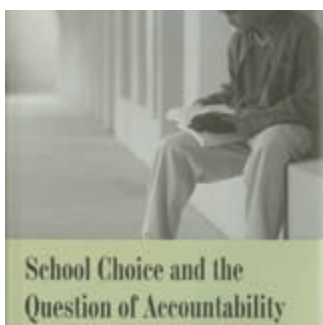




JUST THE FACTS

The 100-Year History of Milwaukee's Public Policy Forum



by Jeff Bentoff

JUST THE FACTS

The 100-Year History of Milwaukee's Public Policy Forum

by Jeff Bentoff

© 2012 Public Policy Forum, Inc.

1913-1945	3
The “Movement For Greater Efficiency”	
1945-1984	16
“A Fountainhead of Ideas for Fiscal Sanity”	
1984-2012	30
Tackling New Challenges	
President Perspectives.....	44

Those who follow government and current affairs think they know how public policy is developed. They’ll tell you that it takes place at the intersection of politicians, interest groups, media, and individual citizens. And if they’re talking about how it works in most U.S. cities, they’re correct.

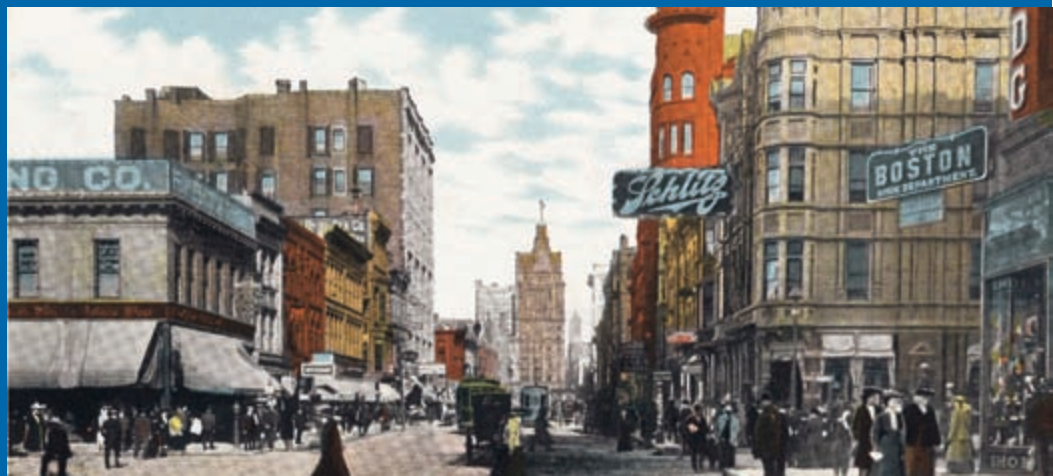
But in the Milwaukee area, there’s a unique, additional player that also has helped shape public policy. A small, non-partisan, and independent non-profit – dedicated to efficient government, independent research, and cooperation with elected officials – has played an instrumental role in Milwaukee’s policy arena. It has done so without fanfare or the general public’s broad awareness, despite improving the quality of life for area residents and businesses.

And it has been doing this for 100 years.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Milwaukee-based author Jeff Bentoff first became acquainted with the Public Policy Forum while covering local governments as a reporter for the Milwaukee Sentinel in the 1980s. Bentoff subsequently followed the group’s work as an official in the offices of Milwaukee Mayor John O. Norquist and Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele.

Bentoff has written for numerous publications and owns Bentoff Communications, a media relations and public affairs firm that works with businesses and non-profits to achieve their communications goals.



The group was founded as the Milwaukee Citizens' Bureau of Municipal Efficiency on May 26, 1913. Today, that same organization, now called the Public Policy Forum, remains one of the oldest, continuously operating independent government research groups in the country. The Forum is one of only a very few public policy groups that traces its roots to the "efficiency bureau" movement of the early 20th century. Dedicated to helping improve the operations of local governments, most of the many local bureaus across the country have since folded or changed their mission or structure. But in Milwaukee, what was once part of a national experiment remains alive and well – and has become a valued local institution.

Unlike most other think tanks or public policy groups now operating, the Public Policy Forum is truly independent. It is not bound to the ideas of ideologies, political parties, or donors. It does not answer to institutions, governments, or businesses. It adheres only to the goals and objectivity articulated in its founding documents: Promoting the use of scientific methods to make government more efficient and publicizing facts about how government is administered.

During its history, the group has been characterized as a "watchdog" that keeps

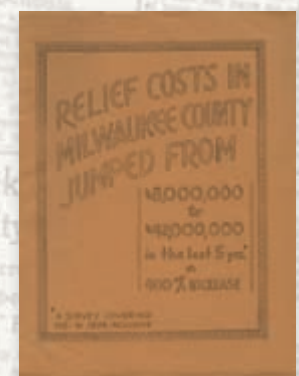
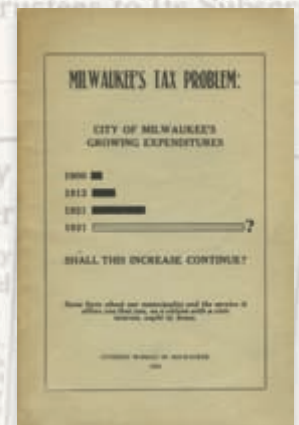
an eye on elected officials, a "bulldog" that sinks its teeth into government, and a "seeing-eye dog" that helps guide government. (A critic decades ago even likened the organization to a "poodle dog for the downtown interests," though that moniker didn't stick.)

Its researchers have issued more than a thousand studies, reports, and white papers, and attended hundreds of public governmental meetings – sometimes serving as the sole representative of an indifferent public.

The Forum has studied topics ranging from the very mundane – such as budgeting methods, boiler inspection services, and the city's charter – to the global and far-reaching – such as economic development, school choice, and regional cooperation. Starting with a small focus on Milwaukee city issues, the group quickly branched out to county government and later to municipalities and school districts across the region, and beyond governmental topics as well.

Throughout its 100 years, the Forum has doggedly and successfully steered clear of partisanship. In fact, despite vastly different politics, then-Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker and Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett both recently cited the group's research in their annual budget addresses in the same year.

(left) A postcard showing Grand Avenue and a view looking east from Third Street, circa 1915.

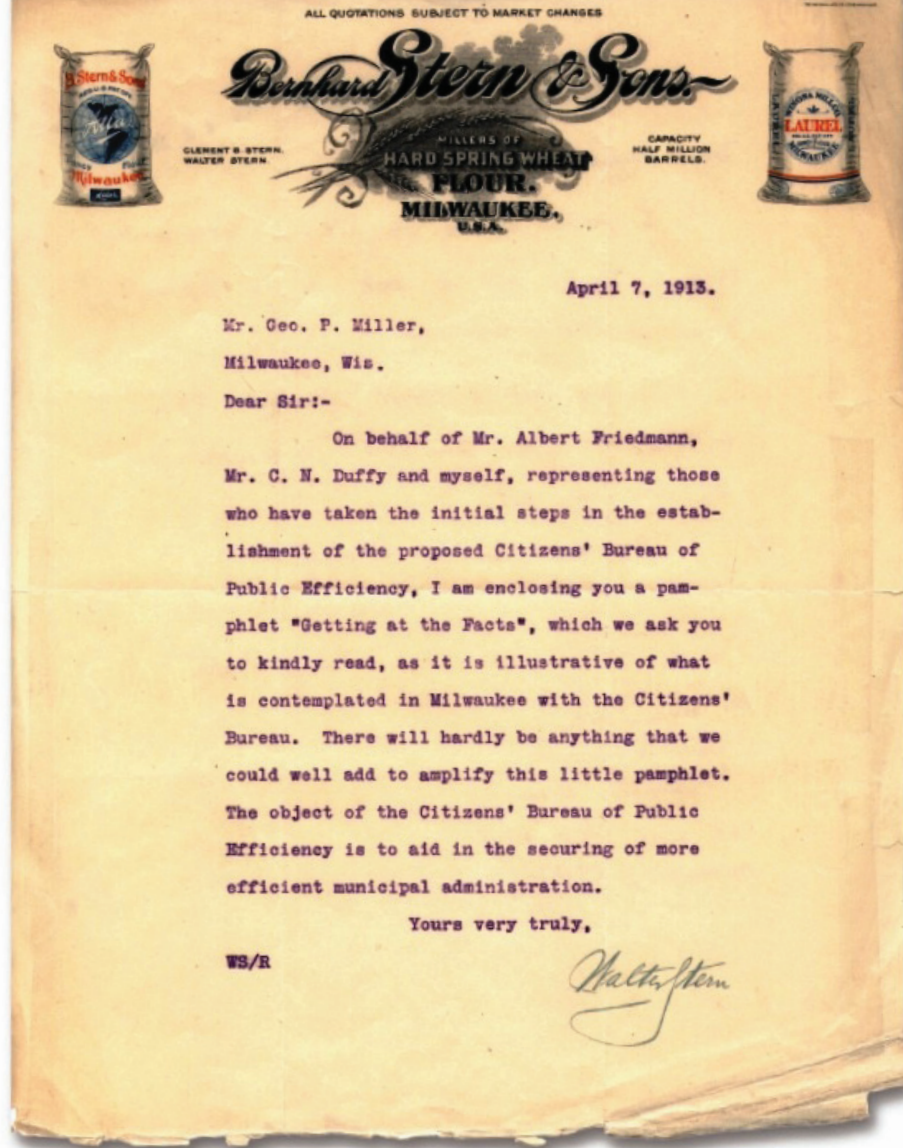


Shown are early examples of Forum reports: (top) "Milwaukee's Tax Problem: City of Milwaukee's Growing Expenditures," 1921; (middle) The Bureau's Report On Its Fourteenth Year Of Governmental Research, May 1928; and (bottom) "Relief Costs in Milwaukee County Jumped From \$8,000,000 to \$42,000,000 in the last 5 yrs.," May 1937.

While several of the city's most successful businessmen started the group, its membership and leadership have become more inclusive over the years, growing to involve a wide variety of citizens, businesses, non-profit organizations, and even governments.

Its earliest motto described the Bureau as "for efficiency in government through co-operation with government." The group still believes that it can best affect government by working with officials, rather than against them. And instead of touting its own successes, the Forum provides information to policymakers and the public — and lets them take credit for the reforms.

While it's hard to quantify the direct impact of a behind-the-scenes group, the historical record shows the Forum deserves credit for helping implement many valuable local government reforms that today are taken for granted. Those include modern budgeting practices, county operation of most parks and the airport, creation of the county executive position, reduction in the number of municipalities, and improved regional cooperation, to name just a few. While most residents and business owners may not be aware of the Public Policy Forum, they have benefited from the countless data-driven public policies it has helped bring to fruition.



Founding officer Walter Stern's letter seeking support for the proposed Bureau.

Many believe that the state of public discourse today has fallen to new lows of partisanship and shrillness. Yet, even in this challenging civic environment, the Forum continues to steadily produce the informed analysis, unbiased perspectives, and objective recommendations that policymakers and the public desire and need.

The Public Policy Forum can be proud of a long history of success in helping to improve local governments and the

quality of life in the Milwaukee area. With its first 100 years now behind it, the Forum is poised to provide the community with many more decades of independent fact-finding and invaluable analysis. ■

THE DISSEMINATOR
A short story by Mabel Herbert Urner in the illustrated magazine of The Sentinel next Sunday.

TH

ESTABLISHED 1837 NO. 28,399

MORE EFFICIENCY IN CITY'S AFFAIRS IS BUREAU'S PLAN

New Institution Founded by Milwaukee Citizens Now Organized by Choice of Officials.

A. H. VOGEL PRESIDENT

Thomas L. Hinckley, Eastern Expert, Will Be Director in Charge of the Work.

TELLS OF BROAD IDEALS

Object Not Only to Fix Blame for Mistakes But to Bestow Praise for Efficiency.

The movement for greater efficiency in city government was given fresh impetus when on Friday afternoon the Milwaukee Citizens' Bureau for Municipal Efficiency effected its complete organization at a meeting held in the Public Service Building by electing August H. Vogel president, and Thomas L. Hinckley director in charge of the work, in addition to the election of nine trustees and the remaining officers.

The first step toward effecting the permanent organization was the election of the following trustees:

August H. Vogel, Charles Allis, Walter Stern, A. C. Elser, Albert Friedman, Charles W. Norris, H. A. J. Epham, J. D. Mortimer and Edward Chris.

New Officers Elected.

The trustees elected, in addition to Mr. Vogel and Mr. Hinckley, the following officers:

Vice president—Charles Allis.
Treasurer—A. C. Elser.
Secretary—Walter Stern.

C. Newbit Duffy, hitherto an active member of the bureau, resigned owing to his impending departure for Manila.

Disregard Parties.

A vigorous campaign for civic betterment was the keynote of all the speeches delivered at the meeting. To eliminate all disturbing factors the organization, as explained by Secretary Walter Stern, has refused to be affiliated with any party, club, coterie or class interest, as the necessary condition of effective work for the best interests of the municipality.

Director Has Wide Experience.

The selection of Thomas L. Hinckley for the arduous task of carrying on the work of the bureau is looked upon by members of the organization as a guarantee of efficiency. Mr. Hinckley comes to Milwaukee with a splendid record of achievement in other counties and municipalities. A graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, his first practical work lay in the design of sanitary engineering for the Ohio state board of health and subsequently for the cities of Altoona, Pa., and Columbus, O. To broaden his practical knowledge of civic affairs, he became a member of the New York City bureau of

SUMMARY OF

SATURDAY, NOV. 16, 1913

WEATHER
Wisconsin—Fair in south Saturday; Sun moderate east to south.

TEMPERATURE
(Last twenty days)
Compared with normal

Nov. 14, 1913	Nov. 15, 1913
High 44	High 44
Low 24	Low 24
1. Milwaukee	1. Milwaukee
2. Chicago	2. Chicago
3. St. Paul	3. St. Paul
4. St. Louis	4. St. Louis
5. Cincinnati	5. Cincinnati
6. New York	6. New York
7. Philadelphia	7. Philadelphia
8. Baltimore	8. Baltimore
9. Washington	9. Washington
10. Boston	10. Boston
11. Portland	11. Portland
12. San Francisco	12. San Francisco
13. Los Angeles	13. Los Angeles
14. Honolulu	14. Honolulu
15. Manila	15. Manila
16. Singapore	16. Singapore
17. Batavia	17. Batavia
18. Hong Kong	18. Hong Kong
19. Shanghai	19. Shanghai
20. Yokohama	20. Yokohama
21. Kobe	21. Kobe
22. Osaka	22. Osaka
23. Tokyo	23. Tokyo
24. Seoul	24. Seoul
25. Peking	25. Peking
26. Tientsin	26. Tientsin
27. Hankow	27. Hankow
28. Canton	28. Canton
29. Hong Kong	29. Hong Kong
30. Shanghai	30. Shanghai

Want Ads, P. 1

New citizens' bureau for efficiency is organized.

Thomas J. Nease, president of the bureau, says that the bureau is organized to effect efficiency in city government.

View suppressed. Cause method of efficiency is being used.

District attorney coal prices problem.

Young man's marriage.

Churches to give signs on Nov. 23.

Starvation and death.

Make objectionary.

Supervisors urge late children's the city club committee.

Parade on Good Friday.

Milwaukee social and future.

Goodyear fire opened on Saturday.

College lecturer cent works of fiction.

Catherine Murphy from sailor believe.

Annual meeting opens on Oct. 15.

Anthony J. Heener, dies at Tacoma.

Victims of lake number 256.

Henry Spencer, ing Mrs. Rexroat.

WASH. Carranza tells of fere in Mexican army.

THE "MOVEMENT FOR GREATER EFFICIENCY"

On a blustery November morning, Milwaukee business leaders awoke to a troubling headline: "Claim: Frills Hinder Work of Education. Citizens Declare Pupils Do Not Learn Rudiments in School. Says Teachers Fail."

Except for the dated wording, the headline could have come from any newspaper today. But the Milwaukee Sentinel article ran nearly 100 years ago – on November 14, 1913.

The article described students who had not learned fundamentals and concluded with both sarcasm and exasperation: "Outside of this, there is nothing the matter with the public school system of Milwaukee, and the curriculum is all that could be desired."

Coincidentally, such longstanding frustration with local government had already led Milwaukee's leading businessmen to call a meeting for that same afternoon. They would launch a new group dedicated to using impartial, scientific methods to finally begin to fix persistent problems with Milwaukee government efficiency and effectiveness – and maybe finally put an end to such bad news in the morning paper.

Thirteen of Milwaukee's top businessmen, some of whom were members of industrial dynasties, gathered at 4 p.m. later that day in November 1913 for the first meeting of the new Milwaukee Citizens' Bureau of Municipal Efficiency, the group they were forming to improve city government.

They met in the directors' room of The Milwaukee Electric Railway & Light Co. in the Public Service Building, which today houses the West Michigan Avenue headquarters of the successor company, We Energies. Elected as officers were: president - August H. Vogel, a top executive with the Pfister & Vogel Leather Co. and son of the company's co-founder; vice president - Charles Allis, the first president of Allis-Chalmers Co., which had grown out of his father's company, Edward P. Allis Co.; treasurer - Albert C. Elser, vice president of the Second Ward Savings Bank and son-in-law of Alfred Uihlein,



The first meeting of the new Milwaukee Citizens' Bureau of Municipal Efficiency was held November 14, 1913 in the directors' room of The Milwaukee Electric Railway & Light Co. in the Public Service Building.



Four of the founding officers of the Citizens' Bureau of Municipal Efficiency (from top to bottom): August H. Vogel, president; Charles Allis, vice president; Albert C. Elser, treasurer; and Walter Stern, secretary.



a later president of the Joseph Schlitz Brewing Co.; and secretary - Walter Stern, president of Bernhard Stern and Sons, Inc., owner of a grain elevator.

They also elected a board and 39 dues-paying "associates" of the corporation, many whose last names remain associated with Milwaukee history today – Pabst, Uihlein, Plankinton, and Gallun among them. The group was to be funded with a budget of \$10,000 annually for three years, with 20 subscribers paying \$500 apiece.

They made another key decision that day – to hire Thomas L. Hinckley as the group's first director. Hinckley, who came from New York City, praised his new board members for having "banded together to take the hand of the municipal government in this campaign for public efficiency and to work with it and for it and through it," according to the meeting minutes.

A large part of the Bureau's work, he told the board, would include a review of the city's form of government, including its charter and statutes. The Bureau would approach the city about implementing recent recommendations a New York efficiency bureau made earlier that year. And the new group would conduct "a study of detailed efficiency methods in various departments... where there may

be possibilities of reducing expenses or increasing efficiency or increasing service without materially changing the present organization," Hinckley said.

"It is not guess work," he added. "It is simply the study of facts, the correlation of facts, comparison of facts, and presentation of the results of such a study of facts."

Hinckley was hired for one year beginning December 1, 1913. The board agreed to pay him an annual salary of \$4,000 (the equivalent of \$91,791 in 2012 dollars).

His tenure would turn out to be longer than a year, but due to disagreements with the board, would be the shortest of any of the group's directors over its first 100 years.

* * *



Thomas L. Hinckley was a logical choice to head the new Bureau, with prior positions

in the country's burgeoning efficiency bureau movement – greatly heralded in its day, but now largely forgotten.

The movement, started earlier around the beginning of that century in New



A 1909 bird's-eye view of City Hall and downtown.



Four more of the thirteen founding members: (top) Horace A.J. Upham, (bottom, left to right) Albert T. Friedmann, Charles W. Norris, Edward A. Uhrig.

York City, was intended to counter corruption, cronyism, and incompetence common in local governments around the country, including Milwaukee's. Professionalism and standardization that served as the foundation for businesses were often lacking in government. Progressives, Socialists, and business leaders alike were behind the movement's ideals — they all opposed government waste, fraud, inefficiency, and ineffectiveness and supported an objective, fact-based approach to improving and running government.

Some of the early 1900s efficiency bureaus, also known as municipal research bureaus, were established and run by governments themselves. Others were privately operated and funded. But as they sprouted in a number of cities across the country, each shared a commitment to objective, unbiased analyses aimed at improving government operations. They relied to varying degrees on publicity, through newsletters and media coverage. And they positioned themselves as non-partisan partners of governments. As a result, local governments likely

had little choice but to cooperate with these avowedly apolitical do-gooders.

While the Milwaukee Citizens' Bureau of Municipal Efficiency stemmed from this national movement, the Milwaukee group also traced its lineage to an additional source, one likely unique to the founding of any bureau: the Socialists.

Milwaukee got its firsthand taste of the efficiency movement thanks to local Socialist politicians. In 1910, Milwaukee's first Socialist mayor, Emil Seidel, and the Socialist-leaning Common Council created a city-run organization, the Milwaukee Bureau of Economy and Efficiency (MBEE). Committed to cleaning up corruption of prior administrations and improving the effectiveness of government, the Socialists hired a prominent University of Wisconsin — Madison economics professor, John R. Commons, to lead the new MBEE and its 13 staff members, 14 special investigating staff, and 11 consulting experts. In its short two-year lifespan, the MBEE issued 20 detailed surveys

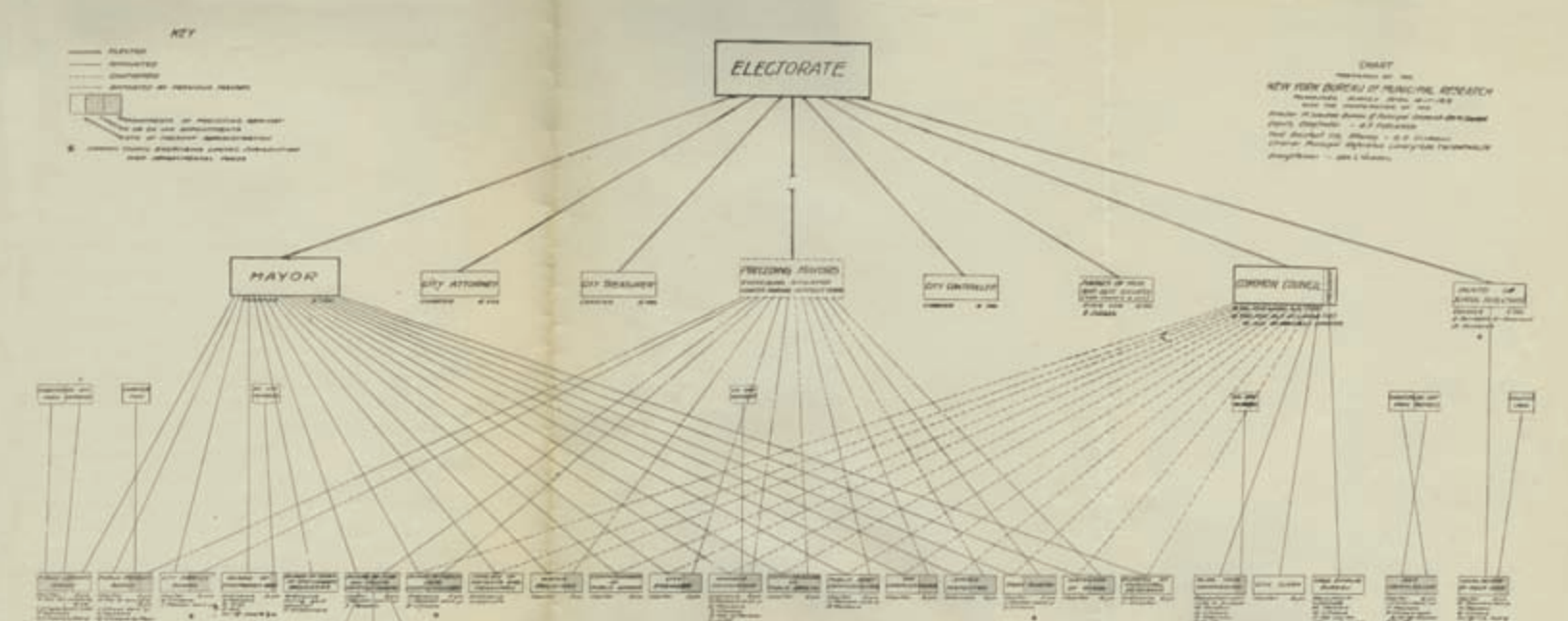


Chart prepared by the New York Bureau of Municipal Research in its April 1913 "Survey of the City of Milwaukee."

and reports on topics ranging from industrial accidents, housing conditions, women's wages, and "The Newsboys of Milwaukee" to refuse incinerators, drain inspections, and the water works' efficiency.

Despite its productivity, or maybe because of it, the MBEE was eliminated when the Socialists lost the mayor's office and council seats in the next municipal election in 1912. Opposition candidate Gerhard A. Bading became mayor, and he and other new non-Socialist leaders quickly shut down the MBEE as a vestige of the Socialists.

However, the popularity of the MBEE's approach did force the new elected leaders to give at least lip service to the concept. They created a new municipal research body they could claim as their own, but delayed staffing and empowering it.

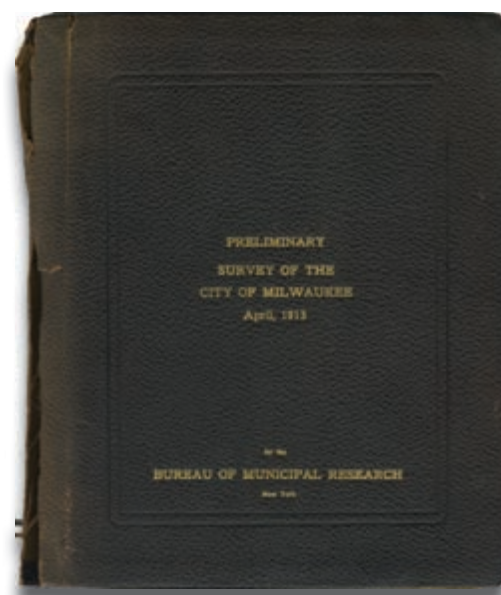
With no efficiency bureau in operation, local business leaders, who appreciated the approach of the MBEE, began looking for an alternative.

An initial reaction was to invite Dr. W. H. Allen, director of the renowned New York Bureau of Municipal Research, to speak on "Progress of Efficiency in Public Business" before the City Club, a business-oriented civic group. Impressed by Allen's talk and

his citizens' bureau, the first of its kind in the U.S., a committee of Milwaukee business leaders formed to pursue creating such a private group.

The committee hired the New York bureau to conduct a preliminary survey of city government, which took place in April 1913. The survey sought to determine the "important administrative problems confronting the city government" and "formulate a plan for constructive cooperation between the city government and a proposed Milwaukee Citizens' Bureau of Municipal Efficiency," according to the June 2, 1913, letter of transmittal from the New York bureau.

The detailed, 135-page survey included 196 wide-ranging "criticisms and constructive suggestions," 132 of which would not require ordinances or city charter revisions. They



ranged from major (giving the mayor more power because he “is practically a figurehead” and reducing the size of the council from 37 to no more than 15); to functional (developing an administrative code and centralizing purchasing); to detailed (using police dogs in outlying areas and improving “inadequate” street signs because “good street signs are indispensable to strangers and a convenience to residents”).

Suggested next steps included creating an independent “Citizens’ Bureau of Municipal Efficiency.” Under the New York bureau’s plan, a new Milwaukee Bureau would “provide expert assistance to the deputy comptroller in reviewing, formulating and installing a uniform system of accounts,” “organize public interest in the preparation of the annual city budget,” and “cooperate in public works betterment,” among other tasks.

Mayor Bading, more comfortable working with the business community’s proposed efficiency group than one started by his Socialist opponents, endorsed the plan. In a July 18, 1913, letter to the citizens’ committee that paid for the survey, Bading said that his administration had already begun implementing some of the proposed changes and wanted to give Milwaukee citizens “an efficient and economical administration and form of government.”

“I will therefore avail myself of the opportunity, in case the Citizens’ Bureau becomes a reality, to call upon it for such assistance and cooperation as it may render to the administration, and again assure you of the full cooperation not only of myself but also of various heads of departments of my administration,” he wrote.

By that time, the “Milwaukee Citizens’ Bureau of Municipal Efficiency” had already become a reality on paper, with five business leaders signing its articles of incorporation on May 26, 1913. The group’s stated legal purpose, according to the articles of incorporation, dovetailed with what would be recommended by the New York bureau (and would remain largely unaltered during the group’s next 100 years):

“To promote efficient and economic municipal government; to promote the adoption of scientific methods of managing and supervising municipal affairs and the accounting and reporting on details of municipal business, with a view of facilitating the work of public officials; to secure constructive publicity in matters pertaining to municipal problems; to collect, classify, analyze, correlate, interpret and publish facts as to the administration of municipal government...”

Photos from the New York Bureau of Municipal Research’s report include numerous suggestions for city improvements. (top) “The police and the department of public works should, by confiscating material standing on sidewalks, compel abutting owners to stop using private property for public purposes.” (middle) “Milwaukee has numerous grade crossings. These should be eliminated before congestion of population and traffic makes them not only an inconvenience, but a menace to life. (bottom) “Some day this railroad will be covered, permitting the park to stretch down to the lake shore.”



Not wishing to wait for elected leaders to truly establish a new city-run bureau, the business community had revived the concept on its own. The business leaders had created a legal entity for the new group, received the blessing (at least for the time being) of the mayor, and had a detailed list of recommendations awaiting action. And on November 14, 1913, they elected a board and officers, hired the first director, and prepared to open an office and begin the work of efficiency — work that would continue for the next 100 years.

The founding meeting of the Milwaukee Citizens' Bureau of Municipal Efficiency and hiring of Hinckley was big news. A testament to the power of the group's leaders and keen interest in the topic, the story ran on the front page of the next morning's Milwaukee Sentinel — in the same prominent spot that the story on education ran the day before. The headline of the November 15, 1913, story read:

MORE EFFICIENCY IN CITY'S AFFAIRS IS BUREAU'S PLAN

New Institution Founded by Milwaukee
Citizens Now Organized by Choice of Officials.

A.H. VOGEL PRESIDENT

Thomas L. Hinckley, Eastern Expert,
Will Be Director in Charge of the Work

TELLS OF BROAD IDEALS

Object Not Only to Fix Blame for Mistakes
But to Bestow Praise for Efficiency

"The movement for greater efficiency in city government was given fresh impetus..." by the creation of the new group, the story began.

THE DISSEMBLER
A short story by Mabel Herbert Urner in the illustrated magazine of The Sentinel next Sunday.

ESTABLISHED 1837 NO. 28,3

MORE EFFICIENCY IN CITY'S AFFAIRS IS BUREAU'S PLAN

New Institution Founded by Milwaukee Citizens Now Organized
by Choice of Officials.

A. H. VOGEL PRESIDENT

Thomas L. Hinckley, Eastern Expert, Will Be Director in Charge
of the Work.

TELLS OF BROAD IDEALS

Object Not Only to Fix Blame for Mistakes But to Bestow Praise
for Efficiency.

The movement for greater efficiency in city government was given fresh impetus when on Friday afternoon the Milwaukee Citizens' Bureau for Municipal Efficiency effected its complete organization at a meeting held in the Public Service building by electing August H. Vogel president, and Thomas L. Hinckley director in charge of the work, in addition to the election of nine trustees and the remaining officers.

The first step toward effecting the permanent organization was the election of the following trustees:

August H. Vogel, Charles Allis, Walter Stern, A. C. Elser, Albert Friedman, Charles W. Norrie, H. A. J. Upham, J. D. Mortimer and Edward Ehrig.

New Officers Elected.

The trustees elected, in addition to Mr. Vogel and Mr. Hinckley, the following officers:

Vice president—Charles Allis.

Treasurer—A. C. Elser.

Secretary—Walter Stern.

C. Nesbit Duffy, hitherto an active member of the bureau, resigned owing to his impending departure for Manila.

Disregard Parties.

SUMMARY

SATURDAY

WEATHER

Wisconsin
south Saturday
moderate e

TEMPERATURE

(Low)

Nov. 14, 1913

Highest

37.

Temperature

1 a. m.
2 a. m.
3 a. m.
4 a. m.
5 a. m.
6 a. m.
7 a. m.
8 a. m.
9 a. m.
10 a. m.

8 p. m.
9 p. m.
10 p. m.
Mean temperature
Excess above
Precipitation
Deficiency
Wind, N. E.
Relative humidity
m. — per cent
Barometer,
30 in.
For general
page 12.

SUNRISE

Light

Waning

New city
efficiency

Thomas
against C
Children
\$1,500.

Vice su
cuss meth

District
coal prices

Cleveland
young on

Church
sion on N

Ione M
starts "s

Make o
ary arran

Supt. R
late child

City el
pal salary

Citizens
parade on

"A vigorous campaign for civic betterment was the keynote of all the speeches delivered at the meeting. To eliminate all disturbing factors the organization, as explained by Secretary Walter Stern, has refused to be affiliated with any party, club coterie, or class interest, as the necessary condition of effective work for the best interests of the municipality."

The paper reported that the "high standing of the citizens' bureau" was apparent from its leadership and membership, which the story detailed.

Thomas L. Hinckley, selected for the "arduous task of carrying on the work of the bureau," came to Milwaukee "with a splendid record of achievement in other counties and municipalities" and "wide experience," the paper wrote. The story noted that Hinckley was a graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and that before taking the Milwaukee position, he also had been with the New York Bureau of Municipal Research and headed the Westchester County (New York) research bureau.

Hinckley said the Bureau would not simply point out city government's shortcomings. "Mr. Hinckley insisted that a large part of his work will consist in calling attention to and commenting favorably on duties well performed by the incumbents and in encouraging the efficient city official and subordinate by judicial praise," the story said.

In another article published shortly after the first board meeting, Hinckley emphasized the group's "publicity" role, which he said would "insure that advances already made will become permanent, and that no turn of politics will be permitted to undo the good work of an efficient administration."

During his time with the Bureau, Hinckley's goals of working closely with government and using publicity to the Bureau's advantage would be tested.

* * *

The new Milwaukee Citizens' Bureau of Municipal Efficiency located its first office in the heart of Milwaukee's governmental and civic life, opening on December 18, 1913. The group chose the top floor of a building on the southeast corner of Broadway and Mason, a location ideal for the group's mission — about a block from City Hall, the Milwaukee Sentinel and the Milwaukee Free Press.

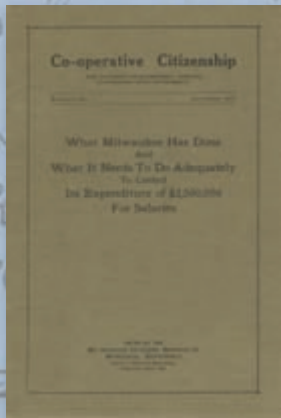
A Milwaukee Journal story that ran on the afternoon of the opening described the Bureau's "first official act... to declare itself in favor of Milwaukee's new segregated budget, and to urge a large attendance at the public hearing on it at the city hall next week."

The Bureau's first published report came the following year, in 1914, covering a prosaic topic: "Report of Ordinances Proposed for Consolidation of Building, Boiler and Smoke Inspection Services." The next year saw reports on purchasing and Fire Department administration and two reports to the public about



The first offices of the Milwaukee Citizens' Bureau for Municipal Efficiency were located in the University Building at the southeast corner of Broadway and Mason Streets. Article with illustration shown announcing the building's pending construction is from Yenowine's News, December 17, 1892.

Three sample reports from the early years: (top) "What Milwaukee Has Done And What It Needs To Do Adequately To Control Its Expenditure of \$2,5000,000 For Salaries," January 1918; (middle) "City of Milwaukee's Major Financial Transactions: 1920-1929 Inclusive Prepared to Serve as the Basis for a Long-Term Program," July 1930; and (bottom) "Public Works in the City of Milwaukee," April 1938.



the group's activities. In 1916, the Bureau published nine reports on topics such as salary standardization, street lighting, municipal finance, central control of motor vehicles, miscellaneous revenues, and the bureau of purchasing and supplies.

The Bureau accomplished much in its first few years, according to a September 1916 article in *Municipal Research*, a national publication. The study said the Bureau had helped the deputy comptroller install systems of propriety accounts and appropriation accounting; after conducting a Department of Public Works survey, hired a consultant to design a uniform cost system now installed in two of its Bureaus; surveyed the Fire Department, resulting in plans to motorize the department and consolidate city repair shops; convinced the city to study Milwaukee's asphalt pavements; surveyed Milwaukee's school buildings for the school board, resulting in a proposed building program; compiled competing arguments in the debate over the "deplorable condition" of Milwaukee street lighting; inspected the Greenfield Sanitarium; advocated for limiting transfers from the contingency fund for emergencies only; helped develop 1,200 standard purchasing specifications as a prelude to more centralized purchasing; and supported a ward reorganization proposed by the city bureau of municipal research.

The Bureau published its own summaries of its work in its early years, noting in one that "it is conceivable that the mere presence of the Citizens' Bureau in City Hall has caused better work to be done by the city departments, and has stimulated a higher regard for public service." That theme would be repeated throughout the group's history.

Despite such a list of successes, not every official and observer always endorsed the Bureau's work. At the board's 1915 annual meeting, Hinckley reported a conflict with the mayor:

"It is difficult to know what are the opinions of the public officials or of the general public, as to the work of the Bureau," Hinckley said. "Unquestionably, we have raised the opposition of at least one important official – possibly more. At the recent budget hearing, the director was attacked by the Mayor for criticizing certain of the budget estimates. In cases where we have failed to keep the good will of officials, we have simply been performing our duty to the public, and we have no apologies or excuses to offer."

Despite generally positive media attention, Hinckley also found himself at odds with at least one newspaper. The *Milwaukee Daily News* pounced on Hinckley and the Bureau on March 6, 1916, with a story headlined:

AND THEY CALL IT EFFICIENCY!

"EXPERT" SECRETARIES TELL PEOPLE HOW ALL THINGS SHOULD BE DONE "EFFICIENTLY"

SLOP OVER AND RETRACT

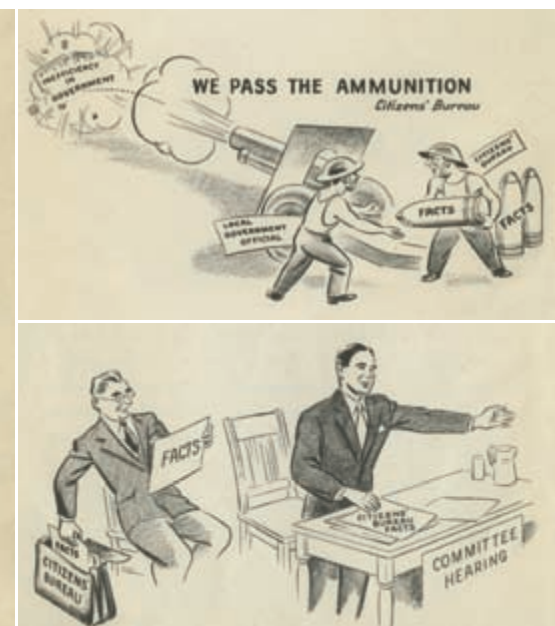
CITIZENS' BUREAU AGAIN BREAKS LOOSE WITH ITS IGNORANCE ON PUBLIC MATTERS

The article covered a controversy over a proposal for a water filtration plant and focused invective toward the Bureau and its mission. It called much of the Bureau's efficiency work "bunk," warned that taxpayers were in danger of being "flim flammed," criticized "imported 'secretaries' with fat salary attachments," suggested that the efficiency analysts considered Milwaukeeans "saps," and referred to information it received as "the latest gob of this kind of 'efficiency' guff dumped in the offices of this newspaper..."

A negative article like this would have stung Hinckley, who strongly believed in the importance of publicity and complained about bad press coverage. But the issue of publicity was bigger than a single article. And he would ultimately resign over it. The topic of publicizing the Bureau's activities generated disagreement between the board and Hinckley from the day he was hired.

* * *

The groups that provided the model for the Citizens' Bureau of Municipal Efficiency highly valued publicity. They believed that while cooperation was essential to influencing government officials, so was public knowledge and involvement. These efficiency bureaus relied on newsletters, bulletins, reports, and media coverage. Not surprisingly, the Milwaukee Bureau's articles of incorporation specifically listed publicity among the group's purposes:



Illustrations from a 1944 Citizens' Bureau of Milwaukee pamphlet titled "An Investment That Pays 500 to One! Savings in Local Government Costs Obtained by Help of Citizens' Bureau."

“...to secure constructive publicity in matters pertaining to municipal problems...and publish facts as to the administration of municipal government.”

The businessmen leading the Bureau's board, perhaps because of their personal business interests or relationships, sought to avoid public confrontation with politicians. They made this clear in a draft flyer to potential members that concluded: “We will esteem it a favor if you will advise us whether we can be of assistance in helping you improve your city government without arousing the antagonism of your city officials” (emphasis in original).

At its first board meeting, the board did not fully delegate the role of publicity to its new director, keeping that power to itself. The meeting minutes ended by noting: “After an informal discussion, it was tentatively understood that any information with reference to the Bureau be given to the press on authority of the President or Secretary.”

Over time, Hinckley repeatedly expressed interest in active publicity for his new group and became frustrated with the board for not allowing him to pursue a more vigorous publicity program.

In his January 1915 report to the board, Hinckley's concerns bubbled over. He asserted that the “success of the program

advocated by the Bureau cannot be guaranteed without the use of a proper medium of publicity.”

“It is therefore, partly as a measure of self protection, that the maintenance of some manner of bulletin service is urged. Unless the general public is kept informed of suggested advances in city administration, no background of popular approval can be reasonably expected.”

Hinckley also criticized the board's failure to give him more leeway in performing his job, saying that “unless the board of trustees does not have confidence in its present director as an exponent of efficiency in city government, there is no apparent reason why full discretionary power should not be allowed.”

One year later, on January 11, 1916, he told the board that less had been spent in 1915 on publicity than in 1914 — a drop from \$196.79 to \$151.15. He recommended “employment of a director in whom full confidence on the part of trustees will be assured,” noting that “employment of a director in whom all members may repose that confidence which is essential to the success of any undertaking of this sort is, of course, a first essential.”

Hinckley's remarks signaled that his time in Milwaukee was about over. By spring of 1916, he resigned. Hinckley's desire

for more autonomy and an aggressive publicity operation ran counter to the board's desire for control and its fears of controversy. Ironically, Hinckley's vision came to pass over time. The Bureau would become known for its many public reports, tireless advocacy, and successful outreach to the public under subsequent directors — while always maintaining a high degree of cooperation and non-confrontation with government officials.

* * *

From Hinckley's departure until 1945, three different directors ran the agency. Each was promoted from within for the top job. They were:

John F. Putnam (1916-1918). He was initially hired in 1914 as an accounting assistant under Hinckley.

Harold L. Henderson (1918-1929). Henderson later worked as a reform expert for Gov. Walter J. Kohler Sr., who personally paid his salary.

John C. Davis (1929-1944). Davis previously served as the founding dean of Marquette University's college of engineering and chief of the city government's Bureau of Municipal Research and worked at the Citizens' Bureau before becoming director. He earned the nickname “Cut Costs Davis” because of his battles for economy.

Over these 30 years, the Bureau established itself with governments and the public through its prodigious work on a variety of issues, adding review of Milwaukee County government to its focus in 1919. Annual reports, public documents, and other summaries during the period list dozens of issues the Bureau studied and improvements it helped implement.

The Bureau maintained a list of its publications that included about 300 titles on a wide range of topics from 1915 to 1945. In addition to studies performed under Hinckley, topics include central purchasing, government salaries, Common Council reorganization, playgrounds, bond budgets, juvenile courts, school building conditions, the city charter, departmental consolidation, home rule, subways, mayoral power, gas taxes, highway legislation, crime statistics, debt, street widenings, public health, auto fatalities, drinking water standards, assessments, tax burdens, police administration, taxation systems, departmental budgets, condemnation laws, harbor bonding, delinquent taxes, sewage facilities, operational budgets, parks, hospitals, state aids, public works, police administration, the lakefront, redistricting, employee bonuses, police cars, and housing sanitation codes.

Many of the report titles emphasize the benefits of reducing taxes, especially in

the aftermath of the Great Depression. A memo dated January 2, 1942, outlined “Major Accomplishments Measured in Dollars Saved Taxpayers: 1931-1941.” Its list totaled \$49.4 million in savings. Items included preventing construction of a police precinct station, city hall annex, central garage, new school, and concrete roof for the Kilbourn Park Reservoir, and stopping the reduction of firefighters’ weekly work hours. The largest single savings claimed in that period was \$27 million for being a principal sponsor of a “tax limitation ordinance” that was in effect from 1933 through 1935. The Bureau also was active under director Henderson for nearly two decades during state legislative sessions, arguing for a fairer share of state resources for the city.

During the 1930s, the Bureau concentrated on “ways of maintaining quality public services, despite drastic reductions in revenues from the property tax and non-property sources, including state aids and grants,” according to Bureau historical notes written in 1987 by Norman N. Gill, then retired as Bureau director.

During that period, the Bureau sought to prevent waste of tax dollars so they could be reallocated to residents’ needs. “Throughout the years 1920-1940, the Bureau viewed its responsibility as one not so much of reducing the expenses of local governments and schools, but



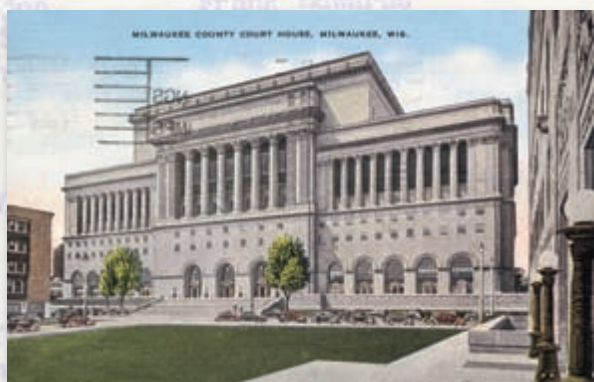
Two publications of the Citizens' Bureau of Milwaukee: its 1923 Annual Report; and a November 1937 taxpayer analysis summarizing the tax rates for five local governments operating in the City of Milwaukee.

CITIZENS' BUREAU OF MILWAUKEE
 611 Plankinton Building
 123 Wisconsin Avenue

for H. Jander
 n P. Putnam
 . Otter

Victor Brown
 August J. Petrie
 Frank Edwards

Victor
 Schw
 Walf
 Walke
 Hart



(top) A 1942 postcard of the new Milwaukee County Courthouse.
 (below) A postcard of the corner of Broadway Street and Wisconsin Avenue created between 1907 and 1930, showing the Free Press and Pabst Buildings.

responsible for a local committee, "In order that the report following such a survey may enjoy public confidence." Accordingly the city and the Railroad Commission of Wisconsin, and the city by three members--making a group of twelve

flat in Milwaukee as elsewhere, the city does not differentiate it from other cities of its size. That only three per cent of its area was urban, a congestion status to the plane enjoyed by the most congested cities, however, prevented us from holding it in congestion rank. A career of expansion in the immediate hinterland was equivalent to about one-third of the area of the city itself on the back in the fact that "Not more than a million are considered are densities mu

rather of making certain that the public received the largest possible return for the money spent," according to the notes.

Indeed, records and histories also show numerous initiatives during that period that were not aimed directly at reducing spending or taxes. These included:

- Surveying playgrounds from 1924 to 1927 and successfully campaigning for voter approval of two related bond referenda. As a result of this initiative, the school board approved a five-year building program, the number of playgrounds increased from 12 to 72, and the area devoted to them grew from 12 acres to 318 acres.
- Starting in 1921, developing 10-year budgets for every city department and reports on finance for each of the five major taxing units.
- Helping city government implement accounting procedures, inspection services, centralized purchasing, civil service rules, and a reduction in the number of aldermanic wards.
- Successfully encouraging the county to hire a budget director, West Allis to change to a city manager form of government, the state to make the highway aid formula more equitable, and the city to install a new cost-accounting system in the comptroller's office and modernize tax-assessment procedures.
- In December 1941, four days after the country's declaration of war against Japan, offering Mayor Carl Zeidler the Bureau's services in the war effort. Davis was appointed executive secretary of the County Council of Defense and director of the Civilian Defense Volunteer Office, taking two Bureau staff members with him. Davis returned to the Bureau full-time in the middle of the next year.

- Directing the research of a city/county Joint Committee on Consolidation established in 1934, producing 14 committee surveys and several recommendations for consolidations of services. As a result, the Bureau successfully advocated for the transfer of the seven existing municipal park systems to the county.
- Studying lakefront ownership.

For the most part, the Bureau and local governments appeared to work closely together with little public conflict, living up to the Bureau's motto, "For efficiency in government through co-operation with government." That motto was featured on the group's letterhead for many years.

City officials would occasionally still tangle with the Bureau, however, including one publicized quarrel in 1929 over assessment legislation.

Upset with the Bureau, Socialist Alderman Paul Gauer charged the group was "nothing but a poodle dog for the downtown interests," according to a Milwaukee Leader article that year. Davis, then head of the Bureau, was "placed on a griddle" at a meeting of the Common Council's Judiciary Committee by its nonpartisan and Socialist members, the Milwaukee Sentinel reported. Gauer was so incensed that he introduced a resolution asking the city clerk to determine the Bureau's contributors. The resolution said the Bureau's "work is financed by the selfish interests whom it is serving."

Despite such tiffs, city officials and media far more frequently praised the Bureau than not, with the Bureau sometimes reprinting complimentary letters from government leaders.

Also during the post-Hinckley period, the Bureau underwent its first of three name changes. Because the staff was unhappy about being razzed over the word efficiency and its nickname of

the "efficiency boys," the organization's name was changed in 1921 to "Citizens' Bureau of Milwaukee."

The next name change would come shortly after the end of this era, when a new director would begin a tenure that would last nearly four decades. Also changing after these early years would be the Bureau's focus, as it would respond to shifts in government and society. ■



1945-1984

When board members hired Norman N. Gill as the next Citizens' Bureau of Milwaukee director in 1945, they knew he would lead their 31-year-old civic institution into the future. What they couldn't predict was that he would ultimately lead the Bureau for 39 years and become a civic institution himself.

Thanks to Gill's recognized knowledge, objectivity, and doggedness, he and his group became as much a part of the civic landscape as aldermen, reporters, and even mayors. In fact, when Gill was unable to testify at Milwaukee's city budget hearing in 1976, a Milwaukee Journal headline focused equally on his and Mayor Henry Maier's absence, exclaiming: "Maier, Gill Miss Budget Hearing."

The article said it was the first such hearing Gill had missed in 25 years. Another reason that Gill's absence was so notable: At many public budget hearings over the years, Gill was the *only* member of the public to speak.

Gill's analytical skills, energy, independence, and tenacity greatly

influenced politicians, media, and public policy, and his lengthy service fortified that influence. Gill, incidentally, wasn't the only Bureau member with such a formidable tenure and reputation. Senior Researcher Paula Lynagh, who began at the Bureau before Gill and worked with him for almost two decades, served the organization for 41 years. Not as well known as her boss, Lynagh's meticulous research, surveys, and reports also contributed greatly to the group's success.

These two policy powerhouses, whose service to their organization totaled an extraordinary 80 years, left an indelible imprint on the Bureau and the Milwaukee community.



Norman Gill in 1945, the year he was named director of the Citizens' Governmental Research Bureau. He would lead the Bureau until 1984.

(left) West Kilbourn Avenue and Milwaukee County Courthouse (1963). At the time, West Kilbourn Avenue extended uninterrupted to the Courthouse's east entrance, and MacArthur Square had yet to be built.

No. 1 Civic Watchdog

When he took the position on July 1, 1945, at the age of 33, Gill became the first director of the Citizens' Bureau of Milwaukee (CBM) who was both a Milwaukee native and hired from outside the organization.

Like Thomas L. Hinckley, the group's first director, Gill came to the post steeped in the methods and philosophies of research bureaus and with years of experience studying local governments.

Gill was born on October 12, 1911. His parents immigrated to Milwaukee from the Ukraine three years earlier. After graduating from Milwaukee's Washington High School, Gill earned a political science degree from the University of Chicago, where he won a National Municipal League essay contest for his undergraduate thesis on county governments. He continued graduate studies at the University of Chicago in public finance and public administration; at American University and George Washington University in public law and budgeting; and at the London School of Economics.

His dissertation for Ph.D. in political science at the University of Chicago dealt with activities and operations of citizens' bureaus Gill surveyed in the 20 largest U.S. cities. He subsequently worked for a year at the St. Louis Citizens' Bureau.

After returning to Milwaukee, he was initially hired in 1940 as the City of Milwaukee municipal reference librarian. While in that post, the CBM asked him to recommend candidates for its vacant director spot. Eliminating the names on Gill's list, the CBM eventually offered the job to Gill.

In his first report to the CBM board of trustees at its 1946 annual meeting six months after he was hired, Gill lectured on the importance of research bureaus.

"Citizen research bureaus and similar civic groups are as American as apple pie and baked beans," Gill told the group, tracing their history back to colonial town meetings.



1959 Milwaukee Journal photograph, originally captioned "Civic consultant Norman Gill."

But Gill said the country was losing civic participation because of the advent of automobiles, a dearth of information about local affairs, and increasingly complex governments. The Bureau was needed to help manage government for the average citizen and uninformed officials, he said.

"Good government in a city today, whether it be Milwaukee, Wisconsin, or Milwaukie, Oregon, involves sound methods of public administration, the use of countless scientific aids to good departmental services, financial management of millions of dollars, the control of thousands of employees, and the general supervision of the most important business in the community — the city's business," he said, according to meeting minutes.

Drawing on his five years at City Hall, Gill described the two ways in which the CBM influenced city officials. First, "the mere presence of a Bureau representative at a committee meeting or conference was sufficient to prevent wrongdoing, or a procedure not in the public interest." Second, "by far the best technique for securing cooperation of public officials is to work with them and to let them have the public credit for the reforms introduced... (rather) than bludgeoning them into action by fighting with them in the newspapers."



Gill in 1984 in the Bureau's Fine Arts Building office, with a view of City Hall.

Gill and the Bureau widely earned the moniker of “government watchdog,” with a 1984 Milwaukee Sentinel story labeling them the “No. 1 civic watchdog.” The location of the Bureau’s offices during Gill’s tenure enhanced that depiction. In 1932, the CBM had moved to a building with a view of City Hall. From the top floor of the Fine Arts Building, 125 E. Wells St., the Bureau was just a half block from City Hall. Its sixth-floor offices afforded staff a literal watchdog’s view of government, with a City Hall tower looming large through the windows. The Bureau would remain at that location through Gill’s tenure.

Despite regularly describing Gill as a commanding policy presence, news accounts often pointed to his less-than-imposing physical presence. Many stories noted his short stature of 5 feet 3 inches, some calling him a “little cog in government” and “diminutive.” Milwaukee County Executive John Doyne, at the group’s 50th anniversary dinner, called Gill “the little guy with the keen mind.”

Over his 39 years at the Bureau, Gill put these two observations into practice by becoming both a ubiquitous presence in government and working to win cooperation of officials.

Noting his omnipresence, a 1977 Milwaukee Sentinel profile said, “State representatives miss meetings and so do county supervisors and aldermen, but Gill, like the agenda, always seems to be there. He is an important part of the roll call of local government.”

Gill rarely argued publicly with officials. “His voice rarely gets above a calm decibel or two, but public officials listen,” said a 1982 Milwaukee Journal profile of Gill. Gill told a reporter in 1984 that “unless I can think of something constructive to suggest, then I keep my big mouth shut. It doesn’t serve anything in the public interest to rant and rave unless one has a constructive alternative.”

While the articles don’t record Gill’s feelings about the physical descriptions, one story did reveal that he didn’t like the “watchdog” description.

“Watchdog is negative — making it look like we are just looking for wrongdoing,” he said in 1967. “I prefer researcher and analyst in local city, county, suburban, and school governmental affairs, making suggestions and providing facts for improving local government and school standards. We look for standards for better quality local government at reasonable cost and effectiveness.”

Longtime Bureau Senior Researcher Paula Lynagh in 1944 with a map showing city fire engine locations. She led Bureau research efforts for 41 years.



“The Best Informed Person in Milwaukee”

Gill’s emphasis on research fit the history of the organization – and that of a key employee he inherited when he became director. Bureau senior researcher Paula Lynagh epitomized the discipline of research and statistics and was Milwaukee’s female pioneer in government and public policy studies.

The Bureau hired Paula Lynagh during its first decade in 1922, when she was finishing her Ph.B. at the University of Chicago’s School of Commerce and Administration. When Gill became director, she had already worked at the Bureau for 23 years.

A native of Roanoke, Illinois, a town of 500 near Peoria, Lynagh studied at Hunter College in New York City before transferring to the University of Chicago. She first came to Milwaukee for treatment by a Milwaukee physician while she was finishing college. She moved to Milwaukee after being hired by the Bureau, initially as a stenographer/statistician.

Lynagh’s first major research assignment was to conduct a survey of city playgrounds. Lynagh found that facilities for children were badly lacking, with just “17 gravel patches used as supervised playgrounds,” according to a 1963 memo she wrote summarizing her career. Her survey results appeared in a Milwaukee Journal series in the 1920s and were incorporated into official city plans. A special recreation council was created and sponsored two successful playground bond referenda. Soon, more playgrounds were created and Milwaukee gained a national reputation for having one of the best playground systems in the country. In 1963, she wrote that she happily photographed a picture of the sign on the City Hall tower announcing that the number of supervised playgrounds in the city had grown to 117.

Early in her career, Lynagh also played a key role in the consolidation of park districts. According to the 1963 memo, she produced an important study on the issue in 1932 that showed “the waste of seven duplicating park administrations in Milwaukee County, and the possibilities of a finer park system under the unified control of the Milwaukee County Board.” Lynagh subsequently directed research from 1934 to 1936 for a 30-member citizens’ committee on the issue. The unification of park districts was accomplished after three successful, hard-fought city referenda in 1936 and the work of an implementation committee on which she served.

During her 41 years, Lynagh conducted surveys on almost every aspect of local public policy, including “fire, police, harbor, health, hospitals, intergovernmental cooperation, library, pensions, purchasing, revenues, schools, sewerage systems and water supplies.”

Lynagh also served as acting Bureau director from August 1, 1944, to July 1, 1945, between the retirement of Director John C. Davis and Gill’s hiring. She was the sole staff member during

that time. The Bureau released 14 bulletins and 7 official communications in that period.

While not garnering nearly as much publicity as Bureau directors under whom she served, Lynagh was mentioned in a number of articles and occasionally featured. The profiles focused not only on her accomplishments, but also on her unique status as a woman working in government, public policy, and statistics. Some of the stories made the latter point with humor that today might be seen as somewhat inappropriate.

An example comes from a 1960 Milwaukee Sentinel piece headlined: “County’s Most Figure-Conscious Woman; Statistician Lynagh Works to Promote Government Efficiency.” The article called Lynagh “Milwaukee’s ‘most inquiring citizen,’” who was seen at countless government meetings. “She looks like the typical housewife, and she’s probably the only woman spectator in the audience,” the story said. “But the real clue to her occupation is the ever-present pencil with which she scribbles facts or figures. When not in use, the pencil is tucked in the bun of her hair.”

County's Most Figure-Conscious Woman Statistician Lynagh Works to Promote Government Efficiency

That article and other profiles praised Lynagh for her abilities and impact, and portrayed her as a highly competent, successful, and influential woman in what was then a man’s world. A 1963 Milwaukee Journal story called her “perhaps the best informed person in Milwaukee on details of local government.” A Milwaukee Journal editorial about her retirement that year at age 65 said: “She has epitomized why the bureau enjoys such confidence, and therefore influence, among public officials – because its facts are dependable and it sets them forth without agitating them. Her incredible capacity for researching public affairs has contributed to better local government in ways too numerous even to cite a few.”

Gill summed up his view of Lynagh and how her work would complement his at his first board of trustees annual meeting: “The nature of Bureau work, with countless conferences with public officials and meetings to attend, means that the director must have someone at his right hand, in a research and statistical capacity, to gather data and make preliminary surveys. Mrs. Lynagh is a tower of strength in that capacity.”

Their professional pairing would benefit the Bureau and public for 18 years.



Sample “Bulletins” from the Citizens’ Governmental Research Bureau:
(top) “\$48 Tax Rate in ‘48?” published September 26, 1947; (middle) “Shall the City of Milwaukee issue \$9,850,000 of School Bonds to be Sold \$2,000,000 a year Beginning in 1951” published March 24, 1951; and (bottom) “State Aids to Public Schools, Milwaukee County compared with the 70 Other Wisconsin Counties” published August 4, 1956.

Updating And Positioning For Growth

Two important changes to the Bureau's articles of association took place early during the Gill years to better reflect the group's activities.

In January 1946, the organization changed its name from the Citizens' Bureau of Milwaukee to the Citizens' Governmental Research Bureau of Milwaukee (CGRB), its third name since its founding. Discussion of a name change predated Gill, as reflected in a January 1945 research memo. The memo recommended adding the words "municipal research" to the organization's then more generic, non-descriptive name. Gill told the Milwaukee Journal the change reflected "more clearly the nature of the organization's work."

In 1956, the CGRB modified the official description of its purpose, broadening its geographic area of concern. An articles' amendment changed the CGRB focus from "municipal government" to "government within the Milwaukee metropolitan area," signaling increasing research on governments outside Milwaukee County as well as the growth of these exurban areas.

Early in Gill's tenure, the group also focused on its own finances. A lengthy January 1946 memo analyzed the agency's finances with an eye toward securing additional funding to increase staff size and its research program. It noted 191 subscribers in 1945, up from 90 in 1935 during the Depression but down from 227 in 1928. Total subscriber revenue in 1945 was \$18,360. By 1949, the number of subscribers grew significantly, to 310, and total revenues were up by nearly 58%, reaching \$29,045.

In 1950, the CGRB took its fundraising efforts to the media, prompting a long, positive Milwaukee Journal story on October 25 headlined, "Milwaukee's Watchdog Comes Out, Asks Funds," and an editorial two days later titled, "Governmental Research Bureau Deserves Support." Continuing the drumbeat for Bureau support were two Milwaukee Sentinel columns that ran three

months later, entitled "Research Bureau's Job Too Big for Its Budget" and "Research Bureau's Work Demands Bigger Budget."

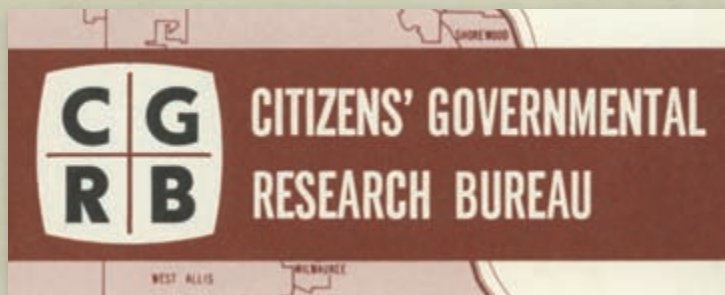
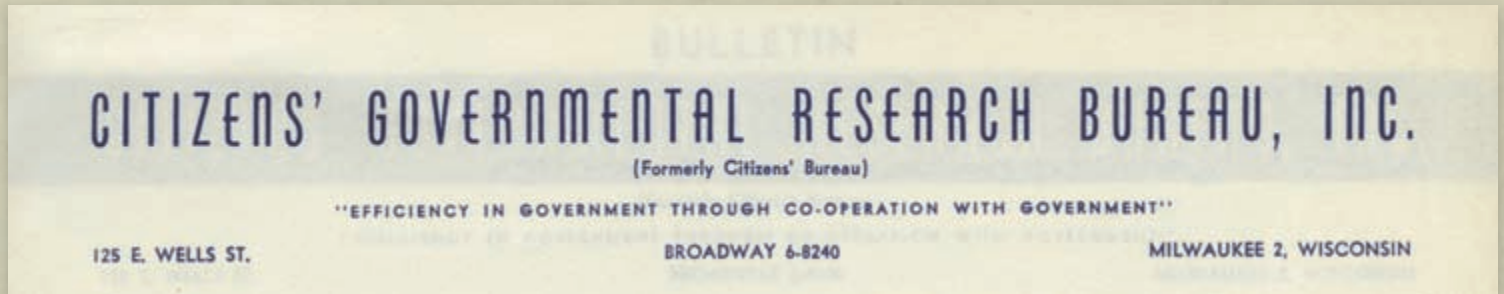
The publicity kept the Bureau in the eyes of subscribers, the general public, and policymakers. Public awareness of the Bureau and its proposals were in many ways a hallmark of this period in the organization's history.

From the Milwaukee Sentinel, February 7, 1959.



Wisconsin's new Democratic governor, Gaylord A. Nelson, was the principal speaker Friday at the meeting of the Citizens' Governmental Research Bureau, Inc. He is shown here with four of the Bureau's officers who were re-elected. Front row, left to right: Karl Maier Jr., president; Gov. Nelson; Eliot G. Fitch, chairman of the board; rear, left to right: Donald A. Grant, secretary; Ralph T. Friedmann, vice president.

Sentinel photo.



Some of the logos and taglines for the group between 1946 and 1987, when it was called the Citizens' Governmental Research Bureau.

‘Ghost Writer’ Gill

Quantifying the impact of the Bureau on specific public policy reforms at any point during its 100 years presents challenges because of the group’s very nature. The Bureau could influence government officials but had no official vote. Also, following its philosophy of giving government officials the credit for reforms, the Bureau has generally avoided bragging about its impact. As a result, the Bureau’s specific role in developing a new proposal or the direct consequences of its advocacy often remains murky.

The most fitting description of Gill’s approach came from Gill himself during a 1962 interview with the Milwaukee Sentinel: “My hobby is ghost writing.” In other words, Gill focused on shaping policy from behind-the-scenes.

“Ghost writing is not only a hobby for Norman N. Gill; it is his business,” said the story, the headline of which began with the description “‘Ghost Writer’ Gill.”

“In his professional and advisory capacity Gill has, on the basis of studies, recommended improved procedures and programs to public officials. These ideas have often found their way into the speeches of these officials; some of them have become public policy.”

One example of the Bureau’s quiet influence is documented in a 1950 Bureau memo about a much-publicized \$50,000 administrative survey performed by the Chicago firm of Griffenhagen & Associates for the Milwaukee Common Council starting the year before.

The Bureau memo discussed the group’s behind the scenes influence on the study: “The staff of the Griffenhagen & Associates was given a compilation of the reports of the Citizens’ Bureau — published and unpublished — as a guide to administrative changes needed here. Many of our recommendations and information were incorporated in the Griffenhagen surveys *although without referring to the Citizens Bureau as the source.*” (emphasis added) The Bureau also was represented on a city committee overseeing the study and on the subcommittee determining its scope.

Despite the Bureau’s lack of credit taking or decision-making power, newspaper articles and Bureau archives document its exhaustive work on numerous public policy reforms. The work is seen in its many surveys, reports, and bulletins to the public, and its appointment on a long list of committees and commissions.



The Fine Arts Building, 125 E. Wells St., a block from City Hall, was the Bureau’s home from 1932 to 1987. It was built in 1891 as headquarters of the Meinecke Toy Co. and later renamed the Fine Arts Building. (top) An engraving of the building from Yenowine’s News, November 15, 1891. (bottom) The building as photographed in 2012.



Sample "Bulletins" from the Citizens' Governmental Research Bureau in the late 60s and early 70s: (top) "More Progress is Needed for Cooperative Purchasing" published May 6, 1966; (middle) "Exemption of 25% of the city of Milwaukee's Property Tax Base, and 30% of the area of the 18 Suburbs suggests the following needs" published January 11, 1969; and (bottom) "168 Local Governments and Schools serve the Four-County Milwaukee Metropolitan Area. Is Regional Government Needed for Area-wide Government Functions?" published January 9, 1971.

Some statistics from the Bureau's archives show that:

- Gill oversaw preparation of more than 550 bulletins and miscellaneous reports. These included a series of reports on individual communities from 1951 to 1956; a similar series with updated info from 1972 to 1975; and a third, from 1976 to 1980, focused on area school districts.
- Starting in 1963, the Bureau began an annual report compiling key budget data for area governments.
- Gill sat on 95 major civic or governmental commissions, committees and task forces, plus additional bodies not recorded. Other staff members also served on civic bodies.
- Hundreds of newspaper articles from this period mentioned the Bureau or its officials, attesting to its powerful influence on public discourse.

The Bureau played a key role in many reforms of the era by providing data, advocating for change, or both. Sometimes the Bureau seemed to set the framework for future reforms. For example, Gill was quoted in a November 1946 Milwaukee Journal article urging

that all projects of countywide benefit be transferred from the city to the county, saving money for city taxpayers because of the county's larger tax base. Gill listed several projects that he said the county should finance and maintain: lakefront improvements, a new museum and library, harbor improvements, airports, the stadium, smoke control, and public and veterans' housing. Today, lakefront improvements, the museum, and the airport are under the jurisdiction of the county, not city, as was the former County Stadium.

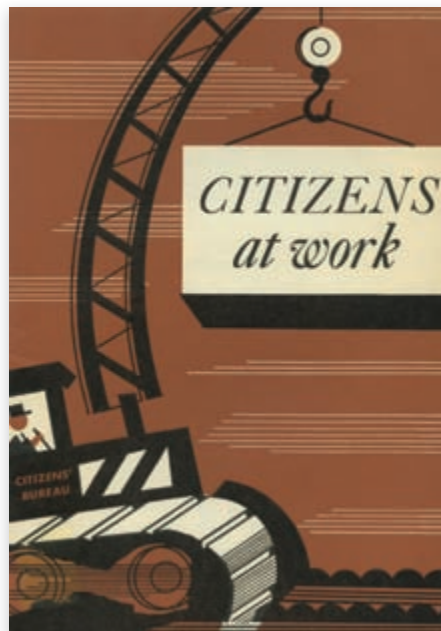
Documents from that period discuss the Bureau's leadership, support, or work on a number of other efficiencies and government reforms that were enacted, including:

- Establishing the position of Milwaukee County executive
- Establishing the Intergovernmental Cooperation Council, a body consisting of chief executives from Milwaukee County local governments
- Centralizing local government purchasing
- Establishing non-elected city and village managers in many communities

- Forming the county transit system after the electric company stopped providing transit services
- Creating the federated library system
- Establishing the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
- Consolidating several separate suburban fire departments into the North Shore Fire Department
- Creating the Milwaukee Department of City Development and the Milwaukee County Department of Administration, each of which consolidated a number of departments

Other notable reforms in which the Bureau was involved included:

- Merger of city and county sewerage commissions
- Reduction in the number of governmental units in the county
- Widespread use of voting machines
- Development of a new stadium, arena, zoo and museum



This 1950 Bureau pamphlet highlighted several of the organization's "good government" reform efforts, including its push for consolidation of area parks systems and its advocacy for modern municipal bookkeeping practices.

The bulldog

During the Gill years, he and the Bureau displayed tenacity in pushing for reforms that sometimes took decades to accomplish. It could be argued that without the Bureau's bulldog mentality, the momentum needed for many of the reforms would have been lost.

Such persistent advocacy appeared to be necessary because of Milwaukee's resistance to change. A 1963 Milwaukee Journal article raised the issue bluntly: "Does Milwaukee Merit 'Slow' Tag?" the headline asked. One alderman complained, "Why, we're so slow we're safe from nuclear attack – if a bomb drops here, it will take two days to go off."

The CGRB's usually patient determination kept pressure on government officials, even when deliberations lasted many years.

As a 1950 Milwaukee Journal article put it: "To a great degree, the bureau today is an observer, following each new venture through to its completion, 'needling' overly long delays through its bulletins."

"The bureau is a dogged organization. Once it gets behind a plan it keeps on its trail, recognizing that progress takes time in a democracy where public administrations are apt to change and each new one must be sold. Usually, it finds, it takes 12 years to put an important project across. It, therefore, never lets the plan be forgotten, even when it took 24 years to procure a children's court and 20 years to centralize the county's relief and social service agencies."

Other examples of long-delayed government reforms that CGRB championed include:

- **Transfer of museum from city to county.** A joint city-county study committee agreed in 1948 on the transfer. After decades of wrangling, the transfer was arranged 28 years later, in 1976.
- **Municipal warehouse.** City officials dedicated a \$160,000 municipal warehouse at 1028 N. Hawley Road in October 1953, after 25 years of efforts to win approval for this consolidated facility. The CGRB was credited with helping for eight years to lead this effort, which resulted in improved efficiency and reduced use of tax dollars.
- **Centralized data system for City of Milwaukee government.** Gill was credited with advocating at numerous city committee meetings for five years for a centralized department to more efficiently and less expensively handle city data needs. The plan was approved in August 1966.
- **Creation of a county government department of administration.** The Bureau supported a county government reform in 1970 that consolidated internal staff functions into a single agency. Creation of the Department of Administrative Services took eight years to accomplish.
- **Griffenhagen study implementation.** After release of the Griffenhagen study reports in 1949, the CGRB over many years urged city officials to adopt the recommendations. The CGRB tracked the percentage of recommendations periodically, reporting, for example, in 1956 that 80% had been accomplished.
- **Central city recreation facilities and programs.** The Bureau successfully advocated for improving playground facilities in the 1920s. Using a foundation grant in 1969, the Bureau returned to the issue, this time effectively calling attention to the lack of recreational facilities and programs in Milwaukee's central city compared with the rest of the county.

CGRB leadership understood that change often takes time. Lynagh said in a 1960 profile that government “moves slowly. You have to live to be old in this business to get anything accomplished.”

Gill, called “the metropolitan area’s most patient man” in one article, said in 1963 that “one of our main jobs is to not let the officials forget things.” In another story, he said, “Five years is the speed of lightning.”

Former Milwaukee Mayor Henry Maier aptly described the CGRB’s resolve at the group’s 50th anniversary banquet in 1964 when he said: “Some people call the Bureau a watchdog. I prefer to call it a bulldog because of the way it gets its teeth into various seats of government in Milwaukee.”

(right) The Bureau celebrated its 50th anniversary with a dinner attended by 300 guests on January 15, 1964, at the Wisconsin Club. The evening included a symposium on “Challenges of the Sixties” with topics and local speakers on “The Economic Challenge,” “The Community Challenge,” “The Education Challenge,” and “The Government Challenge.” The keynote speaker was Seth Taft, then president of the Governmental Research Institute of Cleveland. In the photos, (top) Mayor Henry Maier at the podium, (middle, left to right) Bureau president Ralph T. Friedmann, Norman Gill, Mayor Henry Maier, and (bottom) Norman Gill at the podium and Ralph T. Friedmann.



CITIZENS' GOVERNMENTAL RESEARCH BUREAU
cordially invites you to its
50TH ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM and DINNER
January 15, 1964, Wisconsin Club, 500 West Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin



MILWAUKEE SALUTES
CITIZENS' BUREAU
ON 50TH YEAR

The City of Milwaukee
congratulated the Bureau on its
50th anniversary with a salute
on the City Hall tower sign.

The Gill Years: An Appraisal

The CGRB received much public praise from officials and the media during the Gill years, but occasionally it encountered criticism.

In February 1966, an AFL-CIO Milwaukee Labor Press editorial entitled “Hardly An Impartial Spokesman” charged that Gill represented only “a handful of industrialists and businessmen about town” and spent “much of his time fighting the legitimately won gains of public employee unions and fighting legitimate betterment in governmental functions.” It claimed that the election of CGRB president Ralph W. Ells, chief economist and director of public relations at Allen-Bradley Company, “perhaps Milwaukee’s most conservative manufacturing firm,” exposed the Bureau

“as a strongly management-oriented, right-wing dominated group, hardly qualified to speak for the people of Milwaukee County.”

Gill said at his retirement dinner in 1984 that his boards never suggested that the Bureau do or say anything against the public interest. At other times in his career, Gill said the Bureau sought to improve government efficiency and save tax dollars as a way to make resources available for other civic needs. “A dollar of taxes wasted in the police and fire departments may mean a dollar less for education and recreation,” Gill said at an annual meeting in 1947.

The Bureau was not without its public policy failures. Bureau support for reforms did not always guarantee

success. Reforms that Gill worked on but failed to accomplish included countywide assessments, at-large elections for county supervisors and city aldermen, and changing Milwaukee County’s elected sheriff position to an appointed civil service post.

A 1968 Milwaukee Journal article fittingly described the scores of reforms the Bureau trumpeted and advocated under Gill: “A fountainhead of ideas for fiscal sanity is the hard working Citizens’ Governmental Research Bureau and its director, Norman N. Gill. The Bureau is constantly pushing metropolitan area governments to work toward great efficiency.”

Gill’s long years of service as CGRB director ended with his retirement in



The directors of the Citizens’ Governmental Research Bureau present a certificate of appreciation to Bureau president Ralph T. Friedmann (second from left) at the 50th annual meeting of the Bureau on January 24, 1964.

1984, at age 73. Board members believed new blood was needed, especially to help the organization's fundraising. In his later years at the Bureau, Gill had been able to rely on a handful of top business leaders for infusions of funding when needed. With those supporters retiring, board members were concerned about the organization's future finances.

For 39 years, Gill worked in a position he loved and for which he was seemingly made. Not surprisingly, despite working into his 70s, he resisted retirement. In a June 1984 Milwaukee Sentinel story, he said that leaders of the CGRB three years earlier "made a valiant effort to fire me. It didn't stick. It was done tactfully and firmly, but I hung on for dear life."

The CGRB under Gill received numerous accolades, including many at the group's 50th anniversary in 1963 and around Gill's retirement. On the Bureau's 50th anniversary, a 1964 Milwaukee Journal editorial called the CGRB "a notable nonblower of its own horn" and "quietly efficient and effective." The paper said Gill's "unique skill is, without ax grinding, to translate the Bureau's fact finding objectiveness into constructive results. Wherever there is a public problem, Gill is there."

At the CGRB's 50th anniversary dinner at the Wisconsin Club in January 1964, then-Mayor Henry Maier noted that while he didn't agree with all of the Bureau's recommendations, "I have always respected the facts, and on more than one occasion have called upon the brains and the diligence of Mr. Gill and his staff for assistance in meeting some of the complex municipal problems we have today, and I want to say that I most earnestly feel that he has fulfilled our requests magnificently."

Maier concluded by telling the group: "Some of the contributions that you have made to this city during the past half century will still be serving this community when you celebrate your hundredth anniversary." ■



(top) A 1966 photo of the Frank P. Zeidler Municipal Building with City Hall in the background. (below) A circa 1956 street scene of West Wisconsin Avenue with the Riverside Theater, Warner Theater and Gimbel's Department Store shown.

For the Bureau's board of trustees, replacing Norman Gill after 39 years represented more than the hiring of another leader. It symbolized the group's decision to broaden its mission and seek new directions from a path it followed for decades.

The CGRB began to change visibly not long after Gill's retirement — with a new name, its fourth and current one, and later with a move to its first new offices in 55 years. Change also became apparent in the group's expansion beyond its traditional roles of government watchdog and efficiency advocate, taking on complicated regional issues outside city halls and courthouses. The next three decades of the group's history were characterized by increased staff, improved financial stability, a new professionalism in its operations, and the diversification of membership and leaders.

Four different leaders took the helm during the remainder of the group's first century. They brought new backgrounds, with careers in journalism, business, non-profits, and even government administration. The male-dominated organization also placed a woman in charge for the first time. While each new leader brought a new focus, each followed the group's core mission established back in 1913.

1984-2012

Jean B. Tyler served as the director from July 1984 through 1995, leading the organization's new focus on the emerging issues affecting the future of the Greater Milwaukee community and functioning as an agent of change, spending much time on improving the group's finances, operations, and diversity.

Change Agent (1984-1995)

The CGRB coupled its announcement of Gill's replacement with a declaration that the group was changing direction. "The new focus of the bureau is going to be on the emerging issues affecting the future of the Greater Milwaukee community," Board President George Kaiser said in a May 1984 Milwaukee Sentinel story.

Kaiser announced that civic leader Jean B. Tyler would become director on July 1, 1984. "Her combination of administrative, research, and community experience is particularly suited to guide the Bureau into this new area," he said.

A Pittsburgh native, Tyler had come to Wisconsin to earn a master's degree in public administration from the University of Wisconsin – Madison. She later served from 1974 to 1981 as the Milwaukee Legislative Reference Bureau's director, becoming the first woman to head a city department.

Tyler was well known in the early 1980s for her leadership of the Goals for Greater Milwaukee 2000 project, a massive two-year effort by hundreds of volunteers to ensure a high quality of life in the area in the year 2000. Her work with the project highlighted her organizational and communication skills as well as extensive connections with businesses, unions, government, and non-profit organizations.

Tyler's appointment as CGRB head also marked the most significant change to date in the group's diversity: Tyler would serve as the first female director of the group – at a time when no women had even served on the organization's board.

A symbol of the changes during Tyler's tenure came in the change of CGRB's name in 1987 to the Public Policy Forum, as it is still known. (Its legal name is the more formal "Public Policy Forum Incorporated: Researching Community Issues.") The term "forum" was seen as reflecting the group's broader scope, and the new moniker would eliminate confusion from the prior name about whether the organization was part of government.

"The current name is a pretty big mouthful, which hardly anybody could remember... and there's a feeling that the organization was thinking in new directions and needed a new name," Board President Harry L. Wallace told the Milwaukee Sentinel in June 1987. Also that year, the Forum would move to an office building on West Wisconsin Avenue, leaving the perch it had held since July 1932 across from City Hall in the Fine Arts Building. Another tenant was expanding into the group's space there, forcing a move.

Functioning as an agent of change, Tyler spent much time on improving



the group's finances, operations, and diversity.

Once on board, she found that finances were tight, ongoing fundraising and membership efforts largely absent, and internal financial, human resource, and technology functions lacking. Early on, she relied on help from member companies to address these deficiencies. They provided free expertise to set up personnel and budgeting systems, and a member company loaned her computers until the Forum could buy some and even set them up. Members also pitched in with marketing assistance.

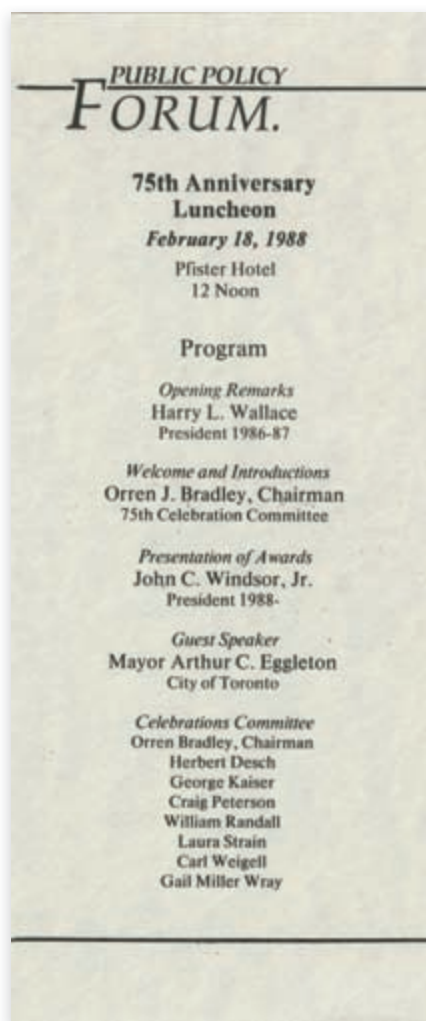
Tyler employed a number of strategies to increase the group's revenues. In her tenure, the group more actively sought

The Forum celebrated its 75th anniversary in 1988 with a luncheon at the Pfister Hotel including a keynote address by City of Toronto Mayor Arthur C. Eggleton.

and obtained multi-year foundation grants that enabled her to contract out research work for specific projects. She changed the dues structure, increasing them for larger companies while creating lower-priced categories to bring in, for the first time, smaller businesses, individuals, non-profits, and even governments, as well as offering subscriptions to the Forum's reports.

Tyler also created a new annual awards event honoring local government officials. It built on the Forum's history of giving governments credit and also helped raise the group's visibility, revenues, and membership. (Now called the Salute to Local Government, the popular annual event celebrated its 20th year in 2012.)

Tyler also began to bring diversity to the Forum. Throughout its history, the organization's membership and leadership had been almost entirely white, male, old and wealthy, reflecting the times in which it was founded. Tyler saw diversity as a way to keep up with the changing times, bring in new members, and encourage more community involvement. She launched a program called the 2020 Project to attract members under the age of 40. The new younger members became future leaders in the group and helped design and disseminate research on several hot-button topics, such as race and housing.



She also actively recruited women and African Americans to attend monthly programs and join the Forum's leadership, ultimately resulting in the first female and African American executive committee members. (The diversity trend would continue after Tyler's tenure, with an African American board president serving from 2000 to 2002 and a woman serving as president since 2010.)

In 1988, at the time of the Forum's 75th anniversary, local media took note of the changes. A television news editorial said the group had "broadened its perspective" from specific government

issues to "include other areas such as race relations, neighborhood development, and metropolitan cooperation" and had "started to involve younger professionals in its activities." Some public policy issues the group tackled under Tyler included a first-of-its-kind study of urban teachers, which helped lead to the creation of the Milwaukee Teacher Education Center; leadership and research for the Milwaukee Public Schools' School-to-Work Task Force; and development of an Institute for Local Leaders.

When Tyler retired in 1995, a Milwaukee Journal editorial said: "Under Tyler's leadership, [the Forum] spruced up its name and enlarged its reach, helping to promote dialogue on thorny issues ranging from school reform to crime. But stimulating constructive debate is only part of Tyler's legacy. Her work through the Public Policy Forum was instrumental in producing better-trained civic leaders, launching the Start Smart Milwaukee program to prepare kids for school, improving the curriculum for vocational education and preparing students for the work force."

FACTSPEAK

An Information Brief for For
By: Timothy J. McElhatton,



Examples of reports released under the leadership of Jean Tyler and the newly re-named Public Policy Forum: (top) "In Fact: MPS 1988-89 Budget Review Surfaced Major Policy Issues," July 1988; (middle) "Factually Speaking: An Information Brief for Trustees" on City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County budgets, December 1988; and (bottom) "Fact Speak: Major Local Taxing Units Explore Merits of Coordinated Capital Project & Debt Management," August 1990.

Stabilizing Force (1995-2002)

When David G. Meissner took over as the Forum's director in 1995, he brought a unique background to the position: a career in business and journalism, with unusually strong ties to the community's corporate leadership and the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (the paper created out of the merger of the Milwaukee Journal and Sentinel that year). His time at the Forum would end with the group's financial future more secure and its national academic reputation enhanced.

Despite his background and future successes at the Forum, Meissner initially faced a very elemental challenge in his first weeks on the new job: The existing two-person staff soon resigned to take jobs at the Milwaukee Public Schools.

With an unexpected opportunity to start fresh, Meissner hired Jeffrey C. Browne as the Forum's new senior researcher and brought in as office manager an employee from his public relations firm. As a result of the paper's merger, Browne had recently left the Milwaukee Journal, where he had held positions as special projects editor, public opinion research director, and education beat reporter.

He knew Browne from his own days at the paper, where Meissner had worked for 20 years, including as an editorial writer for 11 years and as a reporter and copy editor. Meissner later served as executive director of the Greater Milwaukee Committee (GMC), an influential business/civic group, and then joined the Barkin Herman Solochech and Paulsen public relations firm, later buying a majority interest in the business.

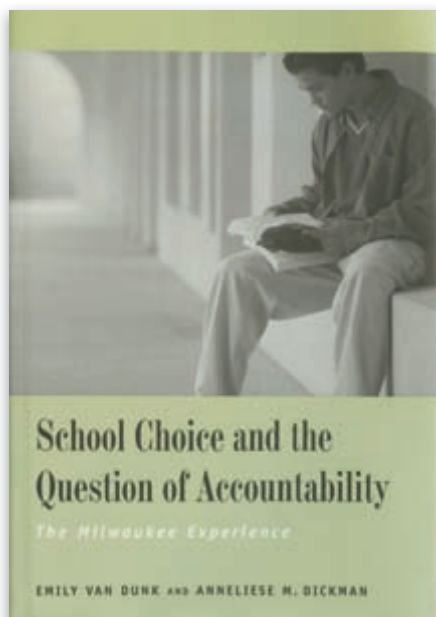
He also was connected to the newspaper in a unique way: as the grandson-in-law of a former CEO of Journal Communications Inc., which owned the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and its predecessor newspapers. In that capacity, Meissner headed the holding company of family descendants that controlled 10% of the media company's ownership, and he served on the corporation's board of directors.

Forum President Jack Pelisek told the Milwaukee Journal in January 1995 that the search committee selected Meissner in part because of his three different careers. "Dave had all the qualifications we were seeking: a good journalistic background, four years of running the Greater Milwaukee Committee and 10 years with one of the nation's top public relations firms. He knows the public and private sector issues of the community as few others do."

From 1995 to 2002, David G. Meissner served as director and stabilized the organization's finances, doubled its budget, and grew its staff.

Forum researchers wrote a book published by Yale University Press, "School Choice and the Question of Accountability."

The authors, Emily Van Dunk (left) and Anneliese M. Dickman, discussed the book at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., in 2004.



The Forum's financial situation had improved during Tyler's tenure. But by all accounts, finances were still unstable when Meissner began at the Forum, with the group running deficits in some prior years. Meissner felt that his initial top challenges were to continue the group's reports on local government spending and taxing while raising additional funds to build an internal capacity for more extended research.

A renewed focus on grants attracted funding from about 10 separate foundations during Meissner's tenure. As part of the push for foundation grants, Meissner decided early on to seek new funding sources outside the area by proposing research on Milwaukee issues that had national and regional significance. The strategy paid off with his first such focus – the school choice issue. In 1990, Milwaukee had become the first U.S. city to allow parents to use public funds to send their children to private schools. The Forum successfully sought funding from Chicago's Joyce Foundation to research and report on the program's impacts, enabling the group to conduct about 10 years of studies on this controversial issue.

The grants ultimately allowed Meissner to hire two additional full-time researchers, increasing the Forum's research staff to its largest level since at least the mid-1940s.

The new researchers, Emily Van Dunk and Anneliese M. Dickman, wrote a peer-reviewed book on the issue, "School Choice and the Question of Accountability: The Milwaukee Experience," published by the Yale University Press. The book was written in 2001 and was a focus of a Washington Post editorial in 2004, when the authors launched the publication with a speech at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

The book attracted controversy locally, as the research by Van Dunk and Dickman found flaws in how Milwaukee's school choice program was being implemented, including a lack of reporting on student achievement and school operations. The Forum's research into school choice even prompted one board officer to resign. But controversy over Forum studies during this period included other issues as well, which was not surprising given the controversial topics it was tackling.

For example, both supporters and opponents of a proposed light rail system criticized the Forum. In December 1995, a Milwaukee aldermanic candidate accused the Forum of bias against light rail in a study on area transportation needs. Conversely, in January 1999, the Milwaukee Journal reported that Waukesha County Executive Dan Finley “slammed” the Forum over its endorsement of a regional transportation plan that included light rail, saying it showed a bias toward Milwaukee.

The Forum’s foray into the issue of gun violence and regulation also attracted heat. The Forum had conducted a public opinion survey about handgun violence and scheduled a symposium on the topic. Jim Fendry, head of the Wisconsin Pro-Gun Movement, “publicly called the meeting a ‘sham’ and a camouflaged effort by ‘anti-gunners’ to promote gun control,” according to a January 1998 Journal Sentinel story. Nonetheless, Fendry said he would participate on an event panel as a way to get his views across.

The Forum took on another topical issue outside its “watchdog” tradition when it published “Embracing Diversity – Housing in Southeast Wisconsin,” a 2002 report addressing housing discrimination in southeastern Wisconsin. Metropolitan Milwaukee was found to be “the third most racially segregated metropolitan area in the nation,” with a 55% nonwhite population in Milwaukee and a white population of 95% or more in most of the municipalities in surrounding counties.

The report examined the causes of housing segregation and estimated its economic impact on the region. It urged the state Attorney General’s office and other law enforcement agencies “to inform minorities about their consumer rights in borrowing, encourage them to file complaints where appropriate, monitor lending practices and prosecute offenders that undermine the credibility of their industry.” New state legislation followed, including the 2004 Homeowner Protection Act, which required

new disclosures from “high-cost” lenders, and a 2005 law requiring new loan originators to pass a competency test, receive continuing education and pass a criminal background check.

During Meissner’s tenure, the group also researched other topical issues, including how taxes affected welfare recipients, the size of the Milwaukee Public Schools administration, and tax policies to attract employment.

The Forum’s finances became more stable after it secured a \$250,000 grant from the Faye McBeath Foundation to put toward an endowment. The grant was conditional on the group’s ability to raise \$200,000 in matching funds, which Meissner was able to do. (The endowment currently is housed at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation.) The Forum also picked up needed income from contracted research projects, including an annual report card on charitable giving and a comparative schooling report for Sustainable Racine.

When Meissner announced he would retire at the end of March 2002, the Journal Sentinel reported that the organization was operating in the black, had more than doubled its budget, and had grown to a full-time professional staff of six with the capacity to conduct more research on its own. In addition to marking continued growth for the organization, these changes offered stark contrast to the initial staffing situation Meissner encountered early in his tenure.



Forum senior researcher and later vice president and director of research Jeffrey C. Browne became president of the organization in 2002, bringing a focus on regionalism and strengthening the competitive position of southeastern Wisconsin.

Through The Other End Of The Microscope (2002-2008)

Meissner's decision to hire Jeffrey C. Browne as senior researcher in 1995 was born of necessity after his two-person staff left for other jobs. But the skills Browne had honed at the Milwaukee Journal meshed perfectly with the needs of the Forum, and his work with Meissner helped propel him to the group's top position after Meissner retired.

Browne, who had previously been the Forum's vice president and director of research, was announced as the group's next president in February 2002. (In 1999, the Forum had changed the title of its top position from director to president.) In a Milwaukee Journal article on his appointment, Browne hinted at an issue that would be a primary focus during the next six years: Regionalism.

The article said Browne wanted the Forum to play a role in strengthening the competitive position of southeastern Wisconsin. "That means building the trust and the economic and social health that are needed for the region to confront its greatest challenges, such as work force training, quality education for all, housing diversity, constructive taxation and regional cooperation," he said.

Browne's research on regionalism and on water issues while Forum president

helped lead to creation of two important area organizations functioning in those arenas today.

Born in Buffalo, New York, Browne earned a bachelor's degree in political science in 1969 from Union College in Schenectady, New York. He moved to Milwaukee in 1975 to work at the Journal after serving as city editor of the Evening News in Salem, Massachusetts, and a public school teacher in Block Island, Rhode Island.

During 20 years as Milwaukee Journal editor and reporter, Browne had developed expertise in public opinion surveys and what was known as "computer-aided journalism." Browne put these skills to use at the Forum during the Meissner term in a number of ways, including through public opinion research.

During Browne's years with the Forum, the group conducted public surveys on many topics, including school choice, crime, criminal justice, regional cooperation, education reform, and public education. A comprehensive study on attitudes toward race used both new survey data and nearly a generation of data Browne had compiled at the Journal. The Forum also contracted with the Journal Sentinel to conduct the paper's annual Metro Pulse Poll on public issues

Under Browne, foundation funding allowed the Forum to conduct studies on the benefits of regional cooperation. Browne wrote this op ed published in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel in October 2003.

for several years beginning in 1996. The Forum would continue the practice of conducting surveys after Browne left the group.

Browne said recently that he was less interested than his predecessors in the Forum's ability to place local government under a microscope, in part because professional analysts within city and county government had become the norm.

"My idea was to look through the microscope from the other direction and look and think regionally," he said. He said the Forum under his leadership continued to review local government finances, "but it was not as high a priority."

Browne had researched issues related to regionalism during the Meissner era. Shortly before becoming president, Browne also was meeting with a few like-minded civic, business, and academic leaders concerned about the need for regional cooperation. One of those leaders, Julia Taylor, president of the Greater Milwaukee Committee, helped Browne raise funds for studies on regionalism from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Helen Bader Foundation, Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, and The Richard and Ethel Herzfeld Foundation.

The funding allowed the Forum to conduct numerous studies over three years on regionalism and regional cooperation. Browne penned a prominently placed opinion piece in an October 2003 Journal Sentinel headlined, "Can you find the borders? - No. That's why we need a 'regional' attitude." The piece outlined the benefits of regional cooperation. It also suggested, among other ideas, the possibility of a strategic action plan for the region and creating an agency advocating for regional change similar to one in Chicago.

In 2005, the influential Milwaukee 7 (M7) group was created with the mission of uniting the seven-county Milwaukee area "around a regional agenda to grow, expand, and attract diverse businesses." While the Forum did not formally help create M7, its prior research provided useful analysis and helped raise the issue publicly.

Similarly, the Forum conducted studies on water issues that helped lead to creation of the Milwaukee Water Council. An 18-month Forum study funded by three foundations and completed in

Crossroads

Opinion
Commentary
Editorials
Letters
www.jsonline.com/news/editorials

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2003 MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL

Can you find the borders?

No. That's why we need a 'regional' attitude.

By JEFF BROWNE

In 1983, when a group of business leaders created the Public Policy Forum as a good-government watchdog, the city of Milwaukee and "the region" were, in a sense, one and the same. The city dominated the region in terms of population, commerce, finance and political clout. City government spent \$7.9 billion that year.

In 2003, our region spends more than that before lunch every day. We have 254 units of government. Seven counties. Ninety-four school districts. One hundred forty-seven villages, towns and cities. A sewerage district. Five technical colleges.

They levy taxes. They spend \$7 billion a year. Much of the time, these governments are efficient and effective. But sometimes, they function like medieval Europe, and when they do, we need to take responsibility as citizens of the region. We need to come out of our castles, break down the walls around the villages and bring southeastern Wisconsin into the global sunlight.

When we separate politics from policy, important questions emerge about the future of southeastern Wisconsin — Kenosha, Milwaukee, Okauchee, Racine, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha counties. How we answer those questions will help determine the strength of our economy and also the quality of our lives.

Taking responsibility as citizens is not just about good government. It is an economic imperative. We have powerful advantages today in our region. These include growing business clusters such as printing, financial services and medical technology, world-class arts and culture, environmental health, green space and many other attributes.

But as a region, we also have:

- A stagnant tax base. Our region's aggregate property value has grown just 35% over the past decade while Dane County is up 140%.
- A net loss of \$200 million of personal income every year to other regions.
- Wages and income per person that have fallen significantly below the national average.
- Twenty or more police departments in a single county.

■ Buses that go halfway across the region, then turn around at the county line.

■ A widespread but erroneous perception that the downtown areas of our region's cities are dangerous.

■ A labor shortage in the suburbs despite high unemployment in Milwaukee.

■ A future work force — school children — that are learning bad habits long before they get on the job. If children were paid the minimum wage to go to school, their 15% absentee rate because of illness, suspensions and truancy would represent \$400 million in lost productivity.

Southeastern Wisconsin faces a choice of whether to be a region in decline or a player in the global economy. In order to choose the latter, it needs a shared vision of priorities for regional action and a method of advocating, coordinating and implementing action for the region as a whole.

Please see BROWNE, 2J



In 2006, the Forum published a comprehensive study on attitudes toward race using both new survey data and nearly a generation of prior data.

February 2006 focused on water resource management in the region. It also found that the region was “well-positioned to provide a groundbreaking leadership role in the emerging global water crisis and to be a worldwide center for fresh water science and technology.” That idea led to a June 2006 conference with industry, political, and academic leaders to discuss the strategic importance of the region’s abundant fresh water supplies and its major water technology companies.

Browne was the event’s keynote speaker and, according to a Journal Sentinel article, told the conference, “Our region has a golden opportunity to be the world’s laboratory.” Leaders in water technology and academia would form the award-winning Milwaukee Water Council in 2009 to build on these strengths.

A 2005 Forum report, “Keeping up with the Neighbors,” also focused on regional economic development. The report compared the use of tax incremental financing (TIF) as a development tool by Wisconsin municipalities and neighboring states. Not only did “the core cities of Milwaukee, Kenosha and Racine have TIF utilization rates lower than their suburban neighbors,” but the report also found that they compared poorly to cities outside of Wisconsin. These facts prompted the question, “Is Milwaukee being aggressive enough in trying to grow its tax base?”

Three years after its initial publications on the subject, the Forum revisited the data in a new report, “Tax Increment Financing in Southeast Wisconsin,” and found increased utilization of the development tool. TIF approval had risen under Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett by 42% on an annual basis from April 2004 to December 2007 compared with the last two years of the Norquist administration. This followed the Barrett administration’s stated goal to double TIF use.

Browne left the Forum in 2008 to create a consultancy connecting Milwaukee-area business and investors to Vietnam. His work on regionalism had convinced him that the region needed to become more global. He chose to focus his consulting on Vietnam in part because he and his wife had adopted two children from that country in 2001.

(facing page left) CEOs representing several of the state’s largest companies in the service, financial, and manufacturing sectors, discussed what the region needs to attract global talent and business at a Forum Viewpoint luncheon on January 10, 2008.

(facing page right) Trustee Jeffrey Remsik with Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle (left) at a Trustees meeting on June 5, 2009.



Seeing-Eye Dog for Government (2008-Present)

The best watchdog knows its way around the house it's guarding. That could describe Robert E. Henken, the top Milwaukee County government administrator tapped to replace Browne as Forum president: He knew the inside of the halls of government intimately.

Yet, like Gill before him, Henken didn't agree with the traditional description of the Forum as a watchdog. Henken viewed it instead as a "seeing-eye dog," guiding governments with facts.

"The term 'government watchdog' tends to reflect a negative view of government that says it needs to be policed because it's corrupt or incompetent," Henken said recently. "We believe, instead, that government simply needs a healthy dose of outside expertise and objectivity that can help guide it toward making better decisions and becoming more efficient."

In 2008, the Forum's board of directors tapped Robert E. Henken, a top Milwaukee County government official, as its new president. Henken brought a strong background in government administration and public policy to the job.

Henken brought a strong background in government administration and public policy uniquely suited to carefully watching, or guiding, government.

At the time of his selection as president, Henken had served for about one year as director of the Milwaukee County Department of Administrative Services, the top administrative post in county government. The agency, created years earlier because





(top) About 250 guests attended an October 25, 2010, Viewpoint luncheon and panel discussion hosted by the Forum on "Reaping the Benefits of Academic Research." (middle) Forum president Rob Henken (standing) moderated a candidate forum on February 4, 2011, in advance of the County Executive primary. Pictured: Chris Abele, a local philanthropist (seated left); Ieshuh Griffin, a community organizer (seated center) and Milwaukee County Board Chairman Lee Holloway (seated right). Abele was elected. (bottom) On September 10, 2012, a Forum Viewpoint luncheon focused on a new regional housing plan for southeast Wisconsin with a panel of elected officials and housing leaders.

of the advocacy of Norman Gill and others, directed the county's budget, accounting, information technology, human resources, employee benefits, procurement and economic development functions. He previously served for two-and-a-half years as director of the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services and five years as director of research and as a fiscal and budget analyst for the County Board.

While county elected offices are non-partisan positions, the county board chair who first hired him was a Democrat, while the county executive who appointed him to his cabinet, Scott Walker, was a Republican.

Henken, a Boston native, moved in 1994 with his wife to the Milwaukee area, where she was born and raised. He held a bachelor's degree in history from Brown University and a master's degree in journalism and public affairs from American University in Washington, D.C. Henken had worked previously as a radio news reporter, legislative assistant to a congressman, chief of staff to another congressman, and staff director of the House Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs.

His first position in Milwaukee was executive director of the Alliance for Future Transit, a non-profit formed by area business leaders to advocate for mass transit improvements, including the controversial light rail project proposed by Mayor John O. Norquist. He later headed another non-profit, the Milwaukee Jobs Initiative.

Henken said he made a decision at the start of his Forum tenure to get "back to our roots" by renewing its past emphasis on local government finance and providing direct technical and research assistance to local governments.

That decision stemmed not only from his background in government, but also from his concern that local governments faced an unmanageable situation from the combination of exploding pension and health care costs and pressure on available revenue streams. To assist with the new emphasis, Henken added a full-time researcher with local government finance experience and a part-time contracted researcher with a state Legislative Fiscal Bureau background.

During the course of Browne's tenure, the Forum had moved from providing annual written reviews of proposed city and county budgets to testifying at annual budget hearings. Henken reversed the trend, publishing detailed analytical reports of 15 to 20 pages annually on each proposed executive budget within two weeks of submission.

Henken also started a series of in-depth reports on the finances of each major level of local government, beginning in March 2009 with “Milwaukee County’s Fiscal Condition: Crisis on the Horizon?” Over the next few years, the Forum published similarly comprehensive reports on the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Area Technical College, the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, and Milwaukee Public Schools.

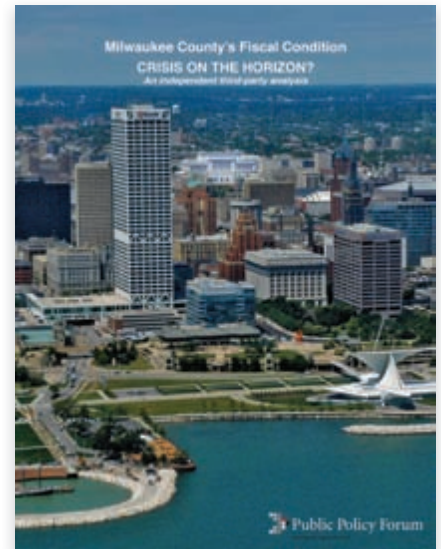
The “Crisis on the Horizon?” study documented the county’s fiscal problems and placed the Forum at the center of an ongoing major public debate over the future of county government. The study followed a highly controversial speech by prominent Milwaukee businessman and GMC member Sheldon B. Lubar a year earlier calling for county government to be dissolved, with its functions shifted to municipalities and the state.

To thoroughly examine the issue, the GMC contracted with the Forum for the “Crisis on the Horizon?” study and the following year for another report that reviewed the potential for structural reform in Milwaukee County government, “Should It Stay or Should It Go?” Both reports were widely read and served as the basis for reform discussions.

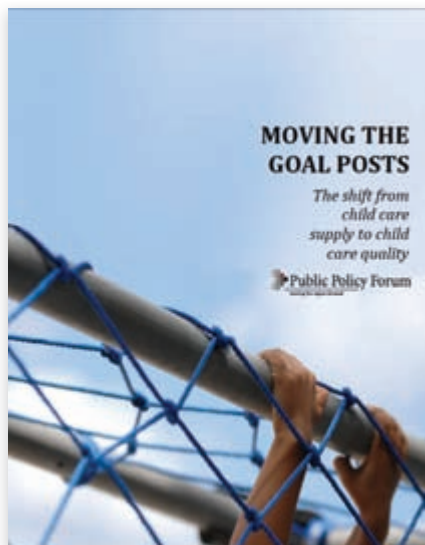
While county government was not dissolved, the creation of an elected county comptroller position grew out of the discussions. In a 2008 Journal Sentinel op ed, Henken had written that “the idea of an independent fiscal entity to serve... in county government was floated after the pension scandal, and it is time for its re-consideration.” He later discussed the concept of an independent entity with GMC leadership and publicly, though he did not advocate for a particular method to accomplish that goal.

In 2011, the GMC decided to seek state legislation to create an independently elected Milwaukee County comptroller position. Despite fierce County Board opposition, the Legislature approved the position. The first elected county comptroller was chosen in 2012.

Also during Henken’s tenure, the Forum published a series of reports on early childhood education, after the group’s board called for research on the issue. Forum research found the quality of child care lacking, with the problem in Wisconsin tied to the treatment of child care under the state’s W-2 public assistance program. With child care treated “as a work support, and not as a means of educating children,” the system was not structured to provide high-quality care, a 2010 Forum report concluded. Instead, W-2’s design had prioritized parental choice, affordability, and a quick expansion of the child care supply.



(top) The Forum in March 2009 published “Milwaukee County’s Fiscal Condition: Crisis on the Horizon?” The study was the first in a series of in-depth reports on the region’s largest governmental bodies. (bottom) A January 2012 Forum report, “Should It Stay or Should it Go?” explored the potential for structural reform in Milwaukee County government.



The Forum delved deeply into the issue of early childhood education. Research on the topic earned the Forum accolades from its peers nationwide at the 2010 annual conference of the Governmental Research Association.

Forum survey work also showed that standards that parents use for choosing child care providers were not consistent with those used by experts to determine high quality.

In 2009, the Forum analyzed the potential impact of several possible reforms, including a state quality ratings system with monetary incentives for care providers. Wisconsin's Department of Children and Families applauded the Public Policy Forum's research on the issue, and in 2010, the state approved a five-star quality rating and improvement system called YoungStar.

The nine Forum reports in its early childhood education research project collectively earned the Governmental Research Association's 2010 Award for Most Distinguished Research.

As with other recent past presidents, Henken made important organizational changes, including diversifying the board to expand inclusion of non-profit and local government leaders. He replaced a full-time public relations position with another full-time researcher, giving the Forum a 4½-person research staff and 6½ total positions.

The Forum also introduced new programs and activities under Henken's watch, including a pair of fellowships for graduate students aimed at improving the skills of budding policy researchers and journalists and its popular "Policy in a Pub" event, an annual members-only gathering at a local bar featuring a briefing on a new Forum research product.

The group also became active in the growing social and digital media revolution, establishing a presence on Facebook and Twitter and continuing to enhance the "Milwaukee Talkie" policy blog initiated under Browne. Use of these new tools continued the Forum's practice of adopting the latest communications technologies. (In 1947, for example, Gill took advantage of the then-new medium of radio by launching and moderating a weekly 15-minute government affairs program that included two alderman on WISN-AM.)

Annual membership revenues during Henken's tenure so far have risen 20%, to about \$173,000. But as the group's 100th year anniversary approached, he saw major financial challenges ahead. Large area foundations were beginning to sunset; a number of corporate headquarters had left the area; retaining and attracting talented staff required additional revenues; and an era of intense partisanship was making it more difficult to raise funds for objective research.

The Forum today holds popular “Policy in a Pub” events, annual members-only gatherings at local bars featuring a Forum briefing.

Despite the challenges, the Forum as of late 2012 was on sound financial footing, with no hint of slowing down its activity. Its research continued to help set the civic agenda, influence the public debate, and encourage government reforms.

If they arrived back in Milwaukee in 2012, the Milwaukee Citizens’ Bureau of Municipal Efficiency’s founders wouldn’t recognize much about the city. But they would feel quite at home with the work, dedication, and success of the fact-based, unbiased, and influential Public Policy Forum. ■



In recent years, the Forum continued a longtime practice of adopting the latest communications tools by developing a Facebook presence and launching the “Milwaukee Talkie” blog.



On the eve of its 100th anniversary, Forum President Rob Henken and former Presidents Jean Tyler, David Meissner, and Jeff Browne discussed the organization's past and future. (Photographed at the Forum offices, July 2012)

What accounts for the Forum's longevity?

Jean Tyler: "The ability to change focus, issues, and tactics over 100 years as situations and times change is key. Managing the Bureau/Forum during the depression years, the war years, the fast growth years, and the current electronic information years is very different."

David Meissner: "I think that the Forum's longevity can be explained by its ongoing relevancy during the last century. It continually produced unbiased factual

information for public consumption and use in solving community issues of the day."

Jeff Browne: "The Forum endures because of our deep respect for both government and the citizens who own it. As an institution, we appreciate that nonpartisan information is the vital link between citizens and good government. That's why we were called the Citizens' Governmental Research Bureau for most of our existence. Giving citizens good information about their government underlies the Forum's enduring

qualities: clarity of purpose, persistence, nonpartisanship, integrity, truth, and credibility."

Rob Henken: "The respect we have earned from both elected and non-elected local government and school district leaders has been paramount to our survival. If those leaders considered us to have an ideological bias, or if they deemed our work to be anything short of highly professional, we would have been seen as just another voice competing for their attention with all of the interest groups that are out there."



Former Forum presidents (from top): Jean Tyler, David Meissner and Jeff Browne; and current Forum president Rob Henken.

What's been the Forum's most significant impact in its 100 years?

Jean Tyler: "I couldn't possibly compare the many impacts over all those years. What has not changed and remains a great strength, however, is the core belief that accurate, understandable information serves as the foundation for successful citizen action."

David Meissner: "Serving as a good government watchdog. An informed public makes for better government."

Jeff Browne: "The Forum does not exist to have direct impact but rather to provide fact-based information that citizens and their representatives in local government use to make good decisions. To the extent that we have good government in the Milwaukee area, the Forum has been a quiet, behind-the-scenes contributor over the decades."

Rob Henken: "Having an objective, nonpartisan organization that has the expertise to analyze complicated policy issues and the credibility to get our findings widely disseminated in the news media discourages government officials from playing loose with the facts. Essentially, we have provided an added layer of independent, citizen-based oversight over local government that has improved the overall quality of government in our region."

What is the key to the Forum continuing another 100 years?

Jean Tyler: "I see a major change as we move from a lack of accurate information to an overload of detailed, often confusing and conflicting information. Perhaps organizations like the Public Policy Forum will move from gathering and reporting accurate information to more sorting, explaining and analyzing the vast amounts of information now available electronically through the touch of a screen."

David Meissner: "Continue doing what it has done so well in the past. If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

Jeff Browne: "In an increasingly partisan environment that has brought citizens an onslaught of propaganda posing as research, the Forum must provide four things: truth, clarity, balance and responsibility. In addition to these qualities, which defined our first century, the Forum needs to help citizens expand their cultural and economic connections globally."

Rob Henken: "The key is cultivating future generations of business, civic, and governmental leaders who appreciate the Forum's mission and value and who are willing to spend countless volunteer hours guiding our organization, insisting that it maintain its previous levels of quality and objectivity, and working to ensure its fiscal viability."



FOUNDING MEMBERS (1913)

Charles Allis	
R.B. Brown	Milwaukee Gas Light Co.
Albert Friedmann	Ed Schuster & Co.
Albert F. & Arthur Gallun	A.F. Gallun & Sons
Oscar Greenwald	Gimbel Brothers
John W. Mariner	
S.B. Way	The Milw. Elec. Railway & Light Co.
Edward A. Uhrig	Milwaukee-Western Fuels Co.
J.D. Mortimer	The Milw. Elec. Railway & Light Co.
C.W. Norris	
Gustav Pabst	Pabst Brewing Co.
William Woods Plankinton	
Ferdinand Schlesinger	Milwaukee Coke & Gas Co.
Edward F. Byron	Joseph Schlitz Brewing Co.
Walter Stern	Bernhard Stern & Sons
H.M. Thompson	
Horace A.J. Upham	
August H. Vogel	Pfister & Vogel Leather Co.
Fred Vogel Jr.	First National Bank
H.O. Seymour	Wisconsin Telephone Co.
F. L. Pierce	Cutler-Hammer Mfg. Co.
Albert C. Elser	2nd Ward Savings Bank
E. O. Hoffman	John Hoffman & Sons Co.
F.A.W. Kieckhefer	National Enameling & Stamping Co.
Max Landauer	
Emil H. Ott	William Steinmeyer Co.
Clement C. Smith	Columbus Construction Co.
Paul J. Stern	Atlas Bread Factory
Herman A. Wagner	Wisconsin Bridge & Iron Co.100

PAST DIRECTORS

Thomas L. Hinckley	1913-1915
John F. Putnam	1916-1918
Harold L. Henderson	1918-1929
John C. Davis	1929-1944
Norman N. Gill	1945-1984
Jean B. Tyler	1984-1995
David G. Meissner	1995-2002
Jeffrey C. Browne	2002-2008
Robert E. Henken	2008-present

PAST PRESIDENTS/BOARD CHAIRS

August H. Vogel	1913-1916
Erich Stern	1916-1918
August H. Vogel	1918
Benjamin Poss	1918-1923
Victor L. Brown	1924-1931
C.J. Otjen	1931-1937
Walter H. Bender	1937-1942
Georg G. Goetz	1942-1946
A. Lester Slocum	1946-1950
Max E. Friedmann	1950-1953
Eliot G. Fitch	1953-1958
Karl Maier, Jr.	1958-1961
Ralph T. Friedmann	1961-1964
Robert T. Foote	1964-1965
Ralph W. Ells	1966-1969
Jame A. Taylor	1969-1971
Van W. Coddington	1971-1973
John H. Paige	1973-1975
Leonard C. Hobart	1975-1977
Robert S. Brown	1977-1979
Carl A. Weigell	1979-1981
Orren J. Bradley	1981-1982
William L. Randall	1982-1984
George C. Kaiser	1984-1986
Harry L. Wallace	1986-1988
John C. Windsor, Jr.	1988-1990
Ralph E. Ells	1990-1992
Charles C. Mulcahy	1992-1994
F. Jack Pelisek	1994-1996
Thomas R. Hefty	1996-1998
Douglas M. MacNeil	1998-2000
Art Smith	2000-2002
David G. Meissner	2002-2004
Rick White	2004-2006
F. William Haberman	2006-2008
James T. Barry, III	2008-2010
Susan H. Hatch	2010-2013



An image of City Hall Square, created between 1907 and 1930, shows the view from the City Hall arch on Wells Street looking south onto Water Street.

75+ YEAR MEMBERS

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Member since</i>
A.O. Smith Corporation	1919
Badger Meter, Inc.	1938
Briggs & Stratton Corporation	1929
Journal Communications, Inc.	1922
BMO Harris Bank N.A.	1916
Northwestern Mutual	1936
Quarles & Brady LLP	1933
Rockwell Automation	1925
U.S. Bank	1919
We Energies	1913

50+ YEAR MEMBERS

Foley & Lardner LLP	1959
Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren s.c.	1959
Baird	1945

25+ YEAR MEMBERS

Associated General Contractors	1986
Aurora Health Care	1988
Cardinal Stritch University	1986
Cassidy Turley Barry	1970
CH2M Hill	1976
City of New Berlin	1985
Franklin Public Schools	1986
Godfrey & Kahn, S.C.	1977
Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Wisconsin	1986
HNTB Corporation	1970
Russell Knetzger	1969
Douglas MacNeil	1988
Marcus Corporation	1970
Marquette University	1971
Medical College of Wisconsin	1986
Michael Best & Friedrich LLP	1965
Milwaukee Area Technical College	1981
Milwaukee Art Museum	1985
Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District	1986
Milwaukee Regional Medical Center	1986
Milwaukee School of Engineering	1986
Ogden & Company, Inc.	1969
Ruekert & Mielke, Inc.	1987
School District of Menomonee Falls	1987
SEWRPC	1985
Social Development Commission	1970
United Performing Arts Fund	1980
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee	1971
von Briesen & Roper, s.c.	1977
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	1987



(top) A 1953 image of the Lincoln Memorial Bridge, a gateway to Milwaukee's lakefront. (bottom) A 1949 postcard of the Milwaukee River running through downtown Milwaukee.

PILLARS OF PUBLIC POLICY

Herzfeld Foundation

Founded by Richard and Ethel Herzfeld, the Milwaukee-based foundation focuses its grants in the areas of arts and culture, education, and arts education, and also makes limited investments in civic improvements. The Herzfeld Foundation has been one of the Public Policy Forum's most stalwart supporters and is widely known as one of Milwaukee's true community champions in its support for education (particularly early childhood education) and the arts. It served as lead funder for the Forum's award-winning, five-year research project on high-quality early childhood education and its multi-year projects on afterschool programming and arts education, and it also has generously supported the Forum's work on Milwaukee County government finances. The Foundation's generous \$250,000 investment in the Forum's new Education Research Fund will provide the capacity for enhanced research activities in all facets of Milwaukee's education landscape, from early childhood to postsecondary.



Founded by her family to honor the life of Helen Bader, the Foundation supports worthy organizations working in key areas affecting the quality of life in Wisconsin, Milwaukee, and Israel. Since its inception in 1992, it has issued more than \$200 million in grants. Since 2007, the Foundation has generously supported the Forum's research in economic development with annual grants focused on that issue area, and it also has supported its work in the areas of criminal justice, shared services/consolidation, and afterschool programming. In fact, the Foundation has provided more than \$1.6 million in grant support for the Forum since 1994. The Foundation's generous \$100,000 investment in the Forum's workforce development research will provide the capacity for a series of reports examining the activities and performance of Milwaukee's major workforce development agencies, the needs of Milwaukee employers, and efforts to address the skills gap.



The Foundation is the charitable arm of Northwestern Mutual, a 155-year-old company serving the insurance and investment needs of more than four million clients. Northwestern Mutual is the nation's largest direct provider of individual life insurance and was cited as one of the "World's Most Admired" life insurance companies in 2012 by FORTUNE[®] magazine. Northwestern Mutual has a long history of giving back to local communities through the financial support of its Foundation, the mission of which is to "build strong, vibrant communities that serve as a legacy to future generations." Since 2009, the Foundation has generously supported the Forum's local government finance research, as well as its annual report on the region's public schools. The Foundation's generous \$100,000 investment in commemoration of the Forum's 100th anniversary will be used to continue to support the Forum's local government finance and education research.



**Wisconsin Energy
Foundation**

With nearly \$14 billion of assets and approximately 4,600 employees, Wisconsin Energy Corporation is one of the nation's premier energy companies. Its principal subsidiary, We Energies, serves more than 1.1 million electric customers in Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula and more than 1 million natural gas customers in Wisconsin, and has been named the most reliable electric utility in the nation. Other subsidiaries are We Power, which designs, builds and owns electric generating plants; and Wispark, a full service real estate development subsidiary focused on business parks, industrial/office buildings and urban re-development. The company is an initial founder of the Public Policy Forum and is the only entity still in existence that has been a Forum member since its creation in 1913.



SENTINELS OF CIVIL CONDUCT



Based in Chicago, BMO Harris Bank has grown to become one of the largest banks in the Midwest serving personal, commercial and affluent customers. BMO Harris Bank provides a broad range of personal banking products and solutions through over 600 branches and approximately 1,300 ATMs. These include solutions for everyday banking, financing, investing, as well as a full suite of integrated commercial and financial advisory services. BMO Harris Bank's commercial banking team provides a combination of sector expertise, local knowledge and mid-market focus throughout the U.S. A Forum member since 1916, the Marshall & Ilsley Corporation – now part of BMO Harris Bank – has generously supported the Forum with its membership dues, sponsorship of the annual Salute to Local Government, and table purchases at each of the Forum's Viewpoint luncheons. The bank's generous \$25,000 100th Anniversary sponsorship will help underwrite the year's activities and support the Forum's ongoing research and facilitation.



The Casino is Wisconsin's No. 1 entertainment destination, drawing six million visitors a year who enjoy a variety of amenities, including: more than 3,100 slot machines, a variety of table games, high-stakes bingo, off-track betting, live entertainment performances and five restaurants, including the 4-star Dream Dance Steak. An active community partner, the Casino employs more than 2,600 and is building a hotel which, when open in 2014, will add more jobs to the area's employment base and new entertainment opportunities for its guests. The Casino has generously supported the Forum with its membership dues and sponsorship of the annual Salute to Local Government and Viewpoint luncheons. Its generous \$25,000 100th Anniversary sponsorship will help underwrite the year's activities and support the Forum's ongoing research and facilitation.

100TH ANNIVERSARY PLATINUM SPONSOR

CommunityConnect HealthPlan
David G. Meissner

100TH ANNIVERSARY GOLD SPONSORS

Badger Meter, Inc.
Briggs & Stratton Corporation
Ehlers
Hatch Staffing Services
SC Johnson

100TH ANNIVERSARY SILVER SPONSORS

BloodCenter of Wisconsin
Cassidy Turley Barry
CH2M Hill
Davis & Kuelthau, s.c.
Daniel W. Hoan Foundation
Godfrey & Kahn S.C.
HNTB Corporation
Quarles & Brady LLP
Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, Inc.

PUBLIC POLICY FORUM OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES 2012

OFFICERS

Chairman

Susan H. Hatch

Vice Chairman

Kristine Hinrichs

Secretary

Andrew Schiesl

Vice Chairman

Dennis J. Krakau

Treasurer

Bradley Viegut

Vice Chairman

Steven M. Radke

President

Robert E. Henken

TRUSTEES

Nicole Angresano
United Way of
Greater Milwaukee

James Archambo
City of Wauwatosa

James T. Barry III
Cassidy Turley Barry

William R.A. Bergum
Badger Meter, Inc.

Bruce T. Block
Reinhart Boerner
Van Deuren s.c.

Laura Bray
Menomonee Valley Partners

Kevin Brehm
AECOM

Michael L. Burke, Ph.D.
Milwaukee Area
Technical College

Tina M. Chang
SysLogic, Inc.

David DeYoung
Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, Inc.

Allan E. Erickson, P.E.
CH2M Hill

Joshua L. Gimbel
Michael Best & Friedrich LLP

Michael G. Goodrich
Potawatomi Bingo Casino

Veronica L. Gunn, M.D.
Children's Hospital
and Health System

Scott D. Harmsen
Grant Thornton LLP

Michael Harrigan
Ehlers

Art Harrington
Godfrey & Kahn, S.C.

Charles A. Harvey
Johnson Controls, Inc.

Susan H. Hatch
Hatch Staffing Services

Kristine Hinrichs
Milwaukee Municipal Court

Thomas E. Hlavacek
Alzheimer's Association
of Southeastern Wisconsin

Geoffrey Hurtado
University of Wisconsin-
Milwaukee

Matthew K. Impola
Foley & Lardner LLP

Christopher J. Jaekels
Davis & Kuelthau, s.c.

Bruce A. Johnson
Aon Corporation

Philip R. Koutnik
Whyte Hirschboeck
Dudek S.C.

Dennis J. Krakau
Associated Bank, N.A.

Mark S. Krueger
Wipfli LLP

H. Bruce Kruger
CommunityConnect
HealthPlan

Kathryn A. Kuhn
Medical College of Wisconsin

Keith Lester
Rockwell Automation

Daniel J. McCarthy
Zilber Ltd.

James R. Miller
BMO Harris Bank N.A.

Matt O'Malley
Journal Communications, Inc.

Karen Ordinans
Children's Health Alliance
of Wisconsin

Matthew J. Parlow
Marquette University
Law School

Paula H. Penebaker
YWCA of Greater Milwaukee

John J. Peterburs, Ph.D.
Quarles & Brady LLP

Barbara A. Prindiville, Ph.D.
Waukesha County
Technical College

Steven M. Radke
Northwestern Mutual

Lisa Robbins
Johnson Direct, LLC

Rachel Roller
Aurora Health Care

Randall Satterfield
American
Transmission Company

Andrew Schiesl
Quad/Graphics, Inc.

Mark Schwertfeger
Briggs & Stratton Corporation

Mark Sherry
Mortenson Construction

Tracy Shilobrit
StrateVantage
Communications, LLC

Janet Slater
BloodCenter of Wisconsin

Richard A. Smith, M.S., P.E.
R.A. Smith National, Inc.

Roger S. Smith
A.O. Smith Corporation

Susan M. Smith
Alverno College

Scott Solverson
HNTB Corporation

Timothy W. Somers
US Bank

Howard A. Sosoff
BDO USA, LLP

Julie Swiderski
Wheaton Franciscan
Healthcare

Wendi Unger, CPA
Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP

Bradley Viegut
Baird

Hermann Viets, Ph.D.
Milwaukee School
of Engineering

Rick White
We Energies

Scott Williams
American Design, Inc.

EMERITUS

William R. Adams
William Adams Consulting

Thomas A. Brophy

Jeffrey C. Browne
Vietnomics

Richard A. Dieffenbach
Dieffenbach & Associates

Susan F. Friebert

Reed Groethe
Foley & Lardner LLP

F. William Haberman
Michael Best & Friedrich LLP

Margaret Henningsen
Women's Fund of
Greater Milwaukee

Edmund M. Henschel
City of Waukesha

Keith Kolb
Baird

Warren L. Kreunen
North Shore Bank

James T. Kunz
AECOM

Douglas M. MacNeil

Paul F. Mathews
Marcus Center
for the Performing Arts

David J. Mauer

David G. Meissner

Charles C. Mulcahy

Frederick A. Muth
Whyte Hirschboeck
Dudek S.C.

Joan M. Prince, Ph.D.
University of Wisconsin-
Milwaukee

Kathleen Pritchard, Ph.D.
Planning Council for
Health & Human Services

Jeffrey J. Remsik
Bottom Line Marketing &
Public Relations

John Rumpf
Baird

Mark Sabljak
The Business Journal
Serving Greater Milwaukee

Roger H. Schroeder

Art Smith
Keystone Travel Services

Brian S. Swenson, P.E.
HNTB Corporation

Richard L. Weiss
Weiss Family Foundation

Nicholas C. Wilson
Jacobus Wealth Management

Paul Ziehler
City of West Allis

AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank the following for their gracious assistance: Forum President Rob Henken; former Forum Presidents Jean Tyler, David Meissner, and Jeff Browne; Forum staff members Pam Matthews, Jeffrey Schmidt, and Anneliese Dickman; Milwaukee Public Library and MPL's Coordinator of Humanities and Archives Virginia Schwartz and her staff; Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, JS Senior Editor News Systems Alan King, and Researcher Judith Berger; Milwaukee historians John Gurda and Martin Hintz; Jenny Weiss and Kim Kriegel, of Weiss & Company Marketing Communications; and photographers Scott Paulus and Phil Slaske.

Serving as valuable resources were "Bureaus of Efficiency," by Mordecai Lee (2008, Marquette University Press); "Celebrating 75 Years of Service," by Jean B. Tyler (1988, published by Public Policy Forum); and "Notes from CGRB History," by Norman N. Gill (1987, unpublished).



Since 1993, the Public Policy Forum has hosted its Salute to Local Government event, where it recognizes local governments and school districts for innovation, partnership, and cooperation, as well as individuals in government and school districts for excellence and lifetime achievement.

PHOTO CREDITS

Introduction

Postcard created by Curt Teich & Co., Chicago.
Courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Page 3

Postcard image of the Public Service Building from the Thomas and Jean Ross Bliffert Postcard Collection. Courtesy of the Archives at UWM Libraries. Also shown on cover.

Page 4

Photo of August H. Vogel. Courtesy of the Milwaukee County Historical Society.

Photo of Charles Allis. Courtesy of the Milwaukee County Historical Society.

Photo of Albert C. Elser. Courtesy of the Milwaukee County Historical Society.

Photo of Walter Stern from the Stein Photograph Collection. 1914. Courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Photo of Thomas L. Hinckley. The Milwaukee Journal. January 11, 1914. © 2012 Journal Sentinel, Inc., reproduced with permission. Access to newspaper courtesy of Milwaukee Public Library.

Page 5

Postcard image of City Hall from the Thomas and Jean Ross Bliffert Postcard Collection. 1909. Courtesy of the Archives at UWM Libraries. Also shown on cover.

Photo of Horace A.J. Upham. Courtesy of the Milwaukee County Historical Society.

Photo of Albert T. Friedmann. Courtesy of the Milwaukee County Historical Society.

Photo of Charles W. Norris. Courtesy of the Milwaukee County Historical Society.

Photo of Edward A. Uhrig. Courtesy of the Milwaukee County Historical Society.

Pages 8-9

"More Efficiency In City's Affairs Is Bureau's Plan" article. Milwaukee Sentinel. November 15, 1913. © 2012 Journal Sentinel, Inc., reproduced with permission. Access to newspaper courtesy of Milwaukee Public Library. Also shown on cover.

Page 9

Photo of the University Building. Yenowine's News. December 17, 1892. Access to newspaper courtesy of Milwaukee Public Library.

Page 14

Postcard image of the Milwaukee County Courthouse from the Thomas and Jean Ross Bliffert Postcard Collection. From the Archives Department, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries. Also shown on cover.

Postcard image of the Free Press and Pabst Buildings from the Thomas and Jean Ross Bliffert Postcard Collection. From the Archives

Department, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries.

Page 16

Photo by Lyle Oberwise. 1963. Courtesy of the Milwaukee County Historical Society.

Photo of Norman Gill. The Milwaukee Journal. June 17, 1945. © 2012 Journal Sentinel, Inc., reproduced with permission.

Page 17

Photo of Norman Gill. The Milwaukee Journal. July 11, 1959. © 2012 Journal Sentinel, Inc., reproduced with permission. Also shown on cover.

Page 18

Photo of Norman Gill. Milwaukee Sentinel. March 21, 1984. © 2012 Journal Sentinel, Inc., reproduced with permission.

Page 19

Photo of Paula Lynagh. The Milwaukee Journal. July 26, 1944. © 2012 Journal Sentinel, Inc., reproduced with permission. Access to newspaper courtesy of Milwaukee Public Library.

Page 20

"County's Most Figure-Conscious Woman" headline. Milwaukee Sentinel. April 19, 1960. © 2012 Journal Sentinel, Inc., reproduced with permission. Access to newspaper courtesy of Milwaukee Public Library.

Page 21

Photo of Karl Maier Jr., Gov. Gaylord A. Nelson, Eliot G. Fitch, Donald A. Grant, Ralph T. Friedmann. Milwaukee Sentinel. February 7, 1959. © 2012 Journal Sentinel, Inc., reproduced with permission. Access to newspaper courtesy of Milwaukee Public Library.

Page 23

Illustration of Meinecke Toy Company. Yenowine's News. November 15, 1891. Access to newspaper courtesy of Milwaukee Public Library. Also shown on cover.

Photo of Fine Arts Building/Meinecke Toy Company. 2012. Photographed by Scott Paulus.

Page 28

Photo of the directors of the Citizens' Governmental Research Bureau presenting a certificate of appreciation to Bureau president Ralph T. Friedmann. The Milwaukee Journal. January 24, 1964. © 2012 Journal Sentinel, Inc., reproduced with permission.

Page 29

Photo of Municipal Building. Courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Postcard image of Wisconsin Avenue from the Thomas and Jean Ross Bliffert Postcard Collection. From the Archives Department, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries. Also shown on cover.

Page 30

"Autumn Lakefront Morning." October 2011. Courtesy John December.

Page 31

Photo of Jean B. Tyler. The Milwaukee Journal. February 14, 1988. © 2012 Journal Sentinel, Inc., reproduced with permission.

Page 34

Photo of David G. Meissner. 1992. © 2012 Journal Sentinel, Inc., reproduced with permission.

Page 36

Photo of Jeffrey C. Browne. 2004. Photographed by Pat Goetzinger.

Page 37

"Can you find the borders?" article. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. October 12, 2003. © 2012 Journal Sentinel, Inc., reproduced with permission. Also shown on cover.

Page 38

"Race Relations Impacting Business, Impeding Progress." The Business Journal Serving Greater Milwaukee. December 1, 2006.

Page 45

Photo of Jean Tyler. 2012. Photographed by Phil Slaske.

Photo of David Meissner. 2012. Photographed by Jeff Schmidt.

Photo of Jeff Browne. 2012. Photographed by Phil Slaske.

Photo of Rob Henken. 2012. Photographed by Phil Slaske.

Page 46

Postcard image of City Hall Square from the Thomas and Jean Ross Bliffert Postcard Collection. Courtesy of the Archives at UWM Libraries.

Page 47

Postcard image of the Lincoln Memorial Bridge from the Thomas and Jean Ross Bliffert Postcard Collection. Courtesy of the Archives at UWM Libraries.

Postcard image of the Milwaukee River from the Thomas and Jean Ross Bliffert Postcard Collection. Courtesy of the Archives at UWM Libraries.

Page 49

Photo of downtown Milwaukee. March 2012. Courtesy of John December. Also shown on cover.

Page 52

Photo of a Forum Salute to Local Government event. June 2012. Photographed by Phil Slaske. Also shown on cover.

All other photos and images are from Citizens' Bureau of Milwaukee/Citizens' Governmental Research Bureau/Public Policy Forum files.



633 WEST WISCONSIN AVENUE, SUITE 406
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN 53203

(414) 276-8240 ■ WWW.PUBLICPOLICYFORUM.ORG



Impartial research. Informed debate.

633 WEST WISCONSIN AVENUE, SUITE 406
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN 53203

(414) 276-8240 ■ WWW.PUBLICPOLICYFORUM.ORG