

# Law prof captures a piece of state history

By Michele Glance  
staff writer

Harold Norris has been described as an architect of the Michigan Bill of Rights.

And justifiably so. The West Bloomfield resident and lawyer was a Detroit delegate to the historic 1961 Michigan Constitutional Convention and advocated many provisions that are now a permanent part of the state's bill of rights. Norris didn't want the history of how the bill of rights was written to be lost. And he wanted to communicate to the next generation that while needed reforms do take a lot of time and effort, they can be peacefully achieved.

So he published a three-volume, 2,500-page, 40-year collection of his writings entitled "Reflections of Law, Lawyers and the Bill of Rights, 1944-1984."

"I wanted to put into writing in a single collection something that would be of help to the next generation," Norris said.

"It takes a lot of time and effort to reform the law but it can be done,"

Norris said. "The great thing about this country is you can change so many things peacefully."

At the 1961 convention, Norris successfully advocated creating a right to freedom of expression, creating a right to fair and just treatment in legislative and executive investigations, creating a specific prohibition of racial and religious discrimination, and he co-authored the creation of a civil rights commission.

WHILE THE MASSIVE size of the volumes may seem like a deterrent to the average reader, Norris doesn't want to see the book labeled for lawyers only.

"People are interested in the law, and people are interested in the bill of rights," Norris said.

"Just like war is too important to leave to the generals, law is too important to leave to the lawyers," Norris said. "It's something that belongs to all of us."

Norris, who has taught at the Detroit College of Law for 25 years and has

been a member of the Detroit Executive Board of the American Civil Liberties Union for 35 years, forces several new trends in the field.

One change will be the growing emergence of pre-paid legal service, Norris said. Similar to medical insurance, Norris said this will make law-

yers more accessible to everyone.

"Lawyers play a significant role in resolving difficulties and disputes, and you're going to see more people having access to lawyers than ever before," Norris said.

"The real problem is 90 percent of the lawyers are serving 10 percent of the people," he said. "I think that

should change in the interests of the people."

A CHANGE NORRIS has already seen while teaching law school is the influx of women to the once traditionally male profession.

"I used to have two women students

in a class of about 100, and now I have 40," Norris said. "I think that's a constructive change for the better."

Women are doing very well academically in law schools and achieving important positions in the field, Norris said.

"The door is open wider than it ever has been before," he said.

## Lippitt sworn in as circuit judge

Attorney Norman L. Lippitt was sworn in Wednesday as judge of the Oakland County Circuit Court to fill the vacancy created in May by the resignation of Judge George LaPlata.

Lippitt, who has been legal counsel for the Detroit Police Department since 1967, was appointed by Gov. James Blanchard to serve until the November 1986 election. LaPlata's term runs to Jan. 1, 1991. The remaining four years of LaPlata's term will be filled by the electorate.

LaPlata resigned following his appointment as federal judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Chief Judge Francis X. O'Brien of the Oakland County Circuit Court presided at Wednesday's ceremonies.

The oath of office was administered to Lippitt by Circuit Judge Hilda Gage.

Michigan Supreme Court Justice Patricia Boyle and Dean John Abbott of the Detroit College of Law spoke at the investiture.

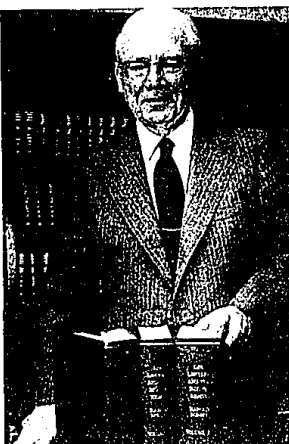
Lippitt is a resident of Birmingham

and has practiced law from his Southfield office since 1955.

LIPPITT RECEIVED his law degree from the Detroit College of Law in 1960. He is a member of the American Trial Lawyers Association and has served as an arbitrator for the Michigan Attorney Grievance Commission.

He is listed in the 1983 edition of "The Best Lawyers in America." He also holds the highest ratings available in the "Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory" and in the "National Directory of Criminal Lawyers."

Lippitt is a frequent lecturer to attorney organizations on topics including advocacy, evidence and constitutional law.



Harold Norris

## Signup on for triathlon

Two hundred of southeast Michigan's best athletes will get the chance to participate in the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan Triathlon at Belle Isle beginning at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 14.

The triathlon will feature a 25-mile bike race, a three-mile canoeing course and will finish with a six-mile running race.

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Registrations are being taken now

calling the parks and recreation office, 474-6115.

## Farmington Observer

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