

THE MICHIGAN BROADCASTER

Editorial

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MAB Memories

By Judy Kenney, MAB Chairman 2001 (currently Vice President/General Manager, WFTX-TV, Fort Myers, FL)



When I was asked to write an article about my tenure as Chairman of the MAB, I laughed out loud. I can hardly remember what happened yesterday, much less what happened in 2001. So I grabbed a glass of wine, sat out by the pool (I heard it was 50 degrees in Michigan that day,) and started to reminisce about the good 'ole days in early 2000.

Several things came to mind....digital transition (imagine thinking about it for all these years and it is now a reality,) Amber Alert's beginning, Pirate Radio, Retransmission fees, Satellite Radio and TV. Ugh, pour me another Merlot.

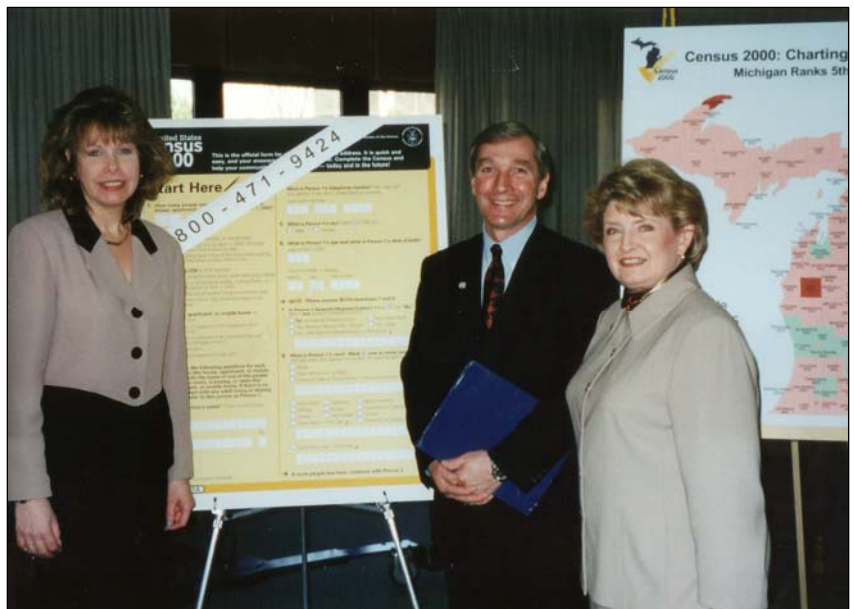
(pictured left – Judy Kenney and former FCC Commissioner James H. Quello during the MAB's Annual Meeting and Management Retreat at the Grand Hotel in 1999)

A couple of things stand out in my memory. The MAB did a survey in early 2000-2001 asking members what their concerns in broadcasting were at the time. I remember having healthy conversations at board meetings about a few key issues. The underlying tone was one of PEOPLE (see some things never change) mostly Engineers and Salespeople. What would happen when all the "old-time" (maybe a better way of saying it is "experienced") engineers retired?? None of the younger generation wanted to work on a transmitter

(analog, by the way) – they wanted to work in the exciting world of IT. In addition, as an industry, we didn't do "paid internships," so all the future engineers were going where the money was – and it wasn't broadcasting. I remember we were afraid that television had lost its "sexiness," and we were considered "cheap." We were not feeling the love from all the graduates that snubbed their nose at our industry. Well, here we are, 8 years later and we have just pulled our analog signals. The world hasn't come to an end – we all have engineers that keep us on the air (and using computers to boot). Some of us even have a couple of amazing young engineers that actually want to be in our business. Imagine that....

(pictured right – Judy Kenney; former Michigan Lt. Governor Dick Posthumus; and Karole White during the Census 2000 campaign)

As for Sales People/Account Executives, it was very similar. The concern was losing all the good sales people to other industries that paid more than broadcasting sales. That whole "sexiness" issue came out also. Weren't we a fun industry anymore.... had we let other industries steal our best people? Did they go into Pharmaceutical sales, Syndication, Web sales????? I can tell you that each and every one of you have some terrific sellers. They are the people you want on your team as we work our way through these difficult times.



Happy 60th Anniversary MAB, I'm proud to be a part of your history.