

All smiles: U.S. Rep. Joseph Kennedy II played to a receptive audience Sunday including Bloomfield Hills resident Joan Hill and Martha Blom of Orchard Lake as the keynote speaker at the annual Phil Hart dinner.



STAFF PHOTOS BY JOHN STORIMLAND



Discussing the program: Darlene Berent (center), executive director of Oakland County Democrats, reviews the program with keynote speaker Joseph Kennedy and his wife, Beth, just before everyone is seated.



Next generation: U.S. Rep. Joseph Kennedy, D-Massachusetts, visits with Southfield attorney Colleen O'Brien, president of the Oakland County Women's Bar Association. Behind them is U.S. Rep. Dale Kildee, D-Flint.

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where Phil Hart is buried. "I saw he died at 64," said Riegle, 55, who is in his third term after being elected 17 years ago to replace Hart following the senator's death. "That struck me. That's the age I'd be at the end of another term in the Senate."

Riegle's swan song turned to thunder as Kennedy set the tenor of the program.

Without a prepared text, Kennedy expanded on traditional Democratic themes of social equality and working-class concerns.

He chastised large companies for "gutting the best jobs working people can hope to get" in return for higher returns for investors. He also came down on the banking industry for not providing loans to minority businesses.

As for the ongoing budget woes,

Kennedy said Social Security needs to be debated. "When you can't talk about taxing Social Security programs, you're screwed," Kennedy said.

Touching on the touchy

In terms of touchy subjects, the Massachusetts congressman was the only one to broach the subject of Riegle's involvement in the savings and loan scandal. "I have seen all the personal attacks Don Riegle has been through," Kennedy said. "I want tell you something, I serve on the House Banking Committee and I know the kind of influence the banks in this country have. . . There is no one who stood up against the banks and for the people than the way Don Riegle has." Kennedy, while emphatic outlining the social ills plaguing the country, also provided a few light-

hearted quips.

He said his "uncle Teddy" wanted him to find out who exported Mitt Romney to Massachusetts. Mitt Romney, son of former Michigan Gov. George Romney, is a Republican running against Ted Kennedy. On his own wealth and influence Kennedy said, "I made my money the right way; my grandfather gave it to me. I highly recommend it."

What he didn't say

Jerry Bixby, chairman of the Troy Democratic Club, thought Kennedy hit on all the right issues. However, he was wondering about what Kennedy didn't say. "He almost seemed to be anti-Clinton," Bixby said. "He didn't mention (President Bill) Clinton once. He didn't have anything to say about Clinton."

Vicki Barnett of Farmington Hills thinks Kennedy's message fit the audience.

"I think the key thing he said is that you don't have to be poor to understand there are people out there who need government assistance and help," said Barnett, who is 11th District Chair for the Oakland County Democratic Party. "And it is time for all of us to be a little more altruistic and to step up to the plate."

Albert Holtz of West Bloomfield said the Kennedy charisma is alive and well.

"I usually don't chase famous people, but I was a big fan of his father and his uncle (John F. Kennedy)," said Holtz, who is finance director for Oakland Dems. "When I had the opportunity to pick him up at the airport, I grabbed it."

Hills businessman's slaying 'cut short a sparkling life'

By PAT MURPHY STAFF WRITER

Services for Brian S. McCarthy of West Bloomfield focused on the tragic loss to family, friends and associates rather than the circumstances of his slaying the previous week in Mexico.

McCarthy's untimely death "cut short a sparkling life," said his father, John, one of about 200 mourners who gathered Monday at St. James Episcopal Church in Birmingham.

"You will always be in our hearts," said the senior McCarthy, fighting back tears. "We hope to see you in heaven."

McCarthy, the president and CEO of Automation Software Inc. in Farmington Hills, died of gunshot wounds sustained on Feb. 7 or 8 while on a business trip near Mexico City.

Mexican authorities, in conjunction with the FBI, were still investigating the case Wednesday.

While mystery shrouded McCarthy's death, there was no uncertainty about how he lived, according to those who eulogized him Monday.

He was not a particularly religious person, said the Rev. Susan Bock of Ann Arbor. Bock said she didn't know McCarthy personal-



Brian McCarthy

ly. But her son is a friend of McCarthy's oldest child, Anthony, 16, who attends Easton Academy in Farmington Hills.

Brian McCarthy lived life to the fullest, Bock said. "He loved deeply, tenderly and passionately."

McCarthy and his wife, Clara "Tiki" Scholla McCarthy, had three children, Anthony, Jessica and Allison. During the service, each of the youngsters remembered special qualities about their dad, qualities they said will never

be forgotten. Anthony, for example, said his dad was also his best friend. "And he was always there for me."

In a poem, Jessica, a student at Abbott Middle School in West Bloomfield, described the advice she believed her father would have given to the family. "You can't see or touch me," Jessica imagined her dad as saying, "but I will always be near."

While many of his friends and associates might envision Brian McCarthy as a highly successful, hard-driving businessman, the youngest child, Allison, remembered a tender, caring person.

He tenderly fussed over her stuffed white cat, recalled Allison, a student at Green Elementary School. On one occasion, he brought her stuffed pet on one of the family trips, she said in a tiny voice the audience hushed to hear.

McCarthy's best friend and brother-in-law, Steven Scholla, said Brian was rugged — yet sensitive — with an irrepressible personality. Brian could say and do things in a friendly, joking manner that other people couldn't get away with, said Scholla, who roomed with McCarthy during their college days in Washington, D.C.

Former Hills company still has designs south of border

By PAT MURPHY STAFF WRITER

The slaying of Brian McCarthy was a chilling reminder to officials at Design Systems Inc., a West Bloomfield company, formerly of Farmington Hills, that does business in the general area of Mexico where McCarthy was killed last week.

"We talked about it," said James A. Barnard, president of the engineering services company that has a sales office in Mexico City and this week sent another representative to the general area in which McCarthy was found dead. "But we decided there's no

more danger in Mexico than there is in Detroit, Chicago, New York or any other big city."

Design Systems, headquartered in the 7100 block of Orchard Lake, does about 10 percent of its \$12 million annual business in Mexico, Barnard said. With the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement, the firm regards Mexico, as well as South America, as potentially fertile areas.

Barnard's company was founded about a decade ago and was initially located in Farmington Hills. It moved to West Bloomfield in 1988 and currently employs 140 people.

In addition to sending a representative to Mexico City, Design Systems this week sent three people to Venezuela as part of its long-range strategy.

Barnard said his company's representatives have had good experiences — and results — by conducting business as guests in a foreign country.

"But we're also aware of the dangers," he said. "Our standing policy requires our people to be alert and aware of where they are."

Should they find themselves in a dubious situation, he said, "We advise them to get out."



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