

STARKS, "A LEGEND IN POLITICS," DIES

By David Skolnick

Even though Herman "Pete" Starks last held office in 1985, he remained a local political force. Starks, 80, died Sunday.

The local political icon served 22 years as the city's 2nd Ward councilman, representing most of the East side. Sparks spent 17 of those years as chairman of the council's powerful finance committee.

"He was very instrumental in my campaign," said Councilman DeMaine Kitchen, D-2nd, elected in 2007. "He was a sounding board for my campaign. He was a legend in politics in the Mahoning Valley."

Starks was elected to his first two-year term on council in 1963. When he was re-elected in 1973, he became the first person to serve six consecutive terms as a representative of any ward in the city.

Starks was elected 11 straight times before opting not to run for his council seat in 1985. Instead, Starks ran for mayor that year, losing the Democratic Primary to Patrick Ungaro.

Ungaro served on council with Starks for six years as council president. Ungaro was elected mayor in 1983, serving 14 years in the capacity, and is Liberty Township's administrator.

"We fought like cats and dogs, but we shook hands when we were done," Ungaro said. "He was a dominant person in government. Even after Pete left office, his influence was enormous and overwhelming with council. He was still the person you had to work with."

James E. Fortune Sr., a former 24-year council member, served six of those years with Starks.

"He was a teacher," Fortune said. "I learned so much from Pete, particularly about finances. When he was on council, he was practically the leader of the city. We had the utmost respect for him."

George M. McKelvey, a former 3rd Ward councilman and eight-year mayor, started his political career sitting next to Starks at council meetings.

"I am, still to this day impressed with his knowledge," he said. "When he talked, I listened. His best qualities were his loyalty and honesty. With Pete Starks, his word was his bond."

When Jay Williams announced he was running for mayor in 2005, Starks called him.

"He said, 'You're going to be mayor,'" said Williams, who won that race and was re-elected to a second four-year term last year. "He said it so matter of fact like the sun will come up tomorrow."

Williams said Starks "was never shy about offering his advice and perspective. You always knew where Pete stood."

Councilman Jamael Tito Brown, D-3rd, and currently chairman of the finance committee, said he would speak with Starks from time to time about city finances.

"He was legendary in the city," Brown said. "He was still on top of things in city government" before his death.

Funeral arrangements being handled by L.E. Black Phillips & Holden.

HONORING JOHN KOHLER

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 24, 2010

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the years of service given to

the people of Chautauqua County by Mr. John Kohler. Mr. Kohler served his constituency faithfully and just during his tenure as the Hannover Town Justice.

Public service is a difficult and fulfilling career. Any person with a dream may enter but only a few are able to reach the end. Mr. Kohler served his term with his head held high and a smile on his face the entire way. I have no doubt that his kind demeanor left a lasting impression on the people of Chautauqua County.

We are truly blessed to have such strong individuals with a desire to make this county the wonderful place that we all know it can be. Mr. Kohler is one of those people and that is why Madam Speaker I rise in tribute to him today.

HONORING LAVERNE JONES-FERRETTE

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 24, 2010

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I rise to proudly offer my congratulations, on behalf of Virgin Islanders everywhere, to Laverne Jones-Ferrette, number one in the world in the 60 meters with a time of 6.97, the first woman to run under the 7.00 seconds barrier in over a decade and a semi-finalist at the IAAF World Indoor Championships in Doha, Qatar. I also congratulate Tabarie Henry, a third year student at Texas A&M University who is listed by the International Association of Athletic Federations as the number one 400 meter runner in the world.

The Virgin Islands, with a population of roughly 120,000, has produced legends in every field who continue to be part of the fabric of America, and these two outstanding native Virgin Islanders, through their hard work, have made their contributions in sports that have brought worldwide recognition to them and to U.S. Virgin Islands.

There are also other outstanding members of the V.I National Track and Field Team who continue to excel in their respective events: Adrian Durant—100 meter; Leslie Murray—400 meter hurdles; Calvin Dascent—400 × 400 meter and 4 × 100 meter relay; David Walters—4 × 100 meter relay; Terry Charles—4 × 400 meter relay; Leon Hunt—long jump; Muhammid Halim—triple jump; Allison Peter—200 meter; Courtney Patterson—100 meter; Wyanetta Kirby—long jump and 100 meter hurdles and Desiree King—800 meter and 400 meter hurdles.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting Laverne on earning a silver medal at the IAAF World Indoor Championships in Qatar, Tabarie, and all of our athletes and wish them god-speed as they continue to shine.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 24, 2010

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 172—Previous Question to H. Res. 1205; 173—H. Res. 1205; 174—H.J. Res. 80; 175—H. Res. 1186; 176—H.R. 3976; 177—H.R. 4592; I was keynote Speaker at L.A.S.A. Dinner hosted by former H.E.W. Secretary Joe Califano. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

HONORING REV. VINCENT M. COOKE

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 24, 2010

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the many accomplishments of Rev. Vincent M. Cooke, S.J. Since becoming President of Buffalo's Canisius College in 1993, Rev. Cooke has steadily advanced everything from the school's faculty to its residence halls, making Canisius into the distinguished institution it is today.

Rev. Cooke began his Presidency at Canisius with the mantra, "nothing less than quality would be acceptable." He has certainly followed through on these words. During his time at Canisius, Rev. Cooke has restored and enhanced the school's residence halls, Old Main and Lyons Hall, as well as its award-winning Montante Cultural Center. He began a 17 month, \$22 million upgrade of Canisius' technological resources, creating more than 50 state-of-the-art classrooms.

Rev. Cooke's dedication to excellence extends far beyond Canisius' facilities; not only did he raise the school's academic standards, Rev. Cooke also increased Canisius' applicant pool outside of Western New York and offered additional merit-based aid and scholarship assistance to the most qualified students. He dedicated himself to hiring the best possible faculty and, over the past decade, has increased the number of courses taught by full-time faculty while decreasing Canisius' student-to-faculty ratio.

Rev. Cooke's successes have meant so much for Canisius College; however the benefits of his work have extended to the surrounding community as well. Through his win-win approach to community relations Rev. Cooke helped to establish a partnership with Fannie Mae and Hunt Real Estate, creating the Employer Assisted Housing Program which provides incentives for college employees to buy homes close to campus. His efforts to preserve historic campus buildings have invigorated the surrounding community while an increase in policing efforts have made the campus and neighboring communities a safer place.

Madam Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Rev. Cooke for his copious achievements. His work as an educator, innovator, and leader has bettered not only Canisius College but all of Western New York as well.