

He's on third career and hasn't stopped yet

By Karen Hermes Smith
staff writer

William P. Hampton's resume could be that of three successful persons. Since graduating from law school 20 years ago, the 45-year-old Bloomfield Hills resident has risen to the top of three careers.

As politician from 1964-70, he became the youngest-ever majority floor leader of the Michigan House of Representatives.

As judge from 1970-76, he presided over the Oakland County Circuit Court. And now, as one of six partners in a 47-attorney Farmington Hills law firm, he is an in-demand trial attorney, engaged by the area's wealthy to represent them in their legal matters.

Among his clients are Jay Kogan, owner of the Oakland Mall in Troy, who's charged with trying to strangle his wife to kill her; Karen Nederlander, who's divorcing her husband and Karen and Robert Larsen of Bloomfield Township who were arrested for hiring eight men and women to kidnap Mrs. Larsen's daughters and deprogram them of their alleged cultist beliefs. (The Larsens were later released and not charged.)

THE AFFABLE Hampton attributes part of the way his professional life has developed to fate.

"If I had sat down and developed

some mass plan, it couldn't have worked out any better," he said.

Hampton was born and reared in Pontiac where he attended Pontiac High School and met Betsy, his wife of 22 years.

Like his father, he became an attorney, graduating in 1960 from Michigan State University, East Lansing, and in 1963 from Wayne State University Law School, Detroit. He practiced law with his father his first year out of law school. They called their Pontiac firm Hampton & Hampton.

In 1964, when Henry Hogan decided not to run for re-election to the Michigan House of Representatives, young Hampton announced his candidacy for the relinquished seat.

"I was always interested in public service and I felt I had the background to help," said Hampton who was active in politics during college.

Hampton defeated three challengers that year, including Congressman William Broomfield's campaign manager and William Broomfield, then Birmingham city planner, whose name Hampton feared voters would confuse on the ballot with Broomfield's.

HAMPTON'S allegiate political experience helped him in his endeavor. While at MSU, he had worked on gubernatorial candidate Paul Bagwell's election campaign, giving

him an insight into how campaigns work.

After just three years in the house, Hampton became majority floor leader. He held the No. 2 command for just a year until 1969-70 when the Democrats gained control.

In 1970, Hampton decided not to run for re-election to the legislature. He remembers having the feeling he does when he goes into a theater after the movie's already started, sits through until it ends and then watches the beginning when it replays.

"After being there for six years, I started hearing the same speeches and I said to myself, 'This is where I came in.'"

Hampton thought about running for lieutenant governor in 1970, but also opted against that.

"I probably had the votes at the convention to be nominated but (former) Governor Milliken wanted (James) Brickley, a Detroit Catholic as opposed to a suburban Protestant," Hampton said.

"Plus I was satisfied with the fact that if I had gone to the convention and won the nomination, it would have undermined Bill Milliken and cost him the election."

HAMPTON NEVER regretted either decision. In December 1970, when Philip Pratt was appointed by former President Nixon to serve on the U.S. District Court in Detroit, Milliken



STEPHEN CANTRELL/staff photographer

After serving as legislator and judge, William P. Hampton has returned to a full-time law practice. Several local municipal governments and the

area's wealthy are among those who call on him to represent them in lawsuits.

asked Hampton to take Pratt's seat on Oakland County Circuit Court.

Three years later, his colleagues on the circuit selected him to serve as presiding judge, an administrative job involving the day-to-day operations of

the court.

Among the highly publicized cases Hampton handled as circuit judge was the killing of a Pontiac newsboy by a youth gang.

In 1976, Hampton returned to practicing law, in part to pay for his three children's private educations.

He specializes in municipal law, representing on a regular basis Bloomfield Hills, West Bloomfield, Bloomfield Township, Pontiac Township, Walled Lake and the Oakland County Drain Commission.

He also specializes in domestic relations, corporate litigation and an array of criminal law.

Despite his demanding schedule and responsibilities, Hampton remains easy-going, keeping in mind that only so much can be done in one day. "I don't let things bother me," he said. "Criticism, for example, is like water off a duck's back to me."

He is also organized and well-prepared for his cases. "I'm fortunate to have a staff of lawyers to write briefs," he said.

And every few months, Hampton gets away to unwind. One of his favorite spots is his northern Michigan vacation home. "When I'm there, I feel like I'm a thousand miles away."

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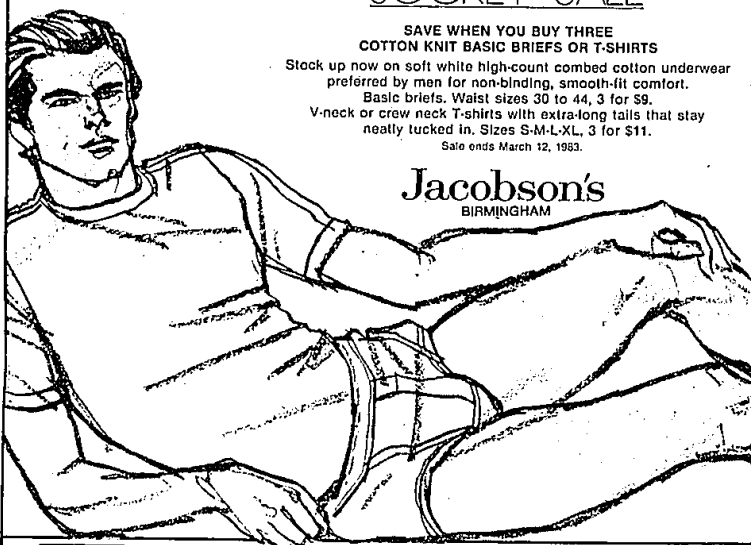
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The tour will take visitors to modern and historical Paris, the Louvre, the Jeu de Paume, the Beaubourg Museum and Marais district, the Rodin Museum, and the Cluny Museum.

Other stops will be made at Claude Monet's property in Giverny, the cathedral at Chartres, a French chateau, a Gothic cathedral in Brussels, and at the

Grand Place in Brussels. Marilyn Finkel, chairman of the Orchard Ridge Fine Arts Department, is coordinating the tour. She conducted the successful art tour of Italy last spring.

All-inclusive rates for this tour will be \$1,695 per person based on double occupancy.

Rates include round-trip airfare between Detroit and Brussels, round-trip transportation between Brussels and Paris by private motorcoach, airport bus transfers, and various meals, tips, taxes and service charges.

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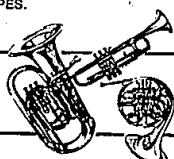
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