin E. Beekman: Innovator in Special Education

By Jo Trumble

When you are born left-handed in 1909, society decides you need to be right-handed and forces you to adapt. Add to that a stutter that you are told will take you out of your preferred career choice and a stint where you have to rely on crutches to get around. With all of these “differences” you grow up with an understanding of human nature that most others do not appreciate. Marvin Beekman had all of these challenges as he grew up. He attributes these “deficits” as part of his success in the Special Education field.



Marvin Beekman

Courtesy Lansing State Journal, 9 Oct 1965.

Marvin E. Beekman was born on May 9, 1909, in Grand Haven. Growing up, he worked to lose the crutches and become right-handed. Music offered him a chance to tour the country with his baritone as part of the Thomson Jacque Band. He graduated from Grand Haven High School in 1927 and headed to

Western Michigan where he was the first winner of the National Craftsman Award in 1932.

That summer Beekman went to the state’s YMCA summer camp to head up the Arts and Crafts department. While he was there he decided to take on the “problem” boys when he got tired of listening to the other counselors complain about them. With all of the boys in one cabin with him, Beekman learned the hard way how to get through to them. When a father of one of those boys asked him to talk about the experience at the Lansing Rotary Club, Beekman’s uncertain future took on a decided direction. In the audience sat J. W. Sexton, Superintendent for Lansing Public Schools. Sexton offered Beekman a teaching job to start in the fall of 1932.

Beekman reported to his classroom in Cedar Street School to find 40 students that were “so-called retarded.” What he found was that many of the teachers, like himself, were not trained to deal with this type of student. His day-to-day handling of the students caught the eye of Dr. Dwight Rich who asked him to become the Director of Special Education after he completed his B.A. from Western in 1952. He started by overseeing only 67 special education teachers and counselors. He followed this with an M.A. from MSU in 1957. He also held a Master’s degree from New York University.

Also in the year 1957, Beekman undertook a campaign to require schools to supply funds for special education students. His statement was: “Some children are mentally retarded because we do not know how to teach them.” A plan for a dedicated center, not an institution, for these students was being created in his mind in 1960 while he was chairperson for the Michigan Section of Mental Retardation at a White House Conference under President Kennedy.

A committee of interested parties joined together in the winter of 1961 to discuss plans. When Beekman realized they did not want to talk money, however, he wrote grants and found other ways to find funding. By 1965 he had enough funds to start talking designs. The Lansing Board of Education approved site plans in August 1965 and the 40-acre site east of Forest View school was on its way. This would be a center run by the Lansing Schools but would be open to all students within Ingham county. Ground was broken in 1966 on a design that would include training areas to teach housekeeping and how to handle money in shopping situations, a swimming pool, and dental and medical examination rooms, to go with regular classrooms. When the doors opened, Beekman Center also held records of all children in Ingham County that would qualify for any of its assistance.

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The Special Olympics, which also began in 1968, was able to find a home in Beekman Center for its regional offices.

It should not be a surprise that many suggested Marvin Beekman's name be associated with the building he so championed. Originally, he was embarrassed by the approval to name the building the Marvin E. Beekman Center for Trainable Children when it opened its doors in 1968. He later grew to appreciate the honor and spoke at the dedication that would host more than 800 people. Beekman stated: "And this building is truly unusual. Some special education leaders in Washington have described this facility as 50 years ahead of today's thinking."

In 1968 he left the Lansing Public Schools to become the Director of Special Education Department for the State of Michigan. Marvin Beekman, however, could be found wandering the halls of the Beekman Center on occasions.

In 1973 Beekman finally found people who supported his ideals about honoring all students with an education. His son Lynwood, a lawyer, was able to assist in the passing of a law in 1973 where all schools were required to supply funds for special education. Shortly after this bill passed, Marvin Beekman retired. His retirement was partly influenced by his need to recover from open heart surgery that same year. It was said that his memory for former students was still strong.

His name gracing the building he helped create was not his only honor. Central Michigan would honor his work with an Honorary Doctorate in Public Service in 1972. The Marvin E. Beekman Award was also established in 1973 by the Directors of Special Education to honor Outstanding Leadership in Special Education. MSU presented him with an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws in 1974.

In 1934 Beekman married Pauline Westwood, his college sweetheart. They would have four children: Patricia, Susanne, Lynwood, and Edward. Pauline Beekman not only taught at Pattengill but also would open the doors to their house to many of Marvin Beekman's students. Her caring nature would be featured prominently in her receiving Lansing's Mother of the Year Award in 1956. They were able to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary at the Country Club in 1984.

Marvin Beekman died November 6, 1985, at the age of 72 and was buried in Evergreen Cemetery. His willingness to try anything he thought would help students made him an innovator. His ideas affected special education across the whole nation. He was instrumental in helping change the thinking of how a whole group of citizens are viewed.

Although now many students with special needs are mainstreamed into ordinary classrooms, Beekman Center is still

there to meet the needs of those needing extra help. Beekman Center's current Principal, Rob Ellis, stated: "In the season we are in, education with individualized goals for each student, it is a ripe time to really look at what specially designed instruction really is to benefit all of our students in general education and those with individual educational plans. Education is in transformation for all students, families, staff and educational systems."

People from all over the world have visited the Beekman Center to learn about their innovations over the years. At 50 years of age, the Beekman Center may need some extra upkeep, but the heart of the program is still there. There have only been five principals during the 50 years. John Breagh, who was the first and the person for which the horse barn is named, stayed for 26 years. There was also a teacher, Denise Fitzpatrick, who worked there for 42 years. Every year, many of the former students look forward to visiting their former school. Innovations are still being sought at this unique school. This could only bring pleasure to the man it is named after who was always concerned that: "There is so much we don't know in this field."

*Beekman Center celebrated its 50th birthday on September 5, 2018. They opened their time capsule and are working on adding updates before sealing up a new one.



Beekman Center

Upcoming Events - *Cont'd from page 1*

Duffy Daugherty...

In his career Daugherty coached 33 first-team All Americans, but probably more rewarding to him was the fact he recruited 59 black players to play football at MSU during a time when they could not play for the powerhouse Southern teams like Alabama. His 1965 and 1966 teams either won or tied for the National Championship.

Daugherty also was credited with starting an African American quarterback, Jimmy Raye, one of the first for a major college. Raye said in his autobiography that Daugherty "was color-blind." Other coaches may ultimately win more games at MSU but it's unlikely any will grace the cover of *Time Magazine* as Duffy did on October 8, 1956.



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