

Here's 5 who helped Southfield

"Early councils were motivated to develop Southfield into a modern city. They were always interested in any type of progressive zoning."

That meant no heavy industry but lots of office construction, he said, with the obvious tax-base benefits that make so many people-services possible.

"For instance, city councils have always been zealous about having recreation facilities. That department has always been given a lot of encouragement. And it's been successful."

MANY OF THE SERVICES Southfield has to offer its residents emanate from the municipal complex on Evergreen. Buying the land for the complex was "the best decision the first council made," Feder said.

Feder points to the library housed in the complex. "When the city was first incorporated, we had a minimum facility for the library. It was in the oldest school building in the township. Now, we have one of the largest libraries in the state in terms of books circulated."

Closer to home, Southfield has also been able to offer a first-rate court system, Feder said.

"This courthouse is the envy of certainly all the district courts in the state. It all started as a municipal court, with one part-time judge: Judge Clarence Reid, who's a district judge here still. Now, as a district court, there are three judges and a magistrate."

Other city benefits Feder points to are the size and sophistication of police and fire departments, the caliber of senior citizen housing and the school system.

"In Southfield, we have always had an enlightened and aggressive government. There has never been a hint of scandal. Members of the councils and elected officials have been very dedicated to their jobs. The city couldn't have done without them."

If Feder sounds enthusiastic about the city, it's because he is.

"Sometimes, I think I was like a one-man public relations department," he said with a laugh.

CITY CLERK PATRICK FLANNERY

There's a soft accent in Patrick Flannery's voice, a legacy of his Irish birth. It becomes more evident when he describes the result of 25 years of Southfield's growth.

"If anybody'd told me in 1964, let alone in 1958, what would happen in Southfield . . . ah, I'd have said it was totally impossible."

It was possible, and Flannery helped arrange it.

He moved to Southfield in 1952. While working with his father's security company, he began to get involved with Southfield Township politics, during the early incorporation attempts.

Flannery's first office was on the original charter commission in 1955. That charter failed, but Flannery was a mem-

ber of the group that put together a successful one in 1958.

After the new city was incorporated, Flannery joined in the clerk's office changeover. "The nucleus was there. For the first five years, I was the only change in the personnel."

As the only city clerk Southfield has ever had, Flannery can make several startling comparisons between operations in 1958 and 1983.

"WE STARTED IN the old township hall on Berg Road. After a couple of annexes were built, we had to move the building and assessment departments to a rented office on Telegraph Road at about Nine and One-Half Mile Road.

"We moved here in 1964, and I wondered what we would ever do with all this room." But as he talked, Flannery looked around his office, whose entire south wall is crumpled from floor to ceiling with manuals, books and files; the impression is that he could easily use another 1,000 square feet.

To make another point, he pulled out the proposed 1983-84 city budget. It totals nearly \$48 million.

"The first budget was roughly \$800,000. We had to borrow funds from the township to make our first payroll. For day-to-day operations, we asked J.L. Hudson to pay Northland's taxes early so we had some cash flow."

Southfield's payroll included about 50 employees, Flannery said. Southfield now employs 600, he estimated. But in

the old days, there weren't as many departments.

"Until 1964, there was no planning department. Up to then, all the requests for zoning came to the clerk. There was no engineering department. All engineering reports came through here."

Flannery has seen Southfield change from hayfields to high-rises from a particularly knowledgeable vantage point. Like many other people who have seen the city develop, he said it was all a matter of attitude.

"The sophistication may not have been there, but the forward thinking was."

ESTHER DRUMMOND

If there's one thing that sticks in Esther Drummond's mind about Southfield's growth, it's the changes in the landscape.

Take tall buildings, for instance. Does it bother her to see farm fields suddenly turned into research and development office towers?

"I've lived here since it was farmland, and it's not really something you notice right away." First the bulldozers come, then a little steel goes up, and pretty soon there's a new highrise, she explained.

"Maybe some people don't like it, but it has to come, and you've got to get used to it."

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