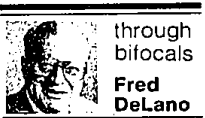


Awe inspiring

'American Cicero' talks economics

IT WAS SO warm and Indian summerish on the afternoon of our recent election day that Russell Amos Kirk arrived bareheaded on the campus of the University of Detroit where the 69-year-old author and scholar was scheduled as guest lecturer.

This was just as well, for in the Kirk household at Mecosta up in the belly of Michigan's lower peninsula it must be confusing for wife Annette to know which attire to lay out daily for a husband known variously as historian, political economist, critic, biographer, novelist, essayist, journalist, distinguished professor, debater, teller of ghost stories, Michigan's foremost man of letters and "The American Cicero."



through bifocals
Fred DeLano

This time the humid lecture hall would hear him speak on "John Marshall and the Coming of the Corporation: The Constitution Changes the Economy," a stimulating 45-minute discourse that left this listener in awe at how one man could of stature can know so doggone much.

Supposedly, an intelligent readership such as this recognizes the name of John Marshall as one of the most famous of all American judges, having served as chief justice of the United States from 1801 until his death in 1835.

"LIVELY DISTURBANCES in the stock markets during October sufficiently reminded most of us of how overwhelmingly the huge industrial and commercial corporations have come to dominate the economy worldwide here at the end of the 20th century," the Plymouth-born Kirk told an intent audience of students, faculty and this one interloper from off the street.

Midway in his remarks, this erudite historian ripped listeners by saying, "We find ourselves in the small, low-domed chamber of the United States Supreme Court in the Capitol on March 16, 1810. Justice Marshall is announcing the court's decision in the case of Fletcher vs. Peck."

(For your edification, the Georgia Legislature had revoked land grants previously issued, some land having already been sold to new owners who argued that by revoking the grants Georgia had interfered with a lawful contract.)

"The great chief justice was a slovenly ungainly, humorous, lovable man. Except for his marvelous eyes,

to call him uncouth was flattering. On the bench he maintained the federal case. His arguments and literary talents had flattered Jeffersonians.

In the case of Fletcher vs. Peck, Marshall had found the opportunity to expound his fundamental doctrine of the sovereignty of the American nation as represented in the federal government.

"WITHOUT DISSENT from his colleagues, Marshall had found that contracts, out of social necessity, must be enforced, and property protected against encroachments, that the rescinding of the land grants was unconstitutional under Article I, Section 10 of the Constitution, for the states as well as citizens were bound by the contract clause. It was one of the great landmark decisions."

It was Marshall's belief in a strong federal government, his broad interpretation of federal powers prevailing over state powers in case of conflict, his doctrine that it was within

the Supreme Court's power to declare legislation unconstitutional, and that a corporate charter is a contract to be protected by law that set a pattern for generations to come.

"The Constitution of the United States has made possible our present economic pattern, even though that pattern is not at all what most of the framers expected would come to pass in this country. Nowhere in the Constitution are joint stock companies, let alone corporations, specifically mentioned," said Kirk.

"PROTECTIONS AND privileges of commercial and charitable corporations are derived from Article I, Section 10 and its clause prohibiting the several states from passing any law impairing the obligation of contracts."

"It was Chief Justice John Marshall who applied the contract clause to corporations even when those corporations came into conflict with a state government and who in certain of his decisions afforded commercial corporations the shelter and refuge of the federal courts. The growth of industrial and mercantile corporations in America is related to Marshall's rulings."

That wasn't all of the lecture, of course. If you wish to hear it all, I'll be happy to loan you the complete tape.

A day to remember virtues of peace

VETERANS DAY is pretty tame stuff nowadays. Sure you might have seen a ceremony or two — a gathering at Westland's Vietnam Memorial, a ceremony at Livonia's Veterans Park — but that's about it. Not much else.

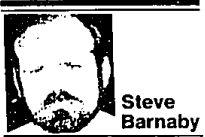
After all, it's been a long time since the United States has been at war, officially anyhow.

For veterans it has become a day of quiet reflection in an otherwise busy workday. You know, a reminder that pops into the head after hearing a reference to Veterans Day on the radio.

"Jeez, that's right. It is today," muses a veteran as his car flies down the expressway to another day on the job. His mind goes back for just a second, a name, a face, an incident flashes into the mind's eye. Then, just as quickly, that remembrance fades as another car cuts in front of him and he rejoins reality.

THAT EVENING another reminder as the evening news shows the entourage of veterans dressed in jungle fatigues, shivering in the cold, as they huddle around the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the wall, in Washington, D.C.

At night, crawling into bed, he lies awake and thinks for a minute or two, before falling asleep, about that time so many years ago when he was young and the world was suffering a



Steve Barnaby

But today we know the really great people are the poets, painters and physicians who have made the world a better place in which to live.

violent convulsion. As you drove by a cemetery, you may have spotted a widow, standing alone over a marker, placing flowers, taking a moment to remember when her life was full of love and happiness with the man who was her veteran.

You also may find yourself sitting next to a woman at work you never knew was a veteran at all, but who spent an important part of her life in the midst of a traditionally male

pursuit where women's contributions are hardly ever recognized.

BUT IF you're like most Americans, you just won't remember at all. And that's probably the best remembrance of all.

America, despite its history of involvement in war, wants to be different. It wants to stop fighting with enemies real and imagined. It would rather talk the problem out than fight it out.

It's a part of our nature that we've suppressed for far too long. But it also is a part of the American psyche that seems to be coming to the fore.

We've finally reached an age where many of the younger generation really believe that war is an expensive waste, in terms of both money and lives.

The war generations of America grew up on the glories of military conflict. We were taught that it was the generals of the great armies, the Alexanders, Napoleons and Pattons, who were to be admired.

But today we know the really great people are the poets, painters and physicians who have made the world a better place in which to live.

War truly is a ridiculous pursuit, guided by men who fear to take the more difficult route — the path to peace.

Star Wars: It's about peace, says general

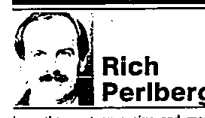
ALL HE WAS saying was give peace a chance.

Tall, lit, finely chiseled features, straight-as-an-arrow posture, he was talking peace, or "preventing war," as he put it.

"I believe there is a point of time that any war could be averted," he said. "Wouldn't it be better to save lives than to avenge them?"

He also talked about the insanity of nuclear armaments. There are at least 8,000 warheads aimed at American targets, which is triple the number needed.

He should know. The speaker was not a misplaced protester of an earlier decade. Nor was he a liberal congressman condemning the defense budget. He was an Air Force lieutenant general whose job since April 1984 has been to direct per-



Rich Perlberg

haps the most expensive and most controversial military undertaking in history.

LT. GEN. James Abrahamson doesn't like the name Star Wars. He prefers the real name: the Strategic Defense Initiative. It's about peace, he said, not war; it's not fictional either, it's "very, very real."

Abrahamson spoke Monday at the Troy Hilton before the Economic Club of Detroit, which periodically makes tentative forays into the sub-

urbs for its weekly luncheons. (A totally unrelated aside here: Of the more than two dozen people at the head table, there was one woman, one black man and the rest were white men. So how is business at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission?)

If Abrahamson didn't exist, the military should have invented him. He is a public relations dream: the picture of charm, grace, competence and, as Garrison Kellor would say, the type of man who has the courage to do the things that need to be done.

I was so taken by him that I couldn't get angry when he gently put the blame for the "badly misunder-

stood" Star Wars program on those media blackguards (my word, not his).

THE STRATEGIC Defense Initiative, said General Abe, is a tribute to President Reagan's vision to change the nature of defense from mutually assured destruction (they won't try to blow us up because even if they succeed, we'll blow them up in return) to a defensive mechanism that makes nuclear warheads obsolete and impotent (his words, not mine).

The danger of mutually assured defense, said the general, is that there is no guarantee that someone, somewhere might not still push the button. "The tragedy is that we can-

not stop one warhead aimed at this nation," he warned.

But can Star Wars do any better? The general waltzed around that question dismissing critics who claim that the system is prohibitively expensive even if it works, which, they say, it probably won't. That's why we have research, he said, not even Einstein was correct about everything (his words, not mine).

President Reagan's idea of defense is not original. There is already one other country, said the general, that can stop nuclear warheads.

"That is the Soviet Union," he said. "They believe in defense."



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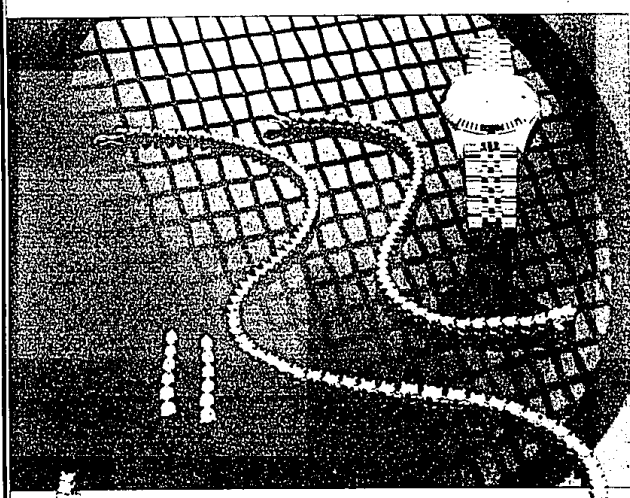
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