



Gallery of

Speakers'
Portraits

PENNSYLVANIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the state Capitol, created as a “palace of art” by its architect Joseph M. Huston. As Speaker of a legislative body formed in 1682, I greet you on behalf of my colleagues in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives.



As you tour the magnificent halls of this historic and ornate building, please take a moment to reflect upon the portraits hanging in the “Gallery of Speakers” along the corridor outside the Speaker’s office. This booklet features portraits and relevant information on individuals who have served as Speaker of the House.

On Jan. 2, 2007, I was elected as the 137th Speaker of the House. It is an honor that I embrace with great energy and passion. It is my pledge to serve as Speaker in a way consistent with the historic role this Commonwealth’s forebears envisioned for this office: ensuring that the diversity of people, faiths and backgrounds of William Penn’s “Holy Experiment” is honored.

May your visit renew your appreciation of our representative democracy and further encourage your participation in the governmental process that is both our legacy and our hope.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis M. O'Brien". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dennis M. O'Brien
Speaker of the House

-
- ◆ **The Speakership of the House is the Commonwealth’s oldest elected statewide public office, established in 1682, and held by 137 persons to date.**
 - ◆ **The House is not a constituted body if it lacks a Speaker, and Session cannot be held without the Speaker or the appointed Speaker Pro Tempore presiding at the rostrum.**
 - ◆ **The term “Speaker” is meant literally. The Speaker speaks for the people and for the House, and is beholden to no executive authority but the law.**
 - ◆ **While the Speaker has only one vote, no more than the newest Member, it is he who convenes and recesses Sessions, appoints committee chairpersons, directs bills to committees, and signs all passed bills and resolutions.**
 - ◆ **The Speaker serves all Members and must uphold the orderly conduct of House business, protecting the parliamentary rights of every elected Representative.**
 - ◆ **William Penn wrote:**

*“Governments, like clocks, go from the motion men give them, and as governments are made and moved by men, so by them they are ruined too.
Governments depend upon men, rather than men upon governments.”*

Frame of Government of the Province of Pennsylvania, Feb. 2, 1683

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome	i
Andrew Hamilton, 18th Speaker	1
Benjamin Franklin, 23rd Speaker	3
Frederick A.C. Muhlenberg, 30th Speaker	5
Thomas Mifflin, 32nd Speaker	7
Ira T. Fiss, 121st Speaker	9
Franklin H. Lichtenwalter, 122nd Speaker	11
Herbert P. Sorg, 123rd Speaker	13
Charles C. Smith, 124th Speaker	15
Hiram G. Andrews, 125th Speaker	17
W. Stuart Helm, 126th Speaker	19
Robert K. Hamilton, 127th Speaker.....	21
Kenneth B. Lee, 128th Speaker	23
Herbert Fineman, 129th Speaker	25
K. Leroy Irvis, 130th Speaker.....	27
H. Jack Seltzer, 131st Speaker	29
Matthew J. Ryan, 132nd Speaker	31
James J. Manderino, 133rd Speaker	33
Robert W. O'Donnell, 134th Speaker	35
H. William DeWeese, 135th Speaker	37
John M. Perzel, 136th Speaker	39
About the Artists	41

ANDREW HAMILTON

18th Speaker, 1729-32 and 1734-38

House Member: 12 years, 1727-39

Bucks County



Born in 1676, Hamilton, known as “*The Old Fox*” by his colleagues, is a noted figure in American history. He helped design and personally financed the building of Independence Hall and was a leading “*Philadelphia lawyer*” for whom the term originated.

The Scottish attorney, who was admitted to the bar in 1712, had oversight for the construction work on Independence Hall and adjoining offices. He was the first Speaker to preside at the State House in 1735, later known as Independence Hall.

At the age of 30, he adopted the name Hamilton, married a rich widow, and served briefly in the Maryland Assembly. After studying law in London, he settled in Pennsylvania and served as its attorney general from 1717-26.

Hamilton hired young Benjamin Franklin as chief clerk of the Assembly. Hamilton’s defense of publisher John Peter Zenger of New York against a

charge of sedition contributed 56 years later to the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

Hamilton was appointed to the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, but according to historians, rarely attended, due to his busy law practice. He also served as trustee of the General Loan Office, recorder and prothonotary of Philadelphia and a member of both the Pennsylvania and Delaware assemblies.

In October of 1729, he was elected Speaker, and with the exception of the year 1733, he remained Speaker until his retirement in 1739.

He and his son, James, were among the founders of Lancaster. Hamilton was Speaker in 1729, when Lancaster became the Commonwealth's fourth county.

Hamilton died in 1741 at the age of 65.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

23rd Speaker, 1764

House Member: 14 years, 1751-64

Philadelphia



Certainly the most famous Speaker, Franklin (1706-1790) began his adult life working as a printer for his brother James. Later, he left Boston to establish himself in Philadelphia. In 1726, he became the editor and proprietor of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, and the best-selling *Poor Richard's Almanack*.

Franklin assisted in founding the Philadelphia Library in 1731. He became the chief clerk of the Assembly in 1736, and postmaster of Philadelphia in 1737. On October 4, 1748, he was chosen a Philadelphia councilman. In 1749, at age 43, Franklin gave up his successful printing business to pursue scientific inquiry and public service. To puzzled friends who asked “why?” Franklin replied that when he died he would rather have people say “*He was useful,*” than “*He was rich.*”

It was at that time that Franklin asked the Assembly for 2,000 pounds sterling to build a hospital, but rural legislators were skeptical. So Franklin offered a deal. Franklin proposed to raise 2,000 pounds privately if the Assem-

bly then would appropriate 2,000 pounds. The legislators agreed. Franklin raised his half, the Assembly supplied its share, and Pennsylvania Hospital opened in 1751, the first in America.

On May 26, 1764, Franklin was “*unanimously chosen Speaker and accordingly placed in the Chair,*” according to the *Legislative Journal* of that day.

Franklin replaced the sickly Issac Norris II and presided a few days in the spring session and again in September before adjournment. On October 1, 1764, he was defeated for re-election in Philadelphia by 26 votes. He left office after 14 years as a member of the House and 15 years as its chief clerk.

In 1766, at age 60, Franklin had his portrait painted in London by David Martin. It was one of Franklin’s favorites, because the Scottish artist wisely took years and pounds off the statesman to produce an excellent, if not exact, likeness. In 1789, Franklin in his will bequeathed the portrait to his beloved House. The year following his death the unicameral House hung the portrait near its Assembly Room in Independence Hall. A decade later, when the Assembly moved to Lancaster, the Franklin portrait was left behind.

He was the deputy postmaster-general of the British colonies in 1753. In 1775 Franklin was chosen to be a member of the Continental Congress. He was a member of the Constitutional Convention of July 15, 1776, and was chosen to serve as its president in 1776. He helped secure the treaty of Alliance on February 6, 1778 and in 1785 Franklin served as American’s ambassador to France.

Franklin served as the Assembly’s agent to Parliament (1764-75), its chief delegate to draft the *Declaration of Independence*, and was a key figure at the 1787 constitutional convention to form the United States.

When he was asked why he was so popular and was elected 13 times, he replied, “*the people happen to love me. Perhaps that’s my fault.*”

FREDERICK A.C. MUHLENBERG

30th Speaker, 1780-82

House Member: 13 years, 1770-83

Philadelphia



Muhlenberg (1750-1801) was the son of Reverend Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg, founder of the Lutheran Church in America and the grandson of Conrad Weiser, a famous Indian scout and interpreter and first presiding judge of Berks County.

Muhlenberg served in the Pennsylvania and Virginia House of Representatives and in the 1st and 3rd United States Congresses. He was an unsuccessful candidate for governor in the 1793 and 1796 elections.

As a child, with his two brothers, he was sent to Germany to be educated as a Lutheran pastor. He later served as county registrar of last wills and testaments and as justice of the peace for the district of Skippack, Perkiomen, Providence and Limerick townships.

The Muhlenberg family produced six members of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, five members of the United State Congress, and two candidates for governor, one of whom was F.A.C. Muhlenberg. The family also was prominent in the founding of Franklin College.

Muhlenberg was elected to the General Assembly in 1770, where he served for 13 years. In 1784, he was elected the first president judge of the Montgomery County court. He held the first session of the court at noon at the Barley Sheaf Barn on Germantown Road. A table, benches and chairs were carried from a nearby inn for the court use in the barn.

He is the only Pennsylvania Speaker also elected Speaker of the United States House of Representatives. He served as Speaker in the 1st United States Congress, March 4, 1789 through March 9, 1791 and the 3rd United States Congress, March 4, 1793 through March 3, 1795. While in congressional office, Muhlenberg attended the inaugural ceremonies of George Washington when he took the oath of office as the first president of the United States.

A colleague of Muhlenberg once stated that: *“The contest by which he was placed in a situation to be Speaker of the House of Representatives in Congress will be commemorated for the honor of America as long as the Union lasts; and for Mr. Mublenberg’s honor the conduct which he observed in that arduous and important office ought never to be forgotten.”*

A portrait of Muhlenberg hangs in the Speaker’s Gallery in Washington, D.C.

THOMAS MIFFLIN

32nd Speaker, 1785-87

House Member: 8 years, 1772-74, 1778-81,

1785-87 and 1799

Philadelphia



Present at the Continental Congress and the Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention in 1789, Mifflin (1744-1800) was the first Speaker later elected governor of Pennsylvania.

A Quaker, Mifflin was a major general in the army and was a descendant of an old Philadelphia family attached to the Society of Friends. He attended a Quaker school and the College of Philadelphia, where he studied classical languages and graduated at the age of 16. When Mifflin was 21, his father sent him to Europe following his education at a counting-house to *"improve his mind and enlarge his ideas by the results of foreign travel."*

In 1771, he was appointed a warden of the city of Philadelphia. In 1772, he was elected a burgess representative of the City of Philadelphia. He was elected to the first Continental Congress in 1774, and was elected a member of the convention to draft the federal constitution.

General George Washington chose him as his aide-de-camp. On August 14, 1775, Washington appointed him quartermaster general of the Continental Army. On May 16, 1776, he was appointed a brigadier general and on February 19, 1777, a major general.

Mifflin served as the president of the state Constitutional Convention of 1790 and was governor of Pennsylvania for three terms, from 1790 to 1799.

A *“sprightly and spirited speaker,”* Mifflin was considered a *“very useful member”* of the First Continental Congress by his colleagues.

Samuel Bryan, in a letter to his father, George Bryan, on November 3, 1785, wrote that *“Mifflin makes an excellent Speaker; he preserves the most perfect order and discourse, and General Wayne is obliged to submit, not a whisper or shifting of places during debate or while business is going on.”*

Mifflin’s portrait was painted by more famous American artists, (Benjamin West, Gilbert Stuart, and John Singleton Copley) than any other Pennsylvania public figure. Copley’s portrait of Mifflin and his wife Sarah Morris Mifflin, is considered an American masterpiece.

The Federal Constitutional Convention met during Mifflin’s tenure, in 1787. The Pennsylvania Assembly sent eight delegates to the convention. All signed the finished United States Constitution on September 17, 1787, and Pennsylvania was the second state to ratify the document, on December 12th of the same year.

IRA T. FISS

121st Speaker, 1943-46

House Member: 12 years, 1937-48

Republican of Shamokin Dam, Snyder County



“It is a proper function of State Government to make it easy for the people to do good and difficult for them to do wrong.”

**— Acknowledgement Speech
January 5, 1943**

Speaker Ira T. Fiss (1888-1955) was the wartime Speaker of the House of Representatives. He served as Speaker for four years, and rapped his gavel for his last adjournment May 7, 1945, appropriately V-E Day in Europe.

“The greatest task before us is to win the war,” he said when he first took the rostrum. “Perilous times demand heroic, unselfish and united action.” He praised Pennsylvania as “the Arsenal of Democracy.” Judge Robert E. Woodside, former Majority Leader, swore Fiss into office and in brief remarks said, “In no nation where a dictatorship exists is there a legislative body. It is the legislative bodies of America that make it a democracy.”

Speaker Fiss instructed the House that now was “no time for needless legislation,” and it responded with the shortest Session in 25 years and the fewest bills passed in 45 years. The Speaker’s call for patriotism was heeded by extending absentee ballots in primary elections to the nearly 1.8 million Pennsylvanians in military service. The 1943-44 House’s heroic achievement was passing a biennial budget \$20.5 million lower than the

budget of the previous two years. That was never done before in this century.

While the war raged that entire spring, the House prepared the budget and programs Pennsylvania needed for peacetime. Preparation was made for cleaning up stream pollution, and major post-war highway repair and construction was begun.

In 1939, only his third year as a House Member, Fiss was appointed the Appropriations Chairman. He oversaw the 1939-40 Budget that produced a surplus for the first time in eight years.

After his Speakership, he served a term as Vice-Chairman of the Highways Committee, and at age 60 retired from the House of Representatives. Members who served with him remembered him as a “quiet, dignified” man of “unruffled temper and simple honesty.”

Fiss was the son of a road builder and briefly followed his father’s occupation. He was educated at Bucknell Academy and Susquehanna University. Ira Fiss was a lifelong resident of Shamokin Dam and its first mayor to serve two terms. For more than four decades, including his tenure as Speaker, he served as Sunday School superintendent at his Lutheran church.

FRANKLIN H. LICHTENWALTER

122nd Speaker, 1947

House Member: 8 years, 1939-47

Republican of Coopersburg, Lehigh County



“We face the multitudinous and perplexing problems confronting our Commonwealth as we adjust our living from war to peace.”

— **Acknowledgement Speech**
January 6, 1947

Speaker Franklin H. Lichtenwalter (1910-1973) at age 36 was one of the youngest Speakers along with having been the youngest Majority Leader ever elected to that office. In 1943, his fellow Republicans elected him their Majority Leader when he was only 32 years old even though he was a Member of the House for only four years. Two Sessions later, by an overwhelming vote, he was chosen to be Speaker of the House. This was a job he said required “great patience and understanding.”

Speaker Lichtenwalter was known for his friendly wit and his talent for preparation and order. With a movie star’s lean, handsome, and trimmed mustache look, he was an impressive figure.

Speaker Lichtenwalter was born in Palmerton, graduated from Allentown High School, and at age 25 was elected Justice of the Peace. By profession he was in the general insurance business, and he was elected to the House at age 28.

After being the wartime Majority Leader for four years, he went to the rostrum in 1947 to preside over a House that had 168 Republicans, the

most in modern times. The 37 Democrats, as one said, considered themselves “the militant, though at most times ineffectual, minority.”

One of the first decisions of Speaker Lichtenwalter was to reduce the traditional 42 House committees to a more workable 32. That was the first step in what later was known as the Modern Pennsylvania Legislature Movement, which made the Pennsylvania House a model assembly for many other states.

Governor James H. Duff proposed raising cigarette taxes and also proposed the controversial penny tax on soft drinks. The major task of Speaker Lichtenwalter and Majority Leader Herb P. Sorg was to achieve critical consensus in their divided caucus, during a long, grueling tax-raising Session. The Lichtenwalter-Sorg leadership team got the job done “without bitterness,” no matter how contested the issues were, as one veteran caucus member said.

State Republican Leaders met at the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel in 1947 and requested the Speaker accept their bid for the U.S. House seat. Speaker Lichtenwalter met his wife Marguerite in the hotel lobby after the meeting. He told her that he reluctantly agreed to the U.S. House nomination and that it was “the worst thing that could ever happen to me.” He loved the State House too much and did not want to leave.

Afflicted with childhood diabetes, he had an outstanding public career until by necessity he retired in 1950 from Congress at age 40. During his last 23 years, Franklin Lichtenwalter was managing director of the Pennsylvania Electric Association, headquartered near the State Capitol.

HERBERT P. SORG

123rd Speaker, 1949-52

House Member: 12 years, 1941-52

Republican of St. Marys, Elk County



“There’s work ahead — and it’s serious work. Ten million Pennsylvania people — some of them needy, some of them ill, some of them in fear for their security, some having, some not having — all have a special right to look to us here to work in all seriousness toward the establishment of those rules of society which will operate most effectively against the common evil and in furtherance of the common good.”

**— Acknowledgment Speech
January 4, 1949**

Herbert P. Sorg (1911-1979) was a House member in just his fourth term when he became Speaker of the House. He succeeded Speaker Lichtenwalter who stepped down after his election to the United States Congress. This Republican Floor Leader thought he was the most unlikely person to be elected Speaker. However, every member of the body agreed that he earned the honor. Even the loyal opposition gave hearty approval. “I can say, in all sincerity, that no commanding general under whom I served in World War II ever had more complete and adequate control of every tactical situation than that displayed by the Majority Leader during this Session,” said Representative Eustace H. Bane, a veteran from Uniontown.

At age 29, with backing from fellow volunteer firemen, he was elected to the House. Two years later, he was Vice-Chairman of the Constitutional Amendments Committee. In his fourth year, he was Majority Whip, Chairman of the Constitutional Amendments Committee and on six other committees. In his sixth year, he was Majority Leader for the difficult but productive 1947 Session. Then he was elected Speaker of the House.

Minority Leader Hiram G. Andrews in his typical vivid style said: “Just remember the way in which he handled Act 481. He nursed it, he wiped it, he cleaned it, he brought his baby through. He burped it, he took it back to Committee and eventually passed it, and I say that is a record of achievement that you won’t find duplicated by any other member of this House, however mighty he may be.”

Fellow Legislators and Judges regarded Herb Sorg as a fine parliamentarian, expert constitutional lawyer, and a “country judge” with a “phenomenal knowledge of the law.” His friends in St. Marys considered their quiet, Lincoln-esque neighbor as being very “adept at what he was doing.”

Representative Charles C. Smith, his successor, claimed Speaker Sorg had the gift to “drive straight to the essential of every problem and thereby dispose of them promptly and with finality.”

In 1951, his final Session, Speaker Sorg came within 70 hours of celebrating Christmas Eve in the Hall of the House instead of with his wife June, his son and four daughters. “I think we should clear the decks, clear the records, and go home in the spirit of Christmas,” a member said when it was 2:30 a.m. on the Saturday before the holiday.

Speaker Sorg was a top student at St. Vincent College and the Duquesne Law School. He was a renowned hunter and fisherman, and in his later life he built a cabin near St. Marys with his own hands.

He retired from the House in 1952, and in 1955 President Dwight D. Eisenhower appointed him to the Federal District Court in Pittsburgh, where he had a second distinguished career for 24 years. He rose to be Chief Judge and received national attention in 1959 for his role in resolving the longest steel strike ever of 116 days.

CHARLES C. SMITH

124th Speaker, 1953-54

House Member: 13 years, 1944-56

Republican of Philadelphia



“Individually, our members come from origins from many sections of the State, but we must always remember that our sectional interests are secondary. Our first thought must always be for the best interests of all of the people of this Commonwealth.”

**— Acknowledgement Speech,
January 6, 1953**

Speaker Charles C. Smith (1908-1970) was Pennsylvania’s “Happy Warrior” of the post-World War II political generation. “His smile is his most outstanding characteristic. Actually his smile is but the manifestation of all the fine qualities that make him different from other men,” said Majority Leader Albert W. Johnson. Wherever he went, a beaming glow preceded this short, immaculately dressed, amiable gentleman, and his cheerfulness brightened every room he stepped into. He was “Charley Smith” to everybody, “a man impossible to dislike” said one legislator.

It was the fate of one so good natured to be put in the midst of two of the House’s most difficult Sessions. First, he was Majority Leader in 1951-52, and then he was Speaker in 1953-54. Those were the taxing years when Pennsylvania, with more than a half-million Baby Boomers nearing or at school age, required its first statewide personal levy. Much of the responsibility fell upon Speaker Smith, but as Albert Johnson said, “His quiet good humor remained constant through the most difficult times, and his

patient determination has been a prime factor in bringing us to a successful conclusion.”

In 1951, Majority Leader Smith got a wage tax through the House, but it was never enacted. Then, as Speaker, he presided over the 1953 Session which levied the first one-percent sales tax. Governor John S. Fine needed a 30-percent increase in revenue just to balance the budget. Speaker Smith and Senate Leader Harvey Taylor devoted weeks to getting all the votes for the sales tax from their caucuses. After the sales tax was defeated twice in the House, Speaker Smith resurrected the bill by suspending the rules and heroically got it passed. The Session ended on July 27, 1953, the same day the Korean Conflict truce was signed.

Speaker Smith was educated at Northeast High School in Philadelphia, and became a partner in one of the largest coal and oil businesses in the Eastern United States.

He won a special election to the House in 1944. The next year he was Vice-Chairman of the Railroads and Railways Committee and served on five other committees. From 1949 until he left the House in 1956, Smith was in Leadership and a hard worker in four busy Sessions; first as Majority Whip, then Majority Leader, Speaker, and in his last Session the Minority Leader. During those eight years, he contended with two factions of Republicans plus the Democrats. Minority Leader Hiram G. Andrews warned caucus members about Speaker Smith by saying, “He will rule against you and cure the wound with that brilliant smile.”

He left the House to become Auditor General in 1957. In 1960, he lost the race for State Treasurer and retired. On occasion he revisited the Capitol as “a statesman,” he said, greeting old friends with that grin almost as big and lustrous as the Rotunda itself.

HIRAM G. ANDREWS

125th Speaker, 1955-56 and 1959-62

House Member: 24 years, 1933-36, 1939-40 and 1945-62

Democrat of Johnstown, Cambria County



“This old House is strong and sturdy, this old House is sometimes wordy: but this old House has times of sanity, and braves the blasts of editorial inanity.”

— **Speaker Andrews verse at House Testimonial, March 20, 1956**

Speaker Hiram G. Andrews (1876-1968) was the wise and witty Methuselah of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. This octogenarian was the oldest member in the House’s history, retiring from its highest office at age 86 in November of 1962.

The Capitol was this lifelong bachelor’s home away from his home in Johnstown. He knew it from its beginning, because in the early days of his 41-year newspaper career, he was a reporter for the “Philadelphia North American” and covered the Capitol Graft Scandal and the 1906 dedication of the Capitol.

During his six years as Speaker, he virtually lived in the Capitol. He kept a hot-plate in his office to make breakfast after he slept over from long night sessions.

“A great and grand gentleman, and we regard him with real affection,” former Speaker Charles C. Smith, a Republican, said when Andrews first was installed as Speaker in 1955.

Representative Andrews was the Democratic floor leader for 11 years, longer than anyone else in his party's history and only one year short of the House record. "I can qualify as a consultant concerning matters of minority party mass movements," he told Republicans.

He took his seat at age 56 in 1933 as a self-acknowledged "renegade", the lone member of the Independent Citizens Party. Early in the session, he rose to his full 5-foot 5-inch frame and in his twangy voice requested, "Mr. Speaker, the Independent Citizens Party at the recess will caucus in the phone booth at the back of the House." After that, Hi Andrews never lacked an audience.

By his second term in 1935, he was a Democrat, a committee chairman, and the moderate partisan he remained the rest of his tenure. He was an advocate for better legislative pay, professional staffing, tax reform, and support of education.

In 1947 he submitted a report calling for electronic roll-call voting, and 14 years later when he was Speaker, it became a reality. As Speaker in 1955, he created the first committee with the word "conservation" in its title. He presided over the first annual session and budget in 1961-62.

Hi Andrews was a master of wry humor spiced with literary allusions. "We served as the whetstone upon which he sharpened the razor of his wit," he said of Speaker Franklin H. Lichtenwalter, and when Andrews was Speaker, he expected members to do the same for him. In 1951 when the House voted to approve premixed yellow oleomargarine, he announced he was "elated" that "common sense triumphed" after 65 years of debate. When it took 11 months to pass a budget, Speaker Andrews had an explanation: "When the Pennsylvania General Assembly starts out to create a legislative mess, it can, as a result of years of practice, do a weird, wild and wonderful job."

After his death in 1968 at age 91, the General Assembly voted to name the Johnstown Rehabilitation Center in his honor.

W. STUART HELM

126th Speaker, 1957-58 and 1963-64

House Member: 24 years, 1941-64

Republican of Kittanning, Armstrong County



“The majority party in the House. . . will lend its support to any sensible, economical, progressive program. . . . The yardstick we will use. . . will be, first, is it workable; second, is it good for all the people of this Commonwealth; third, can we afford it.”

— Acknowledgement Speech,
January 1, 1957

Speaker W. Stuart Helm (1908-1985) was one of the most accomplished and experienced House members ever to be “elevated to such a high position in one of the world’s greatest legislative bodies,” as he termed his first unanimous election in 1957.

He was a leader with a sense of dispatch, and twice as Speaker he proved it. The efficiency displayed in his two sessions as Speaker was extraordinary.

His 1957-58 session required just 71 legislative days, the shortest in 110 years. His 1963-64 session, regarded by many as one of the most productive of the past half-century, took longer — 93 days, but no session since has done its work with such promptness.

Called “the guardian of the dignity of this House,” Speaker Helm in his first address to fellow members told them what he and the public expected: “With your cooperation, I assure you that we will start each day’s session on time. No recess will extend beyond the time established by this House. I serve notice on both Floor Leaders that we must be prepared to start each day’s session of this Body at the time specified.”

Neat and elegant in his own appearance and a gentleman who valued personal and public decorum, Speaker Helm insisted members display politeness, self-discipline, and a sense of pride which included the requirement that male members wear jackets. Parliamentarian S. Edward Moore, guardian of House proprieties for almost three decades, issued the Speaker's reprimands when shirt sleeves were spotted on the House Floor.

Speaker Helm was a well-organized public servant. He was so respected by his peers that he served on 17 different committees during his tenure, a modern House record. He was also chairman of four different committees — Education, Workers' Compensation, Labor Relations, and Welfare, each for two sessions. He was a member of the Education Committee for 20 years, Motor Vehicles for 12 years, and Ways and Means for six years. His understanding of state government earned him national honors. He was president of the National Legislative Conference in 1962-63 and second vice-president of the Council of State Governments.

After he stepped down the first time as Speaker, the Republican Caucus created the post of Policy Chairman, and from 1959-62, he was the first Policy Chairman in House history. When he left the House in 1964, Governor William W. Scranton named him Secretary of the Commonwealth. He later became Executive Director of the State Public School Building Authority and the Higher Educational Facilities Authority. He retired in 1972 after 35 years of public service.

Representative Helm was a lifelong resident of Armstrong County, born in Cowansville and a graduate of Kittanning High School. He also attended the Pennsylvania State and Duquesne Universities. He served on the Kittanning School Board for 18 years, and was the favorite son of that community ever after. He was married to the former Geraldine Rearick and was the father of two daughters, Bernell G. Helm, and Mrs. Jerilyn Bush.

When Stu Helm accepted the gavel the first time as Speaker, outgoing Speaker Hiram G. Andrews succinctly described him as "an able parliamentarian, a conscientious legislator, a just man, a gentleman."

ROBERT K. HAMILTON

127th Speaker, 1965-66

House Member: 30 years, 1941-46 and 1949-72

Democrat of Ambridge, Beaver County



“As a lawmaking body, we are answerable to the millions of people of Pennsylvania, the people who expect us to conduct the affairs of this House in an efficient manner so we can justify the trust they have placed in us.”

**—Acknowledgement Speech,
January 5, 1965**

Speaker Robert K. Hamilton (1905-1986) had the “built-in characteristic of fair play,” said outgoing Speaker W. Stuart Helm in presenting the gavel to him in 1965.

Representative Hamilton received tributes often during his long legislative career such as: “a friend and decent man,” he “served Pennsylvania and the people well,” and “one of the finest men I’ve met in my life.” He is one of only 10 members in the House’s history to serve 30 years or longer.

There was no pretense to Bob Hamilton. He was to all appearances the average Pennsylvanian, yet he was far from average.

He had degrees from the Pennsylvania State and Duquesne Universities, was a lawyer and insurance broker, served as a lieutenant in the 107th Field Artillery, had been a farmer and winner of the Award for Animal Industry and Nutrition, and was the Pennsylvania State University’s Distinguished Alumnus of 1970.

In his adopted hometown of Ambridge, he was a civic leader, church layman, official in the Masonic Orders, a devoted husband to his wife Jean

Hunt Hamilton, and father of two sons, the Reverend James Hamilton and William Hamilton.

When William Penn in his Great Law of 1682 said his Commonwealth should be led by “persons of most note for their wisdom, virtue and ability,” he was thinking of the qualities possessed by Speaker Hamilton.

During his tenure, Representative Hamilton served on 16 different committees. He was on the Insurance Committee for 24 years and served as chairman for six years. He was chairman of the Ways and Means Committee for four years and served on the Appropriations Committee for eight years.

House Democrats elected him the first chairman of their own Policy Committee in 1967-68. During his final four years, he was Speaker Pro Tempore.

Representative Hamilton was president of the National Society of State Legislators in 1970-71.

For most of his career, he represented the First District of Beaver County. He lost one election in that district in 1947 by seven votes. In 1967, after redistricting and changing the statewide numbering of House seats, he was the first to serve the 16th Legislative District.

Before he retired voluntarily in 1972 at age 67, he said his greatest achievements were helping to achieve air pollution control and extending regulations to mutual insurance companies, both of which were attained in the 1961-62 session. His biggest regret was the two-year House terms that kept many members constantly campaigning and interfered with the time-consuming legislative process.

Speaker Hamilton presided over the last House of 209 members. That 1965-66 House was also in session for 109 legislative days, the second longest in history.

Many speakers have splintered their gavels rapping for order, but Hamilton is the one most remembered for breaking his. When this courteous gentleman, a leader with a smile and a good word for everyone, smashed his gavel, the membership indeed understood that the commotion was out of hand.

KENNETH B. LEE

128th Speaker, 1967-68 and 1973-74

House Member: 18 years, 1957-74

Republican of Eagles Mere, Sullivan County



“The traditions of this House are rich. These traditions have been enriched by services to the people of the State of Pennsylvania, and not by partisanship.”

**—Acknowledgement Speech,
January 3, 1967**

He called himself a country lawyer, yet he became one of the most urbane and skillful parliamentary leaders of his time. For 12 of his 18 years in the House, fellow Republicans put him in their leadership ranks. Democrats acknowledged his “competence and fairness” as Speaker, “a man who has been tested and tried in the responsibilities of this office and found not wanting.”

Lee was born in Tioga County in Nauvoo, population 75. During the week he turned 17, he attended the 1939 inauguration of Governor Arthur H. James, and he liked to say he was in politics ever since. Prior to his active political career, he was a U.S. Air Force pilot stationed in Italy during World War II. He later graduated from Mansfield State University and Dickinson School of Law. While in his third year as District Attorney of Sullivan County, he won his legislative seat.

Of the House's twentieth-century Speakers, only Kenneth B. Lee was from Sullivan County, the second least populated county, and he represented the second largest geographical area, the 11th legislative district.

His class of 1957 was a rarity in the annals of the House. Lee was one of 41 freshman Republicans, including future Speaker H. Jack Seltzer. There also were 10 freshmen Democrats and 11 former Members who returned after an absence of one or more sessions. Many were former G. I.'s like Lee.

Called a "conservative activist," Lee became a reformer in his 1961 caucus by instituting the first secret ballot for electing leadership. That year was the advent of the annual General Fund Budget, a modest \$978 million, but it led to what today is known as the Modern Pennsylvania Legislature. Lee played a major role with the Commission for Legislative Modernization, was a delegate to the 1968 Constitutional Convention, and as Speaker, established the House Ethics Committee, restricted the House floor to Members and staff, and inaugurated the nation's first Legislative Data Processing Center.

Lee was also House Republican Leader (1965-66 and 1971-72) and Policy Chairman (1969-70). When the Majority Leadership became vacant in late 1963, his caucus elected him to that office. The 1963-64 Session was one of the House's busiest, and Lee helped direct such new measures as the scholarship-loan program, school district consolidation, public television, community colleges, mining site standards, and unemployment compensation revision.

As Speaker, Ken Lee presided with dignity, fairness, and few words. An outspoken Floor Leader, he skillfully squared the art of compromise with his convictions.

Speaker Lee and his wife, Marjorie, have two daughters, Susanne and Laura, three sons, Scott, Cole, and former Representative Kenneth E. Lee, and seven grandchildren.

HERBERT FINEMAN

129th Speaker: 1969-72 and 1975-77

House Member: 23 years, 1955-77

Democrat of Philadelphia



“We are not only representatives of our respective legislative districts, we are representatives of Pennsylvania. We are custodians of the Constitution, of the law, of the Legislature itself.”

**— Acknowledgement Speech,
January 7, 1969**

Speaker Fineman, who represented the 194th Legislative District, was a leader in advancing ideas and sustaining a bipartisan unity to recreate the General Assembly.

His leadership role within the House began in 1965, when he was elected Majority Whip, and escalated in 1967 when he was elected Democratic Floor Leader. Unanimously elected Speaker of the House in 1969, Herb Fineman recognized it was time to make the Legislature the co-equal partner in Pennsylvania government. In accepting his first of four elections as Speaker, he called the legislative branch of the American government “the single most important stabilizer in the affairs of our free society.”

Speaker Fineman guided Pennsylvania by planning strategies, formulating agendas with his Democratic Caucus and the Republican Leadership, and reaching agreements with the Senate. An historic sequence of improvements was unfolded by Speaker Fineman, giving him title as the “Architect of Legislative Reform.” Through the efforts of Speaker Fineman, Pennsylvania’s

General Assembly was cited as a national model and gained confidence as an effective bicameral body.

He is called the “Father of the Modern Pennsylvania Legislature” for the far-reaching changes and reforms he helped shape in the institution’s management and legislative process.

He has also been described by a Republican leader as “an ardent advocate of a better way to operate this House and a force for better government through better legislative procedures.” “Probably the most tireless worker in the House,” another Republican noted at his 1971 installation as Speaker.

As Democratic Floor Leader in 1968, Fineman co-sponsored the joint resolution establishing the Commission for Legislative Modernization. This resolution, coupled with the 1967-68 Constitutional Convention, at which he was a delegate, were positive forces in the impetus for modernization.

Speaker Fineman’s specific contributions to the House included: setting up fewer but busier committees, scheduling the legislative year, increasing staffing and research, and for the first time, providing members with Capitol offices. He also was involved in creating the Capitol Budget, fiscal notes on bills, equal funding for caucuses, and adding to the Declaration of Rights in the Pennsylvania Constitution clauses for a clean environment and gender equality.

After Speaker Fineman presided over two different passages of the state’s first permanent personal income tax in 1971, his credentials as a master parliamentarian were never in doubt. Thereafter, his peers nationally recognized him when they elected Fineman for the 1973-1974 term as President of the National Conference of State Legislative Leaders.

Speaker Fineman’s contributions have been truly significant in bringing the legislature equal status with the other two branches of government. Prior to being sworn in as Speaker for his fourth term in 1977, a colleague said of him that “it is a well known fact that during the many years of his service in this House, [Herb Fineman] has been identified as one of the hardest working and most dedicated lawmakers in the Pennsylvania General Assembly.”

K. LEROY IRVIS

130th Speaker, 1977-78 and 1983-88

House Member: 30 years, 1959-88

Democrat of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County



“You have elected not a black man to be Speaker of the House of Representatives, but, more importantly, you have elected a man who happens to be black, and that is the direction that this country must continue to go. We must... search out the individual values in men and women and let the residual ones — such as how tall or short, how light or dark, how quiet or how articulate, how educated or not the person — be relegated to secondary consideration.”

— **Acknowledgement Speech,**
May 23, 1977

When K. Leroy Irvis was first selected to be Majority Leader in 1969, his colleagues, as well as himself, had no idea their choice was the first riveter, steel chipper, wood-carver, and poet in the nation to be elected to such high office. Eight years later, he became the first Speaker of African-American heritage in the nation.

Speaker Irvis went on to make his mark in the annals of the Commonwealth. He was Speaker for almost eight years, longer than anyone else since 1774, when Pennsylvania was a colony. He was in leadership for 26 years, including seven as Majority Leader and four as Minority Leader, the longest such tenures in House history.

During his three decades of active service, he sponsored more than 875 bills, and a record 264 became law. His broad interests covered advances in education, civil rights, human services, health, mental illness, governmental administration, justice, and housing. “The soul of this House,” a Republican opponent once called him. A member of his own caucus exclaimed, “He has helped to raise the art of politics to that of an honorable profession.” By instinct a modern “Great Commoner,” Irvis found the House of Representatives to be the natural habitat for his abilities and aspirations.

Irvis’ qualities came from his life experiences as a wage earner, high school teacher, World War II civilian attache, Urban League secretary, assistant district attorney, family man, and public citizen.

He had numerous talents, but perhaps two stood out above the others — his dazzling oratory and his respect for all persons, even when he disagreed with them. “I feel blessed in many ways that I am able to disagree with a man or woman without disliking him or her. There is no one in the Hall of the House to whom I will not talk and to whom I will not listen. . . I will talk and I will listen and I will learn.” Speaker Irvis was a friend to all Pennsylvanians and a compatriot to his colleagues. His words had the resonance of the poet and the prophet, whether he was commending in good cheer, or was admonishing in deep concern.

Speaker Irvis was a profound believer in the “American Dream.” In 1975, he told fellow Pennsylvanians that “We need to rekindle our love of liberty and our confidence in our political system. Our institutions will face their greatest test in our third century. Let this be the century in which we demonstrate that we are truly people of plenty and that our plenty is of the spirit.”

Before he retired as Speaker, Temple University published 58 of his poems in a volume entitled This Land of Fire. The concluding poem, “Daisies,” has only 12 simple words but its concept is eternal: “Quickly gone/And/Soon forgotten/So it is/With men/And/Daisies.”

In his farewell remarks made on the House floor on November 29, 1988, Speaker Irvis praised the General Assembly as “the most wonderful invention on earth, a parliament... (in which) all of us have a voice.” He concluded with a mere four-word description of the House of Representatives, often used since as its unofficial motto: “Through us they speak.”

H. JACK SELTZER

131st Speaker, 1979-80

House Member: 24 years, 1957-80

Republican of Palmyra, Lebanon County



“We have had our differences, and that is the way it should be because we are from different parts of our state, we are from different ethnic backgrounds, from different social backgrounds, but we have that one common binder — we are residents of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.”

— Farewell Remarks,
November 19, 1980

H. Jack Seltzer, the first Speaker from Lebanon County, received a headline in a metropolitan newspaper: “Baloney Baron Takes Chair in State House.” As president of Seltzer’s Lebanon Bologna, a thriving firm founded by his father in 1902, he responded that “baloney” is free hot air but “bologna” is \$2.69 a pound and a Pennsylvania export specialty.

As a skilled politician, Seltzer was known for his mix of notable qualities which made him an outstanding leader who won the friendship of Members on both sides of the aisle. Those who served under him admired his ability to govern with firmness but fairness, compassion and loyalty. Accessibility to Members, staff, and the public was the hallmark of his years in office.

“A man of intelligence, integrity and judgment” outgoing Speaker Irvis said when he passed the gavel to the new Speaker.

Seltzer had extensive experience in public life. After serving in the Navy in World War II, he was a Palmyra Councilman for seven years, five as Council President. In the House he commanded the post of Republican Chairman of

the Appropriations Committee for 11 years. In remarks made to House freshmen in January 1979, Seltzer wisely offered the following observation: “Take note of your surroundings...the beauty of the artistic expressions in this magnificent hall, the symbolism portrayed on these walls, the grandeur of this event. Then reflect for a moment on what your role should be as we move in these coming years through the often cloudy maze of the legislative process.”

The 1979-80 session, presided over by Speaker Seltzer, was one of the most successful anybody could remember, as one newspaper editorialized. The House was barely underway when it and the Commonwealth were disrupted by the Three Mile Island crisis, yet much of a huge legislative agenda and two budgets were resolved.

His exemplary leadership resulted in getting timely budgets passed. Seltzer’s commendable achievements have produced long-term benefits for all citizens of the state.

His political and legislative philosophies were firmly anchored by fiscal conservatism, much of which he acquired from decades of experience as a successful businessman. As an advocate of free enterprise, he fought hard to limit government interference along with unnecessary and frivolous laws which would hinder a successful economy.

As his Party’s top-ranking leader, he made great progress in slowing growth in government spending through his belief that every tax dollar collected should be accounted for. In his fight to reform government, he contributed to the formation of the Bipartisan Management Committee which would later oversee the operations and expenditures of the House of Representatives. His goal was to install a watchdog over the management and administration of the House.

Before saying “a heart full of thanks” to the House, this hard-nosed politician (as he so often referred to himself) described the phenomenal experience of Speakership as “the most frustrating, most enlightening, and most enjoyable experience that I have ever had.”

MATTHEW J. RYAN

132nd Speaker, 1981-82 and 1995-2003

House Member: 40 years, 1963-2003

Republican of Media, Delaware County



“We Representatives of the Pennsylvania House, honored by our special heritage and enabled by our unique tradition, have sworn our pledges to serve our constituency, to serve our Commonwealth, to serve our Country, and to save the dream of William Penn, and this service begins when this day’s meeting ends.”

**—Acknowledgement Speech,
January 6, 1981**

Matthew J. Ryan was well known throughout Pennsylvania as an advocate for welfare reform, tax relief and jobs creation. Speaker Ryan served in the House for 40 consecutive years. Only one member in the 321 years of the House of Representatives surpasses this notable tenure. During that time, he served as Republican Policy Chairman and Whip, and, for longer than anyone else, he held the post of Republican Leader. His 32 years as an elected legislative leader is unequalled in the entire history of the Party of Lincoln. His party loyalty and his extraordinary tenure in serving the people proved his love for the nation’s oldest and most distinguished institution.

Speaker Ryan, a former First Lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps, was an attorney by profession. Ryan was elected Speaker for the first time in 1981, and colleagues from both sides of the aisle lauded him for the nonpartisan manner in which he so fairly presided over that successful session. Elected Speaker again in 1995, Ryan was respected by his peers as a Caucus unifier, feisty debater, parliamentary tactician, government expert, Pennsylvania

booster, and a committee leader who played fair and with esprit. Of the 25 Speakers serving non-consecutive terms, Speaker Ryan has the longest interregnum — 13 years between 1982 and 1995. Known for speaking with great fervor, this true statesman has been praised for his compassion, openness, unmatched quick Irish wit, intelligence, and friendly advice.

Recognized for the “self-deprecatory mien of a seasoned politician,” Ryan good-heartedly complimented opponents and readily conceded if proven wrong. Speaker Ryan told the freshmen of 1991 that the qualities of an outstanding legislator are “skill at listening and understanding, respecting others’ strengths and accepting their limitations, celebrating differences and victories, fighting with conviction, compassion, commitment and courage, and learning the art of compromise.” He later showed his courage and dedication by returning to his front desk with panache as the first Floor leader to undergo a quadruple coronary bypass.

Ryan’s unheralded contribution is that he was one of the creators of the “Modern General Assembly.” He was actively involved in providing legislators with the adequate tools necessary to do their jobs in running government. His efforts helped produce professional staffs and research, Capitol and district offices, Sunset Agency Review, legislative partnership with the Budget Code, caucus parity funding, the addition to the Capitol East Wing, the Bipartisan Management Committee, and the nationally renowned Capitol Preservation Committee.

For a dozen years, the Hall of the House was the arena for the Matt Ryan-Jim Manderino floor debates. Adversaries in the tradition of Daniel Webster for the East and Henry Clay for the West, each spoke powerfully for his Commonwealth and his party. Both came prepared and ready to stand their ground. Ryan had four more years of House seniority, but was the older by just 10 days. “He was a warrior and I have the scars to prove it,” Speaker Ryan said at the passing of his friend, Speaker Manderino.

Speaker Ryan died in office on March 29, 2003, and he was the first person in the history of the present Capitol Building to lie in state in the Capitol’s rotunda.

JAMES J. MANDERINO

133rd Speaker, 1989

House Member: 23 years, 1967-89

Democrat of Monessen, Westmoreland County



“Members of the House have divergent philosophies, reflecting origins from diverse communities. But there is a great balancing force that always holds out the promise of unity — the common commitment to the ideals of the rule of law, the free and open exchange of ideas, and our unbending dedication to do the very best for the people of this great Commonwealth.”

**— Acknowledgement Speech,
January 3, 1989**

After a record eight years as Majority Leader where only Thaddeus Stevens was regarded his equal, James J. Manderino was elected Speaker. From being the combative party leader on the left side of the aisle, Speaker Manderino on the rostrum transformed with unexpected ease into an impartial presiding officer. His skillful moderating of the televised debate of the controversial abortion bill in October 1989 won him widespread plaudits for his fairness and fortitude.

Constituents called him the “Rock of Monessen.” Colleagues called him “a legislative giant.” From 1977-88 as Floor Leader and Whip, he was the greatest caucus builder and manager, party loyalist, issues champion, and budget negotiator in the General Assembly.

In his last six years as Majority Leader in the 1980's, he never had more than a two-vote margin to pass legislation. He devised the PennPRIDE proposal of 28 programs for jobs, education, and economic development. He prevailed in repeated budget and tax fights, and contributed to reforming Unemployment Compensation. "His word's his bond. He may be the brightest, most effective person in state government," one publication reported.

Speaker Manderino grew up in a family of six children whose parents' grocery store folded in the Great Depression. He was a 185-pound tackle for the Monessen High Greyhounds, worked the night shift at the Clairton rolling mill while being class president and top debater at St. Vincent College at Latrobe, and was an outstanding student at the University of Michigan School of Law.

After he became Speaker, he commented that leaders must be versatile. "There are really two sides to my personality," he said candidly. "Sometimes I am kind and affable and congenial. Sometimes I am tough and hard and partisan. But I have to play those roles.... We're trying to solve problems. Some people just can't do for themselves, and government has to help."

Speaker Manderino conducted but one year's Session, and died at his home in 1989 on Christmas night at age 57. In the resolution for their memorial service, House Members acclaimed him their "distinguished Speaker...who is proudly recognized by both Republicans and Democratic colleagues as an outstanding legislator and leader."

Governor Robert P. Casey in his eulogy said: "He was not detached, he was not dispassionate about things he believed in. He was a man shouting at the top of the mountain in a big, booming voice to the people in this state, 'Get up, be fighters. There's a better day ahead.'"

ROBERT W. O'DONNELL

134th Speaker, 1990-92

House Member: 20 years, 1974-93

Democrat of Philadelphia



“The challenge we face in state government becomes one of creating and enhancing real opportunity for those who would reach out and grasp it.”

**—Acknowledgement Speech,
January 23, 1990**

When Robert W. O'Donnell was elected Majority Leader in November 1988, he asked his predecessor where he should begin. “Start with what you believe,” Speaker James J. Manderino told him.

O'Donnell's approach to public service was acting on principle. He built his career by examining public policy, mastering the legislative process, and developing strategies required to shepherd necessary and comprehensive bills to fruition. When pressed on an issue, he replied with a smile, “Would you like the short answer or the long answer?”

He was the first of his Philadelphia Irish-American family to graduate from college, Temple University, and three years later he graduated from Temple University Law School. O'Donnell also attended The Hague Academy of International Law. He then became active in local politics, establishing himself in the legal profession, and at age 30 won a special election to the House of

Representatives, serving the Germantown, Mount Airy, and Chestnut Hill communities.

O'Donnell entered the House as a youthful reformer, a voice for the 1970's, critical yet simultaneously eager for change and opportunity. After a frustrating freshman term, he said that he stayed involved in public life because he believed the State Legislature's "role in our future is crucial" and that he, as everyone who has ever been a House Member, had much to learn about serving his Commonwealth, constituents, party, and the institution itself. "The skill you have to develop in this business is the ability to cooperate. You also have to have the ability to fight. And, most of all, you have to have the wisdom to know when to do which," he told newcomers.

Colleagues on both sides of the aisle quickly came to respect O'Donnell's diligence, fairness, and ability. He was elected Democratic Caucus Chairman in 1981, elected Majority Whip two years later for a six-year tenure, then Majority Leader for a year. Then, in January 1990, upon the death of Speaker James J. Manderino, the House membership advanced O'Donnell to its highest and only constitutional office, where once again he led by practicing his beliefs in free and open self-government.

His substantive legislative achievements included a stronger ethics law, the Philadelphia Convention Center Authority Act, establishment of an authority to restore financial stability to Philadelphia (Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority), and a college tuition savings plan. He also worked 301 calendar days to enact a nationally-recognized automobile insurance reform package. Furthermore, as Floor Leader in 1989, he guided one of the least confrontational passages of the budget in modern times.

Speaker O'Donnell is married to Donna Gentile O'Donnell and has two sons, Rory and Casey.

H. WILLIAM DEWEESE

135th Speaker, 1993-94

House Member: 1976-present

Democrat of Waynesburg, Greene County



“Democrats and Republicans, business and labor, have been at each other’s throats for quite a long time.... The term of art in our political parlance that we would like to jettison more than any other word is ‘Gridlock.’”

— **Speaker’s Economic Summit,
State Capitol
September 21, 1994**

The son of a small-town auto dealer, J. Victor “Vic” DeWeese and his wife Frances “Dotty” Baily DeWeese, and brother to Debby Stark, H. William DeWeese graduated from Waynesburg High School in 1968 and Wake Forest University in 1972, where he was a history major, baseball player and student body president.

On college graduation day, Bill DeWeese enlisted in the United States Marine Corps following his parents’ lead in military service to our country. During World War II, his father was a Sergeant in the United States Army as was his mother, who served in the Women’s Army Corps. Bill served three years on active duty at home and abroad, rising to the rank of First Lieutenant. He has always had an appreciation for the English language, but it was his mother who would send him a “word of the day” while he was stationed in Okinawa, Japan. From that point in his life, he was an amateur etymologist.

Speaker DeWeese made the most of his forum for his inimitable oratorical style. Words such as “indecorous,” “stultifying,” “imbroglio,” “ad hominem,”

“iridescent” and “magniloquent” often flowed from the Speaker’s rostrum. When a reporter once asked about “perks,” not “perquisites,” he said, “You abbreviated the word.” The reporter said, “I can abbreviate if I like,” and Speaker DeWeese replied, “Yes you can, and I can elongate it.”

Upon returning to Greene County from the Marine Corps, he was elected to the state House in a special election in 1976 and has served the 50th District ever since. Before legislators had district offices and staff, Bill DeWeese had his mother Dotty. For 29 years, she has scoured the newspapers daily and cut out any important event, letter to the editor, Eagle Scout award and anniversary. She is one of the greatest influences to help him ensure that he never forgets who his constituents are and his role as a public servant.

DeWeese has advocated policies for Pennsylvania’s working families including affordable health insurance and property tax reform, expanded prescription drug benefits for senior citizens, tax and judiciary reform, advancing civil rights, developing a state economic plan that unites labor and business, and furthering the interests of rural Pennsylvania, the environment and the arts.

He is a life member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Marine Corps Reserve Officer Association, and the National Rifle Association. He serves as a member of the board of trustees of the George C. Marshall Foundation, the Pittsburgh Ballet and Waynesburg College. DeWeese is also a 33rd Degree Scottish Rite Free Mason and a lifelong member of the First Presbyterian Church of Waynesburg.

H. William DeWeese was the first Speaker born after World War II and the first rural Democrat to serve as Speaker in almost 50 years. He was the fourth Speaker produced by Greene County, the most from any small, rural county. He stands alone in the history of the House as a member who was Speaker, Majority Leader, Majority Whip, and chairman of a major standing committee, the Judiciary Committee, the first nonattorney to serve in that capacity in the modern era.

His wallet contains a laminated card that carries the inscription found on the Statue of Liberty “Bring us your poor, your tired, your huddled mass ... yearning to breathe free.”

JOHN M. PERZEL

136th Speaker, 2003-2006

House Member: 1979-present

Republican of Philadelphia



“I am so proud and honored to be a part of the House of Representatives and its traditions, and I pledge to continue to uphold its integrity, its rich heritage and its sacred brotherhood.”

— **Portrait Unveiling**
October 19, 2004

Former Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives John Perzel has never left and has never forgotten his hard working neighbors in Northeast Philadelphia. He has brought to Harrisburg the strong sense of morals his family and friends taught him when he was a boy and, later, a restaurant worker in a working class community.

“Lawmaking is about wanting to make a difference,” he says. “It’s about remembering who you are, where you came from and what’s important to the people and places you care about.”

The *Philadelphia Daily News* calls Perzel’s representation in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives “smart and effective.” That’s because Perzel transcends party lines to work at making the 172nd legislative district and the Commonwealth a better place to live and work. His dedication, demeanor, and hard work ethic compelled his colleagues — Republicans and Democrats — to elect him Speaker of the House in early 2003.

Before becoming Speaker, Perzel served four terms as Majority Leader. He focused on helping children and families. He guided increased health insurance coverage for the uninsured, invested heavily in education, made neighborhoods safer and transformed welfare from a system based on dependence to one that provides dignity. He helped create a more positive job climate in the state by reducing taxes, making state government more customer-friendly and investing in the workforce. Under his leadership, the House also helped reform the way state government conducts business by cutting waste, streamlining operations and encouraging municipal partnerships. As Speaker, his goals have not changed.

The influential *Pennsylvania Report* political newsletter named Perzel as its Most Valuable Player in 1997 and again in 2003. *PoliticsPA.com* named Perzel the 2001 Politician of the Year, saying he is arguably the “most powerful man in Harrisburg,” and that “the Northeast Philly Republican has grown immensely in his job... from deal-cutter to a man who gets things done.” Also, in 2001, the American Legislative Exchange Council named Perzel “Legislator of the Year.”

Speaker Perzel also has served as Minority Whip, Policy Committee Chairman and Chairman of the House Republican Campaign Committee.

Whether it was leading the charge to make prescription drugs more affordable or convincing fellow legislators that small government is effective government, Perzel says it all comes down to feeling like you did something that helps fellow Pennsylvanians.

Born January 7, 1950, Perzel graduated from St. Matthews Elementary School and Lincoln High School in Northeast Philadelphia; he went south for his college education, earning a bachelor's degree from Troy State University in Alabama in 1975. After college, he returned to Philadelphia to resume his career in restaurant management and to try his hand at elected politics. He lost his first try for the House in 1976, but won firmly two years later, unseating an incumbent Democrat. He has won ever since, succeeding in a legislative district where Democrats have an edge in voter registration.

Living only a short distance from the house where he grew up in Northeast Philadelphia, Perzel and his wife, Sheryl Stokes Perzel, have four children: Andrew, David, John Jr. and Samuel.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

James Douglas Adams

*A*n alumnus of Carnegie Mellon University, Mr. Adams received his Bachelor of Fine Arts with University Honors in 1983. In addition to the notable portraits of former Speakers DeWeese, Irvis, Seltzer, Ryan, Fineman, Manderino, Lee, O'Donnell, Andrews, Helm, Hamilton, Fiss, Lichtenwalter, Sorg, Smith, Hamilton, Franklin, Muhlenberg, and Mifflin, he has created commissioned work for the University of Pittsburgh, and has also been honored with the commission of a posthumous portrait of Cardinal Wright. Over the past few years, he has painted a series of 20 paintings commissioned by the Light and Life Foundation. These have been reproduced in booklets and distributed throughout Europe as well as the United States. In 1993, a collector in Vienna, Austria commissioned James to paint a large-scale painting for the wall of a historical landmark. At the University of Michigan's Medical School, James has completed a series of paintings depicting the medical school's founding fathers.

Christine (Tina) Reiley-Phillips

*M*s. Reiley-Phillips received her Bachelor's degree in Art Education and her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Pennsylvania State University in 1977. In addition to the portrait of Speaker Perzel, other notable portraits she has completed include Governor Robert P. Casey, State Representative Elinor Z. Taylor, and Kenneth Reyer, past president of PHEAA. She also was commissioned to paint the mural consisting of the portraits of 250 contributors to the Whitaker Center of Science and Arts in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Ms. Reiley-Phillips is currently an Art Instructor at the Harrisburg Academy, and a past board member and art instructor with the Art Association of Harrisburg.

