

## **Mayor's Office**

*David A. Wood, Mayor*

*Lou Ann Hazen, Executive Assistant*

*Debra Gregg, Secretary*

The year 2020 was a year like no other. In March, 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic came to our area and things changed in the way the entire community operated. I am proud to say that the City of Mishawaka never closed. A Covid-19 Task Force was formed meeting several times a week to determine how the City was going to stay open, provide the critical services the citizens needed, yet keep all our employees safe. It was a daunting task indeed, but one that was met head-on and tackled by each and every City of Mishawaka employee. City services continued to be delivered. The way they were delivered may have been a little different, but they continued to deliver them – uninterrupted! Following is the recap of the highlights for 2020 in the Mayor's Office.

### **Drum Major Award Recipients for 2020**

Each year I have the honor and privilege to present Drum Major Awards at the Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast. This year it was an honor to give two awards to very deserving recipients who have made a significant impact in our community, not only in 2020, but for many years.

Following are the Drum Major Award Recipients for 2020:

#### **Tony Violi**

The son of Italian immigrants, Tony Violi did not speak English until he started school at St. Monica Grade School in Mishawaka. It was a tough time, but Tony, an only child, was surrounded by the love and support of his extended family (cousins) and he persevered. He graduated from Mishawaka High School and Indiana University South Bend.

Tony returned to the Mishawaka Catholic Schools in 1984 to coach football. In 1992, St. Thomas of Elkhart was added to the Mishawaka Catholic Team which regularly competes in the Inter-City Catholic League serving all the Catholic schools in St. Joseph, Elkhart, and Marshall counties. Tony has been Vice-President of St. Monica's Athletic Association and is currently the Football Director and President of the Inter-City Catholic League. Tony is also committed to his church, serving in various leadership capacities and has a great singing voice.

During his 36-year coaching career, Tony has touched the lives of hundreds of young men, including future teachers/coaches, policemen, firemen, elected officials, husbands, fathers, and Mayor Wood's own two sons. He has been instrumental in teaching them dedication, commitment, hard work, life skills and heart.....No one has more heart than Tony Violi.



*Tony Violi, Mayor Dave Wood,  
and Peter KeKever*

### Peter DeKever

Peter DeKever touches the lives of students every day. He is a teacher, mentor, and developer of young minds. He pushes his students to be the best that they can be. Pete graduated from Mishawaka High School and Indiana University. In 1990, he began his long career at Penn High School, teaching English and US History. He coaches several academic competitive teams which have achieved great success under Pete's leadership, winning numerous state and regional championships. He was the co-recipient of the Indiana Academic Coach of the Year.

Pete serves on many boards and Mayor Wood recently named him the Historian Laureate for the City of Mishawaka. He has written articles and several books about Mishawaka History and is the curator and treasurer of the Mishawaka Historical Museum. His father, Joe, guided him in his love of history.

Pete has received numerous awards over the years including ones from the City of Mishawaka, Penn High School Alumni, Center for History, and Indiana University of South Bend. In 2013, he was awarded Indiana's highest honor, the Sagamore of the Wabash.

### **South Bend Regional Chamber--Salute to Business Luncheon Awards**

In February 2020, the South Bend Regional Chamber held their Annual Salute to Business Luncheon celebrating top individual and business achievements. Following are the Mishawaka business and individuals honored by the Chamber:

#### **Outstanding Young Business Leader**

##### Kyle Chamberlin, Counsel, Bradley Company

Kyle Chamberlin is a proud graduate of Mishawaka High School, where his family has a long history as both alumni and teachers. He received his Bachelor of Business Administration and Juris Doctor degrees from the University of Notre Dame, where he presently serves as an adjunct instructor for undergraduate students considering the vocation of classroom teaching.

Kyle currently serves as a board member and Lilly Endowment Community Scholarship committee chair for the Community Foundation of St. Joseph County where he and his wife, Katie, created a scholarship benefiting local students, a natural fit for a couple who completed their education right here in St. Joseph County. Education has been a transformative component in Kyle and Katie's lives, and they hope that the scholarships will help open doors for future generations of local scholars.

Currently, Kyle is chair of the Mishawaka Housing Authority, and executive committee member and board member of the South Bend Regional Chamber. Kyle is a previous board member of Hannah and Friends Neighborhood and is also past president and gala chair for the South Bend Civic Theatre. He has been a reliable and committed servant leader in many organizations. You will often find Kyle supporting many local races as an avid runner in the community and enjoying time spent with his wife, Katie, and dachshund, Pierce.

## **Small Business of the Year**

### *Pathfinders*

Founded by CEO/Owner Stephen Ball, Pathfinders will be celebrating 40 years in business in 2020. The firm has succeeded over the years by delivering the “Pathfinder Way”. This means to build relationships and partnerships, start with strategy, work with urgency, be resourceful, exceed expectations, and eliminate surprises through transparency.

In 2016, the agency transformed the dormant Frank’s Wholesale Florist warehouse at 1250 Park Place in Mishawaka into a creative office space. The 15,500 square-foot building, which had been vacant for nearly a decade, features an open environment to bolster creativity, collaboration, and employee productivity. The new space, which saw both internal and external renovations, now includes a 2,500-square-foot, full-service photo/video studio to accommodate this growing client requirement. Since its move to the new space four years ago, the firm has continually made property improvements to keep up with their growing staff and capabilities.

Awarded “Best Places to Work” in Indiana two years in a row, Pathfinders supports the community through their engagement with Girls on the Run Michiana, Junior League, La Casa de Amistad, Center for the Homeless, South Bend Museum of Art, St. Joseph County FOP and WNIT Public Television.

## **Distinguished Business Leader**

### *David Ziker*

From a young age, David Ziker began working with his father, Mort, and grandpa Joe in the family business. He has performed and reinvented every job and function in his 42-year career. He continues to be instrumental in modernizing the 102-year-old family business while maintaining its relevancy in today’s challenging consumer marketplace.

David formally joined the family business in 1978 after graduating from Indiana University. There have been many challenges throughout the years but in 2019, David began a rebranding effort that would attract a younger clientele. They launched two new services, a wash/dry/fold service called Lightning Laundry, and in-store tailoring/alteration centers. In 2016, it was determined that the Sample Street facility was oversized and outdated which led to the relocation of Ziker Cleaners to the southeast side of Mishawaka. The Byrkit Street facility is now home to Ziker’s modern and automated processing, distribution, and office facility.

David is an active triathlete and enjoys training for events throughout the year. He has been married to his wife Cheryl since 1985 and they enjoy traveling. They have two daughters, Hannah and Sarah.

## **Mishawaka Business Association Annual Dinner and Meeting**

The Mishawaka Business Association held its annual Dinner on March 7, 2020. The Mishawaka Business Association is dedicated to the promotion and growth of the Mishawaka community and business environment. They are a committed advocate for the success of their members and a facilitator for the continued development of the business community.

This year's event theme was The Carnevale. Special thanks were given to Amanda and Brian Rutherford, owners of Burns Special Events, for graciously offering their showroom to host the event. Amanda, Brian, and their staff transformed The Burns Special Events showroom into a New Orleans carnival atmosphere and amid the masked attendees, the following 2020 Business Awards were presented.

### **MBA Person of the Year**

#### Jacob Crawford

Jacob Crawford has been working for the City of Mishawaka since 2009, starting as a seasonal landscape employee while he was working towards an Earth and Environmental Science Degree in Education. In 2015, Jake left the field of education to become Mishawaka's Landscape Manager and Urban Forester.

Teaching has always been a focus of his life and is expressed through his work with Logan Center doing vocational training and job shadow opportunities with clients, mentoring and teaching the Young Adult Services students about landscaping and gardening in our parks, and creating the Mishawaka High School Landscape and Gardening Club.



*Jacob Crawford with grandparents  
Nancy and Don Crawford*

In 2019, the Garden Club and Jake raised funds and built the Mishawaka Education Foundation Community Greenhouse to create a space for furthering plant education not only for the Garden Club and Young Adult students, but for anyone in the community that has an interest in gardening and horticulture. Jake says working for the City of Mishawaka has brought many wonderful opportunities to his life and he plans to continue to share those opportunities with others.

### **MBA Business of the Year**

#### Wertz & Company, CPA

Barry and Becky Wertz founded Wertz & Co., CPA's, located in Mishawaka, Indiana, approximately 30 years ago. In addition to the Mishawaka Business Association, Barry and Becky are and have been actively involved in the Mishawaka community with organizations such as the Mishawaka Lions Club, Mishawaka Breakfast Optimist Club, Mishawaka Education Foundation, School City of Mishawaka Collaborating Committee, Potawatomi Zoological Society, Preservation of the Res, Pioneer Automobile Association and Michiana Packard Car Club.

Becky, who is current treasurer of the Mishawaka Lions Club, has participated in the Lions Club Eyeglass Mission to Mexico for the past ten years. Barry received the Indiana CPA Society Community Service Award in 2019.

## Mayor Dave Wood Youth Advisory Council

The 2019-2020 Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council (MYAC) is proud to have completed another successful year of community service, local government studies, educational opportunities with area businesses and volunteer work around the City. This year’s group consisted of 29 members including a Senior Advisor, Alicia Katzelis, a Mishawaka High School Senior. Alicia helped organize the group while giving advice and working as a liaison between the students, adult coordinators and Mayor Wood and his administration. She attended all meetings and field trips and was instrumental in the success of this group.

2019-2020 Mayor’s Youth Council	
Adams High School	Joey Grabill
Marian High School	Seth Becker, Max Christianson, Delaney Dennison, Anna Gruber, Hannah Hopson, Jacob Herczig, Atticus Horvath, Noah Majewski, Dominic Mammolenti, Avery Sharp, Evan Trippel, Rosa Trippel, Olivia Whitaker, Emily Winters
Mishawaka High School	Jacob Beshara, Jozalyn Bryce, Payton Engdahl, Andrew Fox, Allison Gordon, Kohl Haughee, Kaylee Kern, Garrett Sandefur, Taylor Stanton, Jessica Stewart
Penn High School	Emmie Pica, Dylan Shely, Hannah Shely, Olivia VanLaere



*Youth Council Swearing-In Ceremony*

The MYAC started their year on August 28, 2019 with their family invited cookout. Here they met fellow members, Mayor Wood, and the Adult Coordinators. On September 3rd, an official Swearing-In Ceremony was held in the Council Chambers in front of the Mishawaka Common Council and the first meeting of the year was conducted where the group elects MYAC officers, plans field trips and starts organizing their largest community project, the MYAC Thanksgiving Food Drive. Officers for the 2019-2020 year were: Kaylee Kern, President; Taylor Stanton, Vice-President; Rosa Trippel, Secretary and Joey Grabill, Treasurer.

The students toured the Wastewater Treatment Plant, Mishawaka Police Department, Central Services Division (Street Dept.), Planning Department and toured the Mishawaka Lippert Plant and local non-for-profit, Hello Gorgeous.



*Youth Council learning about Mishawaka City Departments*

A newly formed group this year was the Executive Committee consisting of all High School Seniors and 3rd year members of the MYAC: Abraham Cannon and Alicia Katzelis from MHS; John Tordi and Libby Voor from Marian High School. This Executive Committee formed to apply for a grant with the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) known as the My Vision, My Community program (MCMV). MCMV is a youth planning partnership between the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) and IUPUI School of Public and Environmental Affairs graduate program. The program, in its sixth year, was developed with the belief that young people in Indiana should not have to leave their hometowns to achieve their dreams. Previous participating groups have developed community vision plans that laid the groundwork for student entrepreneurship opportunities, community gardens, bike-share programs, farmer's markets, and other programs students wanted to see brought to their hometown.



*Carmen Lethig (IHCDA), Libby Voor, Aunya Sutton (IUPUI Mentor), Alicia Katzelis, Abraham Cannon*

The Executive Committee began working on this initiative and were chosen to participate along with the communities of Hobart, Jasper, North Putnam, and Versailles. They would receive a \$5,000 grant to use toward their project. Well, this group thought “big” and came up with some great ideas but the one that they stuck with was a Giant Outdoor Board Game Park.

They began researching games and thinking about locations to put the giant game boards and soon realized that this project was going to cost more than their initial grant and the location by the Ball Band Biergarten in downtown would not be ready for several years. Two things they would have to are raise additional funds for their project, and work with Mayor Wood to find a new location.



*Front Row: Hannah Sheley, Emma Pica, Wessler Eng. Rep. Jacob Beshara.*

*Back Row: Mayor Dave Wood, Peyton Engdahl, Abraham Cannon, Drew Fox, Alicia Katzelis.*

In January of 2020, the group applied for an Excellence in Youth Leadership Award with the Aim Youth Council Network and in February, along with Mayor Wood, attended the workshop at Franklin College where the award would be presented. Much to their delight, the MYAC won the award, and this would be another \$5,000 that

they could use for their project. Mayor Wood became so impressed with the work that this group was doing, he decided to include the entire Youth Council to renovate an existing park: Hums Park.

Located at 3100 Harrison Road, Hums Park is one of the few parks heavily used by our teen population. Currently it has basketball, a football field, youth playground area, a sand volleyball pit, and a small shelter/restroom facility. The Mayor was giving the group an empty canvas: a park with 6.77 acres and a budget of \$150,000 plus their \$10,000 to work with. As one Executive Committee Member said, “What an opportunity to leave a lasting mark on the city we value so greatly.”

The Youth Council was divided into committees: Site Committee, Amenities Committee, Budget Committee, Marketing Committee, and lastly a Crowd-Funding Committee, in case they would need to pursue additional funding for this project. The groups worked hard with different City of Mishawaka Departments over the next few month’s deciding what equipment would go into the park, how it would all fit together, and how much money they had to spend. Needless to say, they hit it out of the park and did a total redesign of the park. Unfortunately, many of these MYAC members moved on to college and the final pieces of the park were completed by the 2020-2021 members. What started with the MYAC in 2019 will come to fruition in 2021 with a proposed ribbon-cutting ceremony in April.

Following are the details for the new park:

**New Name:** The park will be renamed but that information has not been divulged and will be announced at the ribbon cutting ceremony.

**Amenities/Layout of the Park:** Cement cornhole boards, cement ping pong table, cement checkers/chess tables, gaga pit, a new pavilion, walking/bike path around the entire park, widening and resurfacing of the parking lot, resurfacing of the basketball court, new youth playground equipment and a Ninja Warrior Course; a first of its kind in our area. The students also repainted the existing pavilion and restrooms and are adding a Hammock Comfort Station. This is an area where you can bring your own hammock, hang-out with friends and study or simply relax and unwind. Anywhere you travel, you see teenagers and young adults using the nearest trees, poles, wherever it will work to hang their hammock! The group did have to complete a Patronicity Campaign for the Hammock Comfort Station, and all of the funds raised (\$7,500) were 100% matched by Patronicity.

The students were able to volunteer for many things prior to March, but once March of 2020 hit; volunteer opportunities came to a standstill. Their April meeting was cancelled, May meeting done virtually by Webex, but the group was still able to meet in June for a final meeting and picnic at the Ball Band Biergarten. Here the graduating seniors were honored with small mementos of their time in the MYAC, and the Executive Committee was given medals for their Leadership and vision of the Hums Park Project. It was another successful year for the students of the Mayor Dave Wood Youth Advisory Council.

## Proclamations

Each year Mayor Wood is called upon to honor notable events and occasions with Proclamations.

Following are the 2020 Mayoral Proclamations:

### City of Mishawaka Retirements

- Mary Ellen Hazen, Deputy City Clerk, 33 years 03/24/2020
- Becky Cockey, Central Services, 35 years 05/29/2020
- John Francis, Sewer Department, 28 years 06/26/2020
- Tim Maust, Mishawaka Utilities, Electric Division, 41 years 06/30/2020
- Terry Hogman, Engineering Department, 32 years 12/10/2020

### Other Notable Proclamations

- Farmworkers Awareness Week 03/23/2020
- Arbor Day 04/24/2020
- National Day of Prayer 05/07/2020
- Relay for Life, St. Joseph County, 25 years 05/30/2020
- Stryker-Liker Day, Ron Stryker, Bear 103.9 09/25/2020
- Mary Weber Retirement from Nursing, 42 years 10/23/2020
- Salvation Army Day 12/15/2020