## How they will remember India's Indira Gandhi

Several months before Prime Minis-ter Indira Gandhi was assassinated, she

Several months before Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assasinated, she sent a message to the people of the United State via four area teachers during a private meeting in her borne. "I'd like to dissuade them that India is a starving nation, because it's no longer a starving nation, because it's no longer a starving nation, she said, according to Jonathan Swift of Livonia Stevenson High School.

Gandhi spoke the words in a gentle tone, but with conviction, said Swift who attended the 30-minute session July 17 with reddord Bishop Borgess teachers Kathicen Gedert, Susan Shreve and Thomas St. Charle sweet of Shreve and Thomas St. Charle, a Birmingham resident.

When we heard about the assassination, it was like losing a friend session length and the reddord between the sassination, it was like losing a friend the sassination, it was like losing a friend the sassination, it was like losing a friend to much to us."

THE TEACHERS met with Gandhl, a Hindu, one month after she ordered a raid on the Sikhs' holiest shrine, the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab. The act was an effort to break the Sikh teach with a month of the control of the control

600 people usas, Accessing the Vork Times.

The temple raid is believed to be the motive behind the killing of Gandhi, who was shot at least eight times by two of her bodyguards who were Sikhs.

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At the time of their July visit, the riots that followed the raid continued to threaten the safety of the people, Swift said. The nervous American visi-tors were unwilling to forfeit the oncein-a-lifetime opportunity.

IN ORBEST to get to Unandhi's dining room, where the meeting took place, they were forced to pass more than 300 people — including iraid Sibks — who were waiting to see the prime minister. "It was thrilling and a little frightening." Swift said. "The guards who killed her were with her for a long time, and they were there when we were there," he said. "It could have happened just as easily that day."

AT THE TIME, the teachers didn't understand the seriousness of the civil unrest, said Shreve, a Troy resident. Once they passed the throngs of people, the wide-eyed Americans were scated in a room where Gandhi was signing papers. Gedert was shocked to realize that the meeting included only the prime minister and a general secretary in the parliament who arranged it, she said.

tary in the parliament who arranged it, she said.
Gandhi seemed even smaller as she sat behind her desk, yet her visitors say they were overwhelmed at the thought of having casual conversation with India's prime minister.

HER "FASCINATING eyes" and charlsmatle presence captivated them. Shreve said.
The suburban Detroit teachers were granted the meeting to give Gandhi an opportunity to learn about a global education program, headed by Swift.

the local Rotary's Paul Harris Fellow-

the local totary's Faul Harris renow-ship Award.

Among the other activities in which Ellis has been involved are the Farm-lagton Falcon Booster club which he helped to organize in 1969 and in which he served as president in 1971-72. In 1978, he was elected as the ZBA presi-dent while at the same time serving as

Continued from Page 1

Ellis is honored

The teachers said Gandhi seemed sincerely interested in the program, which stresses the need to teach students the religions, politics and cultures of countries around the world. The wido-ranging English and social studies courses in the global education program were initiated in 1977 at Stevenson, and have attracted international attention, Swift said.

GANDHI SAID that since she had reached her lifetime goal of making In-dia self-sufficient, her next task was to work to educate more of the country's 700 million pagets.

dia sell-sufficient, her next task was to work to educate more of the country's 700 million people.

"She said she was the mother of the people, because she was raising them all. Shreve said.

"She was the was raising them all. Shreve said said they were most impressed by Ganbi's warm and humble personalist, while was the personalist, which was the personalist, which was the personalist, which was the w

SWIFT ASKED Gandhi if India would change its structure of government to adopt a strong president format.

"She sald she was not interested in it, because the people would think she wanted more power," Swift sald. "She sald, "I am the housewife of the people."

The 66-year-old prime minister of India for 15 of the last 18 years also told the group that because India was a democratic country, she looked to the

He also has been active in the Staman Acres Civic Association, as commissioner of the South Farmington Baseball for Boys little league and as the assistant athletic director of the Farmington Rockets little league football teams. In 1987, he served as a dad adviser in the Farmington Demolay.

United States for more support than it was getting.

At the same time, she warned that if

At the same time, she warned that it Russia gives India wheat, the countries would be friends "because I have to feed my family (the Indian people," Gedert said.

MEETING GANDHI was the high point of an adventure-packed 714-week trip around the world. The trip grew

from Swift and St. Charles' plans to give a workshop at the International Reading Association that was held in Hong Kong last summer. Shreve and Gedert decided to attend.

Gedert decided to attend.
The trip included stops in Italy, Switzerland, Tokyo, Abudabi in the Perstan Gulf, Sri Lanka, Singapore and the People's Republic of China.
Despite a long list of intriguing experiences, they still seem amazed and ex-

cited about their visit with Gandhi. They realize, too, that her death makes their meeting an even greater mile-

their meeting an even great all these stone.

"As we were walking past all these people on the ground who were there to ask her questions, I kept thinking 'I'm going to talk to this person who is in control of 700 million people,'" St. Charles said.

"It's rather awesome."



Area teachers cherish their summer audience with Indira Gandhi, India's prime minister who was assassinated last week. They are Kathleen

Gedert (left), Thomas St. Charles, an Indian offi-cial, Gandhi, Susan Shreve and Jonathan Swift.



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