

## POINTS OF VIEW

## DMC board chairman is one of state's 'natural aristocrats'

"I agree with you there is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talents."

—Thomas Jefferson letter to James Adams, 1813

You'd never mistake Lloyd Semple for Joe Six-Pack.

Fully erect at 6 feet 3 inches, with a full pompadour of gray-white hair, flashing eyes and a booming cultivated voice, Semple embodies all you'd expect of a man with Yale undergraduate and Michigan Law School degrees.

He lives in Grosse Pointe. He hunts ducks on Walpole Island and plays golf at the Country Club of Detroit. He has an educated palate for French wine and a magnificent cellar. A fine lawyer, he's chairman of Dykema Gossett PLLC, Michigan's largest law firm.

And, as volunteer and unpaid chairman of the board of the Detroit Medical Center, he's been lending the struggle to keep one of Michigan's largest and most troubled medical

centers from going under.

Semple is just one of a number of Michigan's natural aristocrats, men and women who in addition to their own distinguished careers take on crushing volunteer burdens to make things better for all of us. Allan Schwartz, the lawyer-civic leader-philanthropist, is an example. So is former governor William Milliken.

I wanted to write about Semple just now partly because DMC has been in the news so much in recent months and partly because the inside story of what he has accomplished—quietly, with no thought of publicity and no personal gain—has never adequately been told.

Semple first got involved as a volunteer on Harper Hospital's board some 25 years ago. After Harper became part of DMC, Semple went on the parent's board. He became chairman on Jan. 1, 1998.

Shortly thereafter, DMC announced a loss of more than \$100 million for the fiscal year. "Significant



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financial distress," says Semple, "the unintended consequence of federal legislation that cut Medicare and Medicaid payments to hospitals and slashed reimbursements for expenses of training young doctors at teaching hospitals like DMC."

Semple knew he had a hard row to hoe. He brought in the Hunter Group, a nationally noted consulting firm that compared its extensive database of hospital costs to the numbers at DMC and recommended drastic cuts. Eventually, 2,600 staff members were

laid off, unions and staff alike complained. Sinai Hospital, once the state's only Jewish hospital, was consolidated with Grace to save \$30 million in operating expenses; many of Sinai's old supporters were angered.

Semple started working 80-hour weeks—40 hours for DMC and 40 hours for Dykema Gossett—rising at 5 a.m. and not getting to bed before 10 p.m. Weeks passed without his seeing his wife at home for dinner or, for that matter, breakfast.

Semple recalls: "The worst time was last winter and spring as we bounced from crisis to crisis. I remember one meeting with a bunch of dedicated but very frustrated doctors who yelled at me for fully three hours. It was without a doubt the most difficult meeting I've ever had."

Eventually, Semple and the board appointed a new CEO, Dr. Arthur Porter, and a new management team. Things have gradually started to get better. DMC isn't out of the woods yet, but it's a whole lot better off than

it was, thanks to many dedicated people including Lloyd Semple.

Why do it? Why go through the aggravation, especially when somebody like Semple doesn't need it. "The fundamental reason is the teachings and tradition of my family," Semple explained. "With privilege comes responsibility. My father, Robert Semple, was CEO of Wyandotte Chemical, but he also served the community by being president of the Detroit Symphony for years and head of the United Fund for this region. In our family, that's just what we do."

With privilege comes responsibility. That isn't everybody's cup of tea, but for natural aristocrats like Lloyd Semple it is. And we're all the better for it.

Phil Power is chairman of Home-Town Communications Network Inc., the company that owns this newspaper. He welcomes your comments, either by voice mail at (734) 953-2047, Ext. 1880, or by e-mail at ppower@homecomm.net

## Goodbye Tiger Stadium: You were our tradition and stability

My grandfather was a young boy of 10 when they began playing baseball at what we now call Tiger Stadium. My father was a young man of 31 when Detroit won the World Series in 1968. I am now 34 on the day they closed the Grand Old Lady at Michigan and Trumbull.

While the Tigers haven't done much right this season, it felt, for one day at least, as if we were on the verge of a pennant. Brian Moehler pitched as tough as Jack Morris, Denny McLain and Hal Newhouser ever did. Robert Fick swung as powerfully as Kirk Gibson, Norm Cash and Hank Greenberg ever had. It was, to borrow a phrase from Abraham Lincoln, all together fitting and proper that these Detroit Tigers play as champions—to, indeed, consecrate and hallow that ground.

Next season, the Tigers will move into Comerica Park on Woodward

Avenue. Its design recalls older ballparks while providing modern amenities and amusements. It will, by all accounts, be a cleaner and more comfortable place to watch a game.

Tiger Stadium certainly did have its warts. Restrooms were small and poorly equipped. Aisles were so narrow that it was difficult to get out without tripping over someone's feet. And even on the brightest of days, the ballpark seemed dark and musty away from the field.

Still, it was a place that I dearly loved. I can't tell you the exact day or even year I saw my first game at Tiger Stadium. My earliest memory is of a game against the Oakland A's sometime in the early 1970s. I remember seeing Reggie Jackson and Vida Blue and a guy that ran incredibly fast named Billy North. And I can recall looking into the Tigers' dugout and feeling very excited to see Willie Horton, Bill Freehan and John Hiller.



SCOTT DANIEL

As the years passed, I was fortunate enough to visit the ballpark frequently. I can recall sitting in the upper deck along first base with my fifth grade classmates. Even though it was 1981, it seems like just yesterday that I sat in the radio booth with Ernie Harwell and Paul Carey for a game as a high school student. Then there was the day in 1984 my brother and I sat above third base and did the

wave along with 35,000 screaming fans.

My final visit to Tiger Stadium came a week ago. I bundled up for what I thought would be a cool late summer evening. As I walked up to the park, I tried to imagine what it must have looked like 50 or 60 years ago. I concluded that it probably wasn't much different. The paint job has changed, perhaps. The streets around the park are probably not as clean. People dress differently. Cars parked around the stadium are a bit fancier.

But, essentially, it's the same. The lingering smell of hot dogs, popcorn and beer hasn't changed since 1939 or 1959. The flagpole in centerfield hasn't changed. The right field overhang hasn't changed. The guy in front of you yelling at the ump hasn't changed. People still rise to their feet when one is hit deep.

I think that's what's most impor-

tant about Tiger Stadium. Presidents have come and gone. World wars have been fought. The stock market has crashed and risen to dizzying heights. Styles of music, from the Charleston, Big Band and Rock-and-Roll to Disco and Rap, have emerged and faded. Even the city around it has gone from boom to bust and somewhere in between.

Through it all, Tiger Stadium has stood there always ready to welcome us home. It was a constant, a sense of stability that each of us shared. No matter what our troubles, no matter what the world was doing outside, it was a place where anyone could plunk down their money, buy a sack of peanuts and a scorecard and embrace the summer sun.

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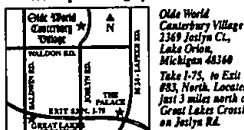
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