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Forsythe on honor roll

Catherine D. Forsythe, a student at Southern Methodist University, in Dallas, Tex., was placed on the school's honor roll because of her high grade average.

She lives at 32280 Heathstone, Farmington.

Ryan ponders court scene

By SHERRY KAHAN

Whereas James L. Ryan has been a justice of Michigan Supreme Court for about 1 1/2 years.

And whereas he is a resident of Redford Township and has offices in Farmington and is, therefore, of particular interest to residents of this area.

It is, therefore, deemed advisable at this time to solicit from him, without benefit of counsel, various opinions and judgments on subjects both legal and personal.

What, for example, does he have to say about his position as one of seven justices of the highest court in the state?

"Being a member of the Michigan Supreme Court is very stimulating and challenging," he answered in a recent interview. "The work is not routine. But there is more of it, and it is less dramatic."

Sometimes, I miss the action of the court room. I miss seeing really good trial lawyers in action and the chance to explain a really complex trial to jurors.

"What I don't miss is the agony of child custody and broken family cases."

Before Ryan was appointed to the bench in 1975 by Gov. William Milliken, and then elected to the post in 1976, he saw courtroom action as first, a justice of the peace of Redford Township, and, later, as a Wayne County circuit judge.

AT THE TIME he was there, both courts were the busiest of their kind in the state, and Ryan met every day "all the joys and sorrows ever visited upon man."

His toughest case was the Port Huron tunnel case, with 12 widows as plaintiffs suing eight defendants. The result was \$7 million for the widows.

"The challenge for me was to make extremely complex issues understandable to the jury," he recalled.

This is one of the interests of his life, making sure that juries know what is involved in cases they are hearing. In fact, it is one of his duties on the court where justices are given various administrative responsibilities.

Justice G. Mennen Williams, for example, is in charge of the legal data processing and information storage system for the state. Justice Mary Coleman acts as liaison between all juvenile and probate courts and the state supreme court.

Ryan, who moonlights as a professor of law at University of Detroit School of Law, oversees the continuing education of Michigan judges, staff, referees and clerks so to enable them to maintain their professional expertise.

This is done mainly in classes and seminars.

RYAN PLANS TO STRESS teaching judges how to communicate with a jury.

"In a one-day jury trial, a citizen is expected to sit on a case and be edu-

cated by a judge on all the law involved in the case," he said. "All in one sitting."

"Judges have to learn to communicate very complicated, sophisticated legal propositions to jury members in language they can understand."

At this point, he contributed the information that names of jurors are taken from voter registration lists. Names are picked from a hat by members of a jury commission. Later, potential jurors are interviewed as to their competence, or to find out if jury duty would cause them a hardship.

THE REDFORD JUSTICE would not let himself be categorized as a philosophical follower of either U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justices Earl Warren or Warren Burger.

But, he willingly offered the opinion that it is necessary for the court on which he sits "to make a judgment that a lower court was right or not on the basis of what the law is, not on what we would like it to be."

He added: "People have a representative body of folks in the legislature to do their will. We don't represent the people on the court. We serve the people."

"Some judges have not been good at self-restraint, and have permitted their own preferences to creep into the outcome."

Having campaigned for his present job last fall in 83 counties, and having traveled 17,000 miles (not at public expense) to meet the voters, he is prepared to hand down an opinion on the question of whether judges should be elected or appointed.

"Almost never did anyone ask me about a case I had decided or about any of the hundreds of opinions I have written," he said. "It was clear to me that the vast majority didn't care."

He added that all the Michigan voters who actually entered the voting booth, 38 per cent of them did not bother to express an opinion on the race in which he was running.

Ryan thinks a fair way to select high court justices is through a judicial bi-partisan nominating committee of judges, lawyers and lay persons representing the major political parties.

"Such a committee would suggest three of the best qualified persons to sit on the state high court," he explained. "The governor would be required to make the appointment from that list."

IN THE HOME of a state supreme court justice, who is accustomed to making hard judicial judgments, who makes the decisions?

"I make few decisions at home without consulting my wife, Mary," responded Ryan. Between them, they are raising a family of four: Daniel, 15; James, 14; Colleen, 11; and Kathleen, 8.

While court sessions in Lansing take up more than half the month, Ryan commutes daily from Redford Township unless the weather is impossible.

"I'm helping to raise a family," was his explanation.



On the scaffolding, Fred Hewitt inspects the condition of the temple's wooden dormers.

Lodge gets a facelift

(Continued from Page 3A)

holes in the roof. Although the holes were patched, the volunteers realize that the roof must be replaced.

"It's a bad situation, so we got after it to do something about it fast before the weather comes in," Hewitt said. Workers have scheduled the roof repair after the dormers are revamped.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF MONEY and time have come from lodge members and residents who are interested in preserving a piece of old Farmington.

A Mason for Virginia who owns a scaffolding business in Michigan donated and set up the volunteers' rig. Members who are bricklayers, gutter fitters, sheet metal workers, printers and other tradesmen are donating their time to the project.

Residents whose only affiliation to

the group is their regard for the old building are donating time.

"True feelings," is the way carpenter Richard Sadowski sums up his commitment to the project. Although he isn't a member of the group, he wants to preserve a Farmington landmark.

McFarquhar, a retired printer, is donating his skills to turn out souvenirs of the building for persons who donate money for the preservation. Each donor eventually will receive a small block of the wood, a piece of slate and a nail from the original structure.

The membership has been able to raise about \$1,500 for the project. Wives are serving lunches to the Exchange Club to raise additional money.



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Card party helps aged

The Ladies of Charity of St. Vincent De Paul are sponsoring a spring card party at the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Home's Labour Hall, Inkster Road at Twelve Mile, Farmington Hills.

The party starts at noon on May 21. Tickets are \$2.50. Proceeds will benefit the aged of Cass Corridor at St. Patrick's parish and the children of St. Vincent-Sarah Fisher Home.

Tickets may be obtained at the door.

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