

FarmHouse Fraternity at Michigan State University

A Pictorial History

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65th Anniversary Celebration, March 2001

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Part Five of Nine: Fabulous Fifties --
From 1950 to 1959

The 1950s dawned with optimism and promise epitomized by the 1952 Parents Day scene. [Source: 1952 *Wolverine*]

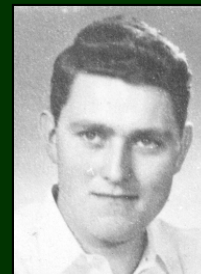


The war in Korea provided an unpleasant distraction in the early part of the decade, however. Numerous FarmHouse men served in this conflict. I hope to compile a more complete record in the future, but here is a partial list:

Jim Ballard '51 got his Army commission through ROTC in 1952 and served in as a quartermaster in Korea in 1953-54. More on Jim and his family later. [Personal correspondence with Ron and Jim Ballard, 1952 FarmHouse composite]



Dean Tribby '51 was drafted into the Army in August of 1952, was married to Donna Reed after his basic training in February of 1953, and served in the 772nd MP. BN in Korea from April 1953 until August of 1954. Dean remains Editor of the 772 MB BN Veterans' Association Newsletter. Dr. Tribby DVM, MPH is retired after many years of service as Director of the Jackson County Health Department. [Personal correspondence with Dean Tribby, 1952 FarmHouse composite]



Dean also reported that James Sprague '51 "also went into Army service about this time and spent time in the 1st Cavalry (I think). He lives in Kansas now." Dr. Sprague made his career as a livestock nutritionist. [Personal correspondence with Dean Tribby, 1952 FarmHouse composite]



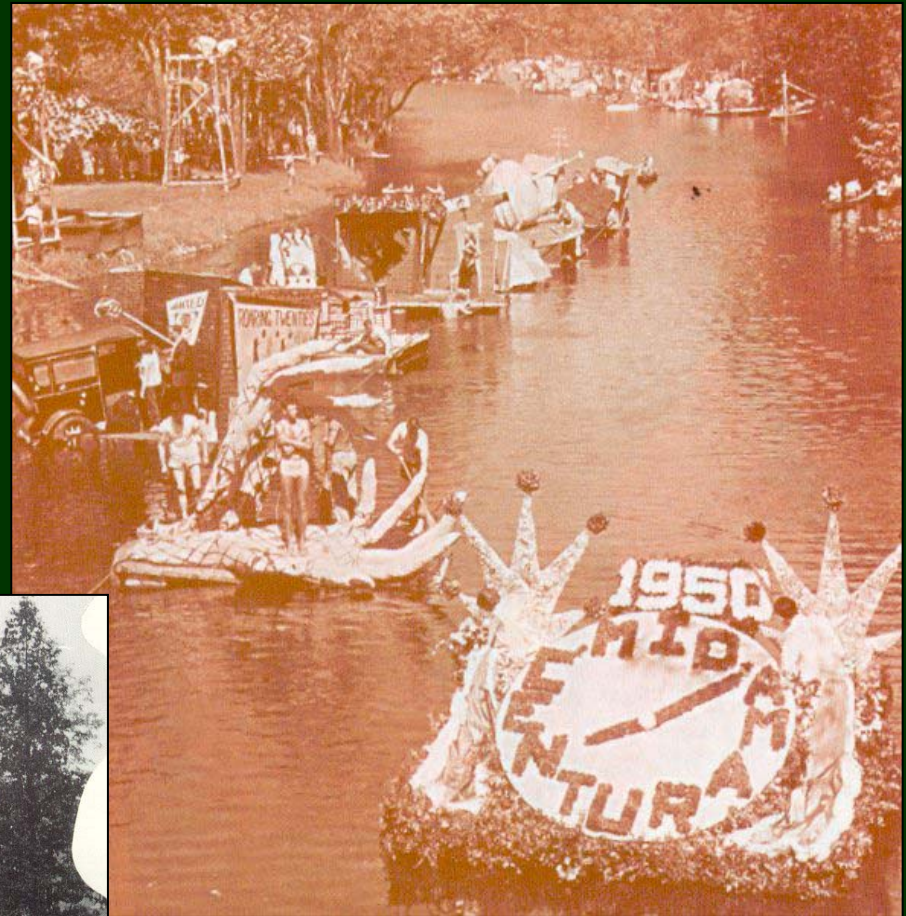
Jim Roberts '50 served in the US Air Force during the Korean conflict (1951-57). While at MSC he was active in Block & Bridle (editing their magazine and coordinating their show) and the Livestock Judging Team. After a career with the U. S. Department of Labor, he is currently retired and living in California. [Personal correspondence with Jim Roberts, 1951 FarmHouse composite]



The war notwithstanding, it was a good decade for FarmHouse. This 1955 yearbook photo was taken during the College's centennial year. This was the year during which the state legislature officially changed the school's name to Michigan State University, once again over the objections of an institution to the south which claimed it had exclusive rights to the combination "University" and "Michigan." The Michigan Supreme Court ruled otherwise! [Source: 1955 *Wolverine*]



Greek life thrived. Water Carnival was founded in 1923 and featured student organization-built floats on the Red Cedar River. Here's a scene from 1950. [Source: 1950 *Wolverine*]



And one from 1952 with the new Shaw Hall dormitory in the background. [Source: 1952 *Wolverine*]

Organized religion also thrived, baby boom kids were everywhere, and churches were packed! This is East Lansing's non-denominational People's Church in 1952. FarmHouse has always taken the spiritual growth of its members seriously. Men are encouraged, individually and collectively, to set their sights high with respect to spiritual and moral issues. It has been common practice, through the years, for FarmHouse men to, once a month or so, attend church as a group. [Source: 1952 *Wolverine*]



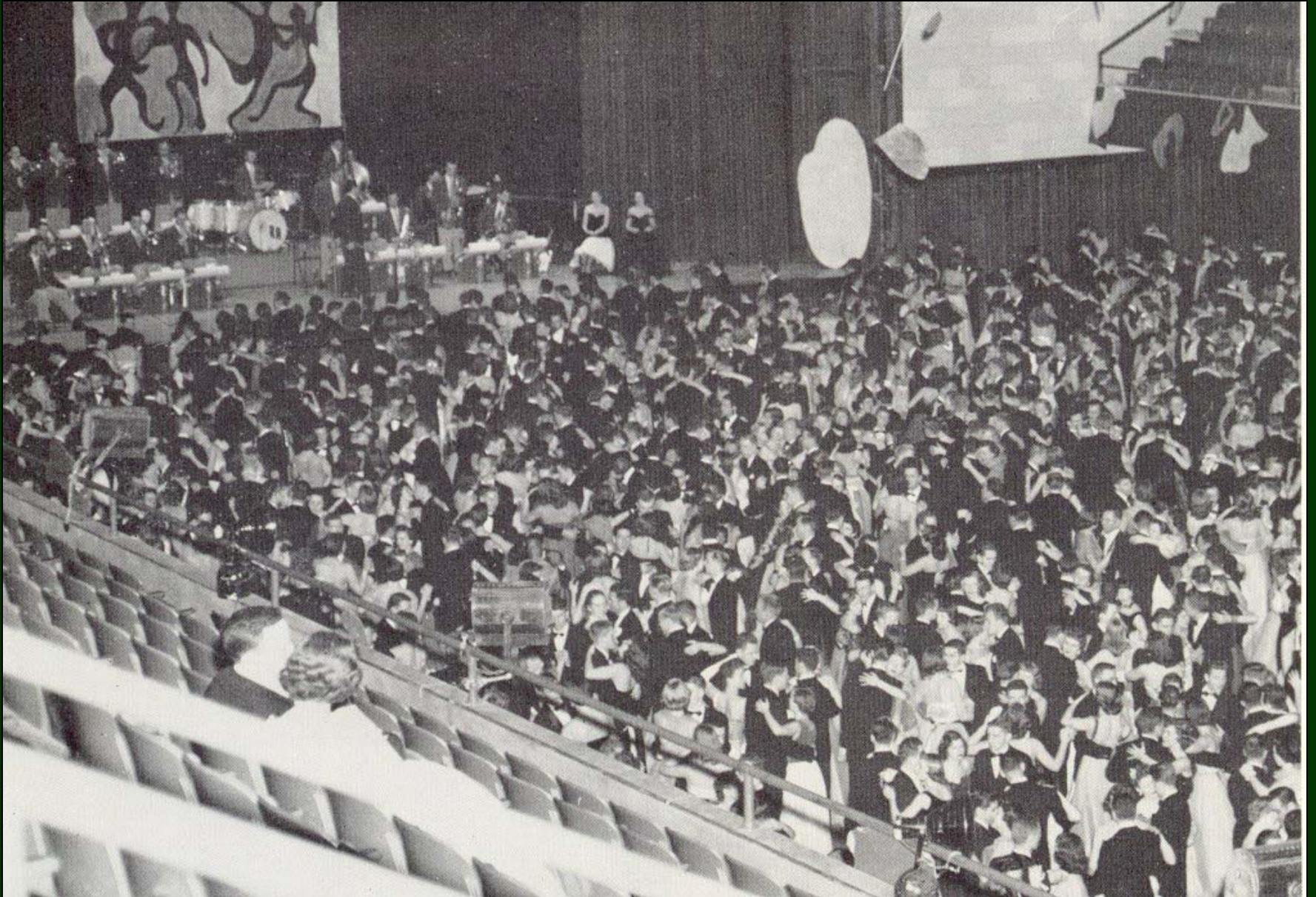


Here's a scene from a campus formal. Elvis was a teenager, rock and roll had not yet made its mark, and the big band sound still dominated campus. The 1952 *Wolverine* reported that FarmHouse's favorite song was "Witchcraft." [Source: 1952 *Wolverine*]

The Ray Anthony Orchestra dazzled the crowd at the 1952 J-Hop. [Source: 1952 *Wolverine*]



The J-Hop was an annual campus-wide formal organized by the Junior class. Here's the 1952 version, staged in the Auditorium. This long-time tradition eventually faded and was discontinued some years later, in part because the campus just got too big. MSU had over 20,000 students by the end of the decade. [Source: 1952 *Wolverine*]



With it's back to the River, the Band Shell, situated from 1937 to 1960 on the site of current Bessey Hall on Farm Lane, was a popular spot for outdoor concerts and events like Greek Sing and graduation ceremonies. [Source: 1955 *Wolverine*]



As noted earlier, MSU's most visible band changed from military khaki to green and white uniforms in 1952. Their spine-tingling kick-step pre-game entrance was introduced in 1954 during the Spartan's first Rose Bowl appearance. Freeman Hayes '55 (left), Jim Thar '56 (center), Chuck Liddle '56 (right) and Ray Bowers '56 (not pictured) were members of the MSU Marching Band during the 1950s. [Source: MSU FarmHouse Composites, 1956, 1957]





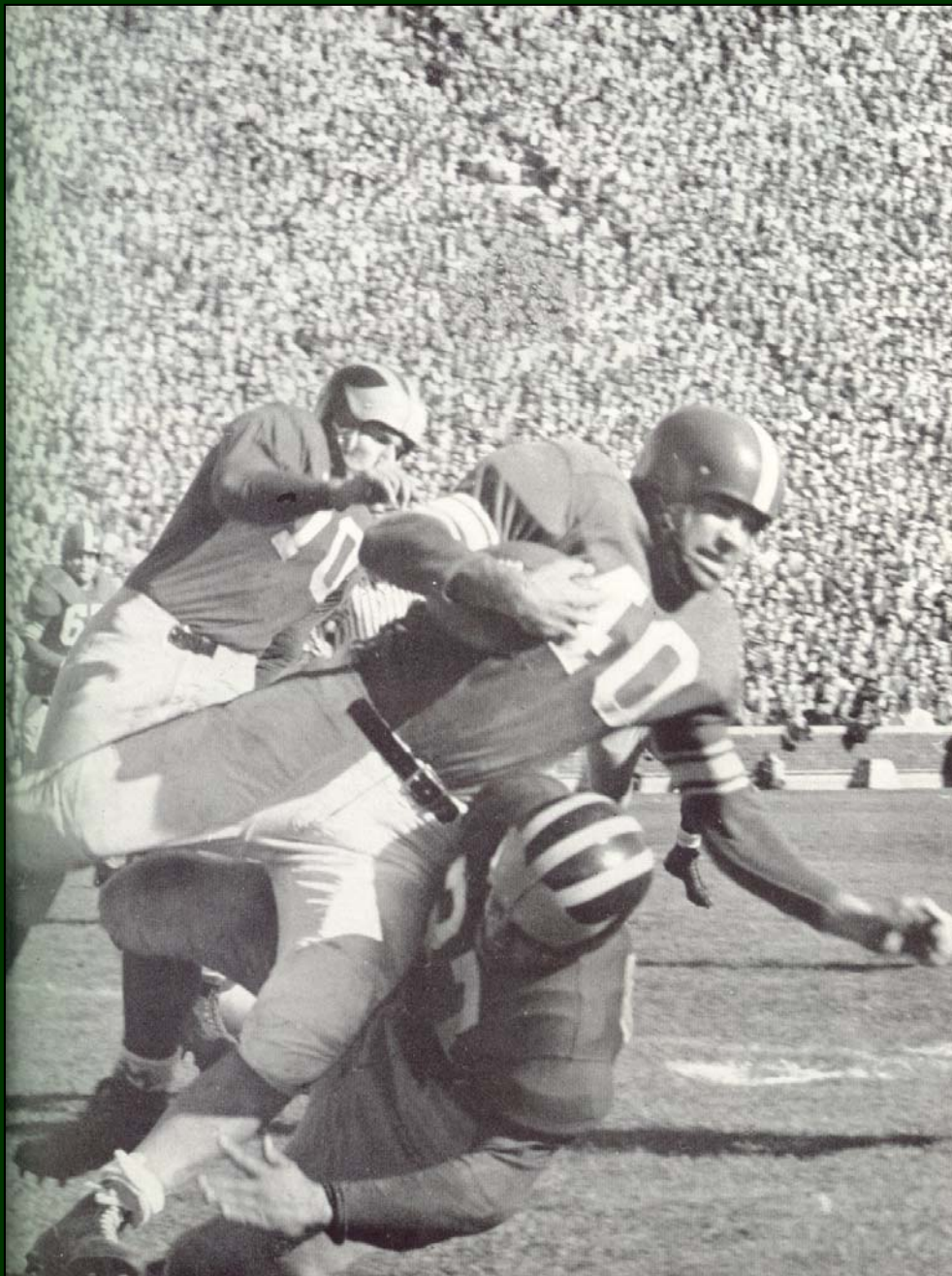
Bustling Grand River Avenue had acquired a big city look by 1955. Well, maybe not big city, but at least “big town!” [Source: 1955 *Wolverine*]

Hair styles got progressively shorter during the 1950s. Ken's barber shop welcomed the crew-cut crowd. [Source: 1952 *Wolverine*]



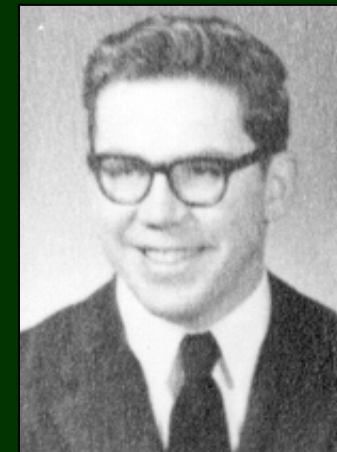
The ten-foot tall ceramic Sparty statue, which arrived in June 1945, dominated campus during the 1950s in a decade of athletic glory. Four MSC/MSU football teams from the 1950s (1951, 1952, 1955, and 1957) laid at least partial claims to the national championship. We boasted a 7-2-1 football record versus Michigan during this decade, the first 10-year period in which MSC/MSU claimed a winning record over the storied Wolverines. [Photo source: MSU Website. Text source: November 3, 2001 *Spartan Sports Zone* football program]





Halfback Billy Wells and the undefeated (9-0) national champion Spartans visited Ann Arbor and ran roughshod over the hapless Wolverines in the Big House in October 1951. The final score was MSC 25, UM 0. [Source: 1952 *Wolverine*]

To my knowledge, the only FH gridder during the 1950s was Keith Bayha '59. "I played football as a freshman on the but we only had inter-squad scrimmages, no competition with other schools." Although his athletic career was short-lived, Keith went on to do other great things. More on him later. [Source: 1960 FarmHouse Composite]

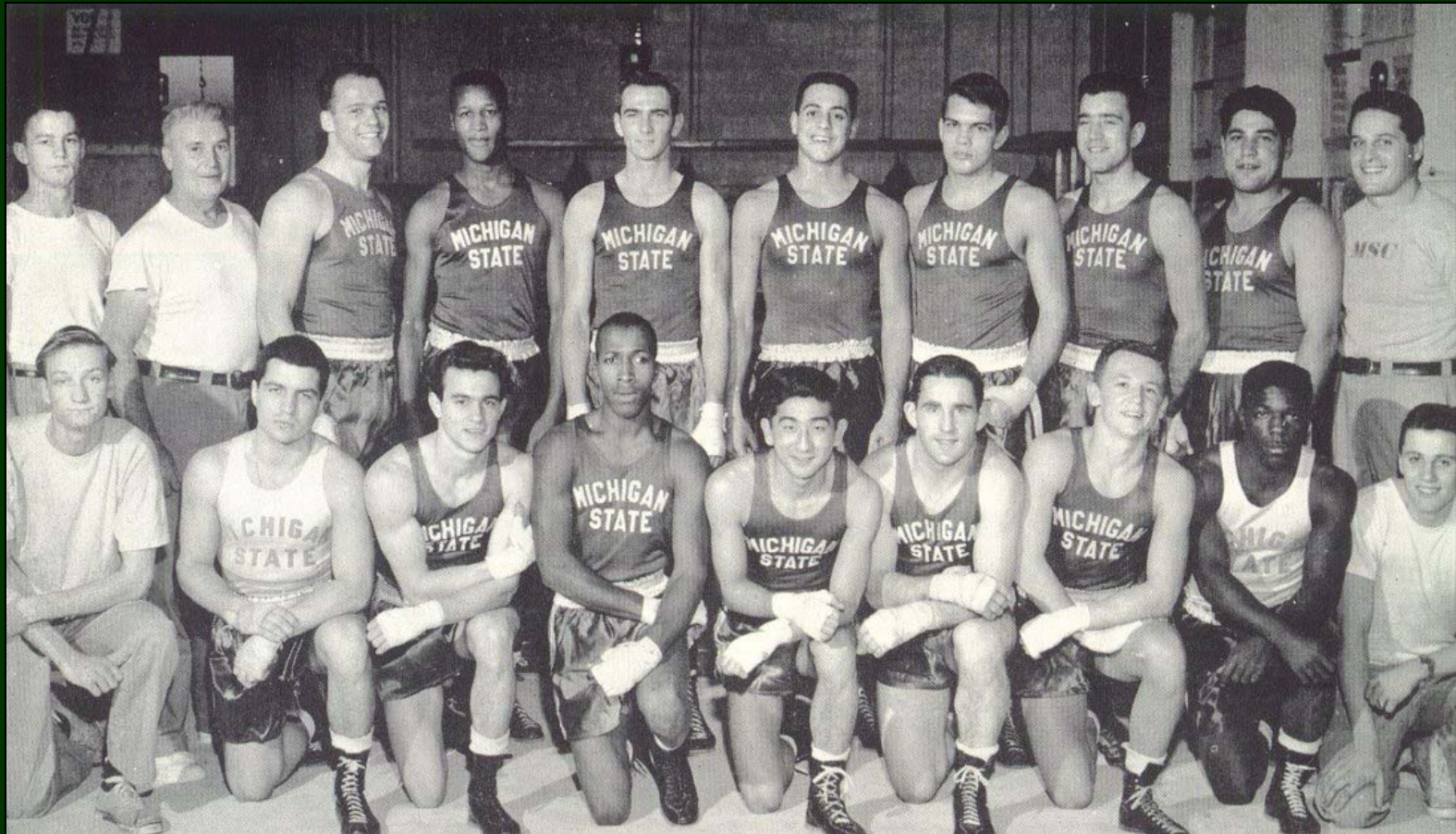


Billy Wells' exploits notwithstanding, the 1951 season's defining moment came in Columbus when MSU scored two touchdowns in the last seven minutes to pull-out a come-from-behind win over Ohio State. Captain Al Dorrow is pictured here getting some advice from legendary Spartan coach Clarence L. "Biggie" Munn during that game. [Source: 1952 *Wolverine*]

Finally entering the Big 10's football race in the fall of 1952, because it took four years to re-arrange conference football schedules, MSC quickly dominated and won both the 1954 and 1956 Rose Bowls. At the time, Big 10 teams were prohibited from attending consecutive Rose Bowls. Nor could conference teams play in any other bowl games. It was the Rose Bowl or bust!



This is the NCAA champion boxing (yes, boxing) team from 1955. [Source: 1955 *Wolverine*]



Dale Warsco '53 (not pictured) was a member of the boxing team in the 1950s. Paul Shek '50 (right) was not a boxer, but he did represent FarmHouse and MSC as a member of the track and field teams from 1948 to 1950. Another FarmHouse athlete, Ray Bowers '56 (not pictured), was a member of both the track and field and hockey teams. [Source 1951 MSU FarmHouse composite]





The State Board of Agriculture was the official governing board of the College for a number of years. An important member in the middle of the 20th Century was Forrest Akers (left), an auto executive from Detroit. [Source: 1955 *Wolverine*].

Akers' MAC/MSU roots ran deep, however. This 1907 baseball game between MAC and UM at Old College Field was notable in part because Forest Akers was on the mound for the Aggies that day. Despite his best effort, the Wolverines won the contest. [Source: *Spartan Saga: A History of Michigan State Athletics*]



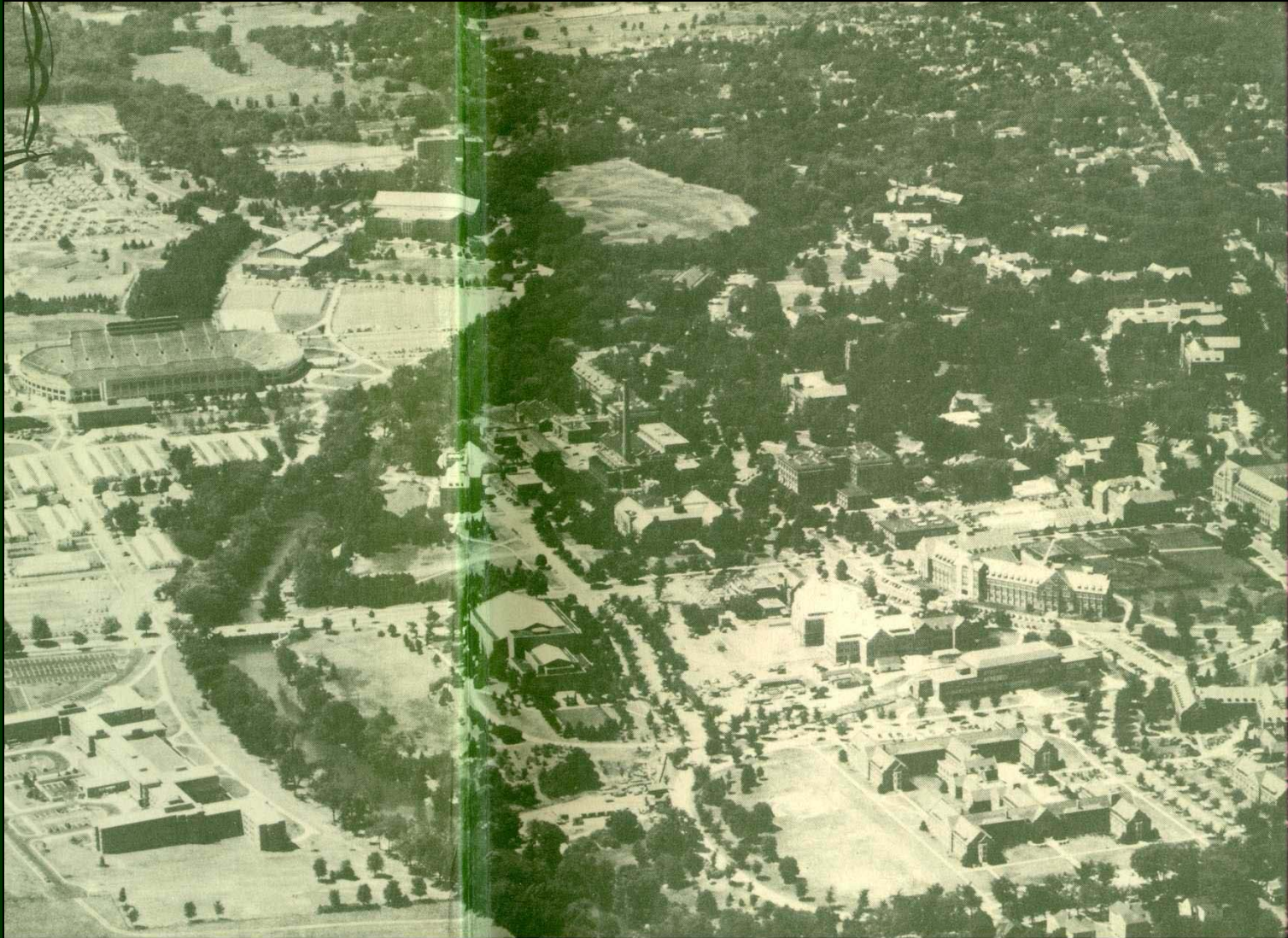


Forest Akers' financial contributions to the University allowed for construction of this facility, now 36 picturesque holes. The course opened to the public in 1958. [Source: MSU Website, Panorama photo by Tim Potter, copyright MSU Alumni Association, 2002.]

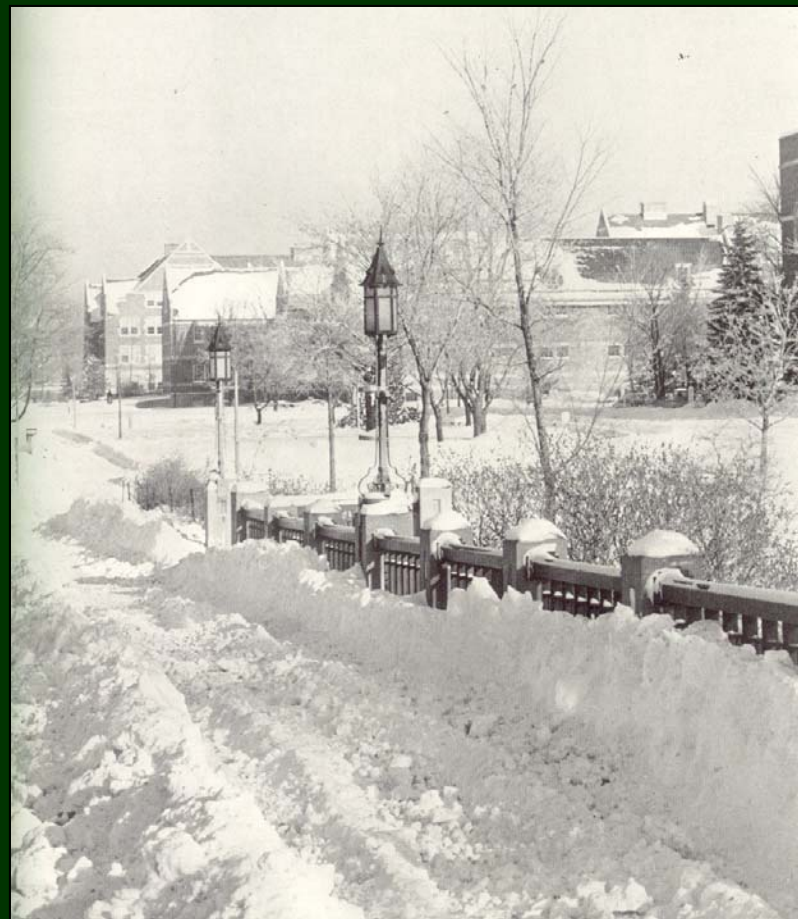


The big picture is worth noting as well, however . . .

By 1955, the campus had spread west to present day Bogue Street (bottom of the picture), which did not yet cross the Red Cedar; that bridge was completed in 1964. Shaw Lane's eastern terminus was a cul-de-sac at Shaw Hall (lower left corner). Note the numerous quonset huts (middle and upper left) which served mostly as student residences. There were fields and trees on the site of the present day Brody Complex as well. Second Wells Hall (the old dorm) and the old power plant still occupied the center of campus as evidenced by the tall smoke stack emerging right in the middle of the photo from where the Hannah building now stands. [Source: 1952 *Wolverine*]



But Farm Lane had, at least from this view (right), assumed it's present look. [Source: 1952 *Wolverine*]



Cowles House, shown at left in a winter scene, is the oldest existing building on campus. Parts of it date into the 1860s. During the 19th century a bunch of faculty houses had been erected on the sites of present day Landon and Yakely Halls, across Circle Drive from Cowles House. Source: 1952 *Wolverine*]



Librarian Linda Eolin Landon served the College and its student body for over 40 years 1891 to 1932. She's pictured in the far left photo at the turn of the century. [Source: 1901 *Wolverine*]

Here she is at right in 1895 working among the library stacks (current Linton Hall). I'm guessing that the spittoon under the table probably wasn't hers! [Source: 1955 *Wolverine*]

This is Landon Hall, surrounded by cool cars, as it appeared when new. For some time, the Marching Band's adjacent practice field was also named in her honor. [Source: 1952 *Wolverine*]



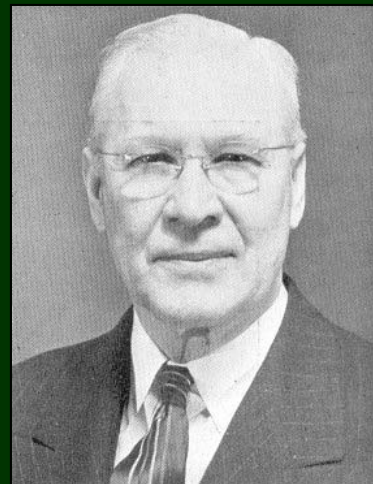
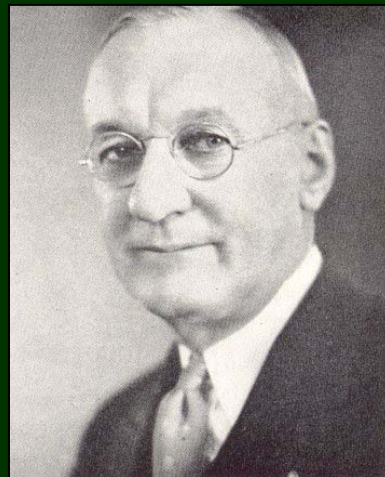
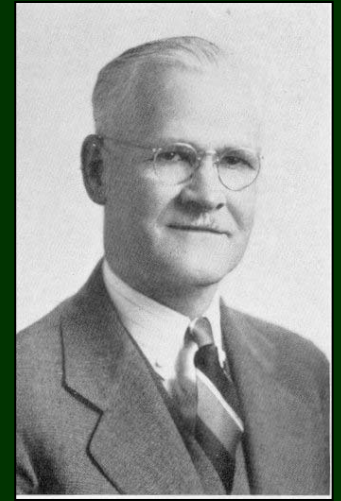
MSU President John Hannah honored his predecessor (and father-in-law) Dr. Robert Shaw with a new residence hall. The street upon which the dorm sits also bears his name. Shaw was President from 1928 to 1941, but when pictured here (right) he was Dean of Agriculture. [Source: 1925 *Wolverine*]



Shaw Hall is an “ultra-modern” (as folks in the mid- to late-50s named this boxy, but very utilitarian architectural style) men’s dormitory. [Source: MSU website]



Meanwhile, in the late 1950s, the university honored, en masse, seven influential late 19th and early 20th century campus figures. In addition to Liberty Hyde Bailey, the “Dean of American Horticulture” now immortalized in bronze, they included (clockwise from top left) former MSC president Kenyon Butterfield, former dean of Veterinary Medicine Claude Bryan, dean of Liberal Arts Lloyd Emmons, dean H.C. Rather of the Basic College, and State Board of Agriculture members W.G. Armstrong, and Clark Brody. [Sources: MSU Department of Horticulture website, 1925, 1939, 1949, 1955 *Wolverines*]



What was the honor? The last name is sure to give this one away, even for Spartans who never lived in one of the dorms. The sprawling Brody dormitory complex featured the world's largest non-military cafeteria. Again, the architectural style was "ultra-modern." Baby boomers were soon to arrive on campus! MSU, which had 30,000 students at the end of the 1950s, was home to nearly 40,000 by the end of the 1960s. [Source: MSU website]



The new Chapel, beautiful whatever the season, honored MSU's war dead. [Source: *MSU Alumni Magazine*, Tim Potter, copyright MSU Alumni Association, 2002]



Upon Mother Bartlett's retirement, Mrs. Grace Knoblach served as Housemother from 1953-1957.
[Source: 1954 MSU FarmHouse composite]



FarmHouse continued to dominate many student organizations. For example, the 1952 Agricultural Council featured Jerry Hull '51 (front row, 2nd from left), Harry Densmore '51 (front row, far right), Don Wallis '51, and Neal First '51 (back row, 5th from left). [Source: 1952 *Wolverine*]

The 1952 version of the Kedzie Chapter of Alpha Zeta included Jerry Hull '51 (front row, 3rd from left), advisor Ken Frey '42 (front row, 4th from left), and chapter members Dale Kretchman '50 (middle row, 3rd from left), John Stollsteimer '51 (middle row, 4th from right), and Don Wallis '51 (middle row, far right). [Source: 1952 *Wolverine*]

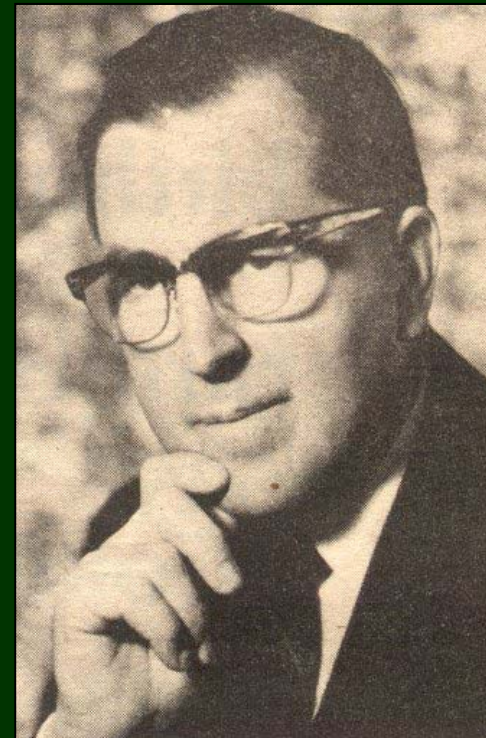


Other men active on campus around this time included George Wilson '46 (Livestock Judging, Alpha Zeta), Dean Allen '48 (Green Helmet), Jim O'Rourke '48 (Blue Key), John First '52 (Homecoming Court), Neal First '51 (Livestock Judging), Louis Hamilton '51 (Livestock Judging and President of Block & Bridle), Jim Sprague '51 (Livestock Judging, Scabbard & Blade), Harry Densmore '51 (Wool Judging) and Al Wolff '51 (Livestock Judging, Blue Key, Scabbard & Blade). Wolff, an Veterinarian by trade, also remains in high demand in Ohio as a square dance caller.

“He best builds the lives of other men who starts from within so that when the job is done the judge will say, a master builder passed this way.” The “Master Builder of Men” Award is the highest honor given by FarmHouse Fraternity: Our chapter has initiated two who became Master Builders, and both were very active in the 1950s. The first was Karl T. Wright ‘36. Pictured bottom row, left in this photo of National FarmHouse Board members, Dr. Wright was a longtime professor of agricultural economics at MSU. Dr. Wright received the Meritorious Service Award from Phi Kappa Phi honor society in 1987. He served as National President of FarmHouse from 1952-1954 and was named Master Builder in 1956. He is the namesake of the K. T. Wright Alumni Participation Award (an award founded in 1981 for the MSU Chapter alumnus most active in supporting the Chapter over the past year). Also a longtime Chapter advisor and a friend to all, K. T. was arguably the most beloved among MSU FarmHouse men initiated between the 1930s and the 1980s. He died in 1994. [Source: *1995 FarmHouse Fraternity Alumni Directory*].



The second was Dr. Russel J. Kleis '49. Dr. Kleis was professor of higher education at MSU. He served on the National FarmHouse Board from 1960 to 1968 including a term as President from 1962-1966. He was a FarmHouse Foundation Trustee from 1968-1974 and was named Master Builder of Men in 1970. Upon his untimely passing, *Pearls & Rubies* eulogized him with several quotes: "No one in the Fraternity has spoken or written as eloquently or with deeper compassion for the cause of excellence." [Dr. Kleis] "Gave generously, unselfishly because he believed so strongly in a basic command of the Lord -- Go Forth and Serve." When Dr. Kleis died in 1979, K. T. Wright and his wife Peggy lead a delegation of FarmHouse men to visit Dr. Kleis' wife Agnes at the funeral home. Mrs. Kleis was also present at Founders' Day 1981 for the unveiling of the Chapter's new Russel J. Kleis scholarship awards given to the top and most improved scholars in the House. [Photo source: 1980 *Spartan Scribe*. Quote source: Winter 1980 *Pearls & Rubies*]



At the time of our 65th Anniversary celebration in 2001, MSU FarmHouse has not had a Master Builder named in 31 years. It's time we did. I recommend an Association committee (of actives and alumni) be formed to comb list of MSU initiates from (especially) the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s for the purpose of making recommendations to the International Office and/or Conclave as appropriate.

One of Dr. Wright and Dr. Kleis' contemporaries, Elmer Scheidenhelm, IL '23 (right), was named Master Builder in 1958. Although an Illinois Chapter initiate, he served on Michigan State's faculty and much of Dr. Scheidenhelm's work as an advisor occurred with the Michigan Chapter. [Source: 1945 *Wolverine*]



Here are some other representative men from the 50s, focusing on some of their career accomplishments:

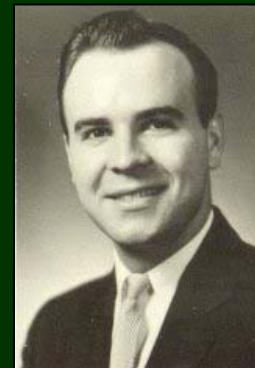


David '55 and Betsy Randall were honored by Osceola-Lake Soil and Water Conservation District as “1993 Woodland Conservationists of the year” for their work on their 235 acre upper-Michigan farm. [Source: 1956 MSU FarmHouse composite]



Keith Bayha '59 is an employee with the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Keith managed the agency's sea otter rescue operations in the aftermath of the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska. [Source: 1960 MSU FarmHouse composite]

David Boyne '54 served as Associate Provost at The Ohio State University. He was, from 1953-54, the first national FFA President from Michigan. In addition to FarmHouse offices, David was President of MSU's Ag Council and a member of Blue Key. After graduation, Dr. Boyne was a major player in the fund raising and construction of our 151 Bogue Street property. He served as 1964 Conclave Chairman when that event was hosted by the MSU Chapter, and was Chair of the National FarmHouse Foundation Board of Trustees (1972-76). Since retirement he has been employed part-time at OSU as director of the Ohio Leadership and Development program for agriculture. [Source: 1957 MSU FarmHouse composite]



David is pictured in the top row, far left, of the 1957 Excalibur group photo. This organization was introduced and described in the 1930s section of the MSU FH Pictorial History. [Source: 1957 *Wolverine*]



Add a Sheppard and Shepherd page here:

Another MSU FarmHouse family dynasty has its genesis in the 1950s as Jim Ballard was initiated in 1951. A generation later, his three sons Ron '72, Dave '75, and Bruce '81 joined the Fraternity. His daughter Cathy was a member of the Little Sisters of the Pearl. I probably have also added Cathy's husband Phil Bowen '74 to this composite as well! In addition to invaluable service to the House, the Ballards are a wonderful collection of hog farmers, engineers, and teachers; active in the church and their respective professions and communities. [Source: 1952, 1973, 1976, 1982 MSU FarmHouse composites]. I've also included, courtesy of Ron Ballard, a contemporary photo of Jim and Carolyn at their 50th Wedding Anniversary Celebration. At bottom left is the logo for the Ballard home farm used until Jim's retirement whereupon it became the Levelvue Pork Shop.



LEVELVUE HAMLOT

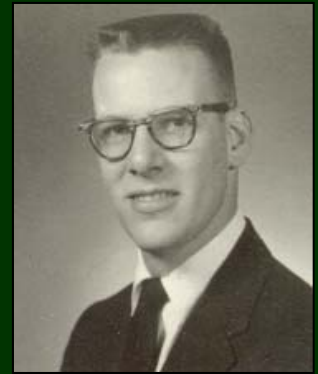
JAMES D. BALLARD
11601 Ballard Highway
Onondaga, Michigan 49264
Phone (517)857-3530



Pork is tasty

DAVID J. BALLARD
11750 Ballard Highway
Onondaga, Michigan 49264
Phone (517)857-3221

Terry Smith '57 served as president of FarmHouse in 1960. He was awarded a juris doctor from the University of Chicago. He practiced law in Grand Ledge beginning in 1965 with several firms, ultimately forming Smith Brothers Law Offices where he practiced until the time of his death. Through social service agencies, cultural activities, organizations and professional groups, he gave continuous service to Grand Ledge, Eaton County and the State of Michigan. He served on the County Social Services board; he was on the board of the Community Chest in Grand Ledge and later of United Way of Greater Lansing; he was a founding director of the Grand Ledge Area Chamber of Commerce and a member of the Michigan Boundary Commission from 1967 until the time of his death.

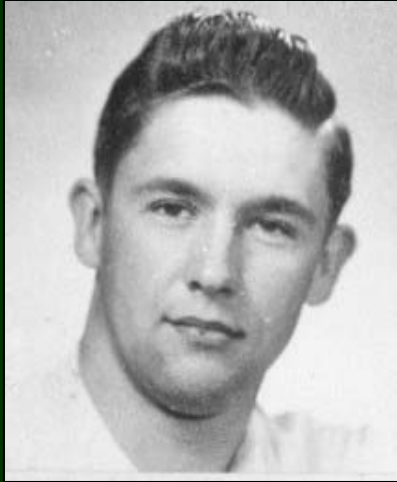


Terry Smith was a member of Rotary International, serving on its board and later as President. He chaired Michigan Week observances in Grand Ledge. Terry was on the board of First of America Bank of Grand Ledge and later of Michigan National Bank's advisory board. At the time of his death, he was on the board of the Lansing Michigan National Bank. A special focus of Terry's has been the development of the Grand Ledge Opera House. With several others he envisioned the historic opera house as a community center and from its inception in the late 1980s until the present, he has been actively involved and served as chair of the Opera House Authority charged with development and operation of the facility. Professionally, Terry was a member of the American Bar Association, the Michigan Bar, and the Eaton County Bar. Early in his legal career, he was a research associate for the Michigan Court of Appeals. He was listed in Who's Who in American Law. [Text source: *Lansing State Journal*. Photo source: 1960 FarmHouse composite]



This is a good time to recognize Ed Barton '57 who was Terry Smith's best friend. Ed served as the Chapter's Vice President in 1960. After earning a law degree at Cornell, Ed served for many years as a lawyer in Allegan County. Seeking a career change, he recently received his Ph.D. from MSU. His current research interests relate to empowering men, men's communities and similar issues. Since returning to East Lansing, he has served as Chairman of the Michigan State FarmHouse Foundation Council, member MSU-FarmHouse Association Board, and Chapter Advisor. He was a mainstay organizing the FH 60th Anniversary celebrations in 1996. His fund raising work allowed the chapter to initiate an annual FFA Scholarship honoring 1995 initiate Jack Schut. No man has given back more to his Fraternity than has Ed Barton. [Source: 1960 MSU FarmHouse composite]

Dale Kretchman '50 was professor emeritus of Horticulture at The Ohio State University at the time of his passing. He enjoyed a productive career and was a member of the local Izzak Walton League Association chapter since 1966 and a driving force behind much that it accomplished during that time. He was Wayne County Chapter president, in several terms, for almost half the time he was an IWLA member; he served as state president from 1991-93, as a national director for 11 years, as a member of IWLA's national Executive Committee from 1993 to 2001; and chairman of that body from 1999 until his passing. [Text source: Wooster, OH *Daily Record*. Photo source: 1952 MSU FarmHouse Composite]



An excerpt from “Goodbye tribute to area’s top sportsman” by Eric Johnson of *The Daily Record*, Wooster, OH, July 1, 2001. “Dale Kretchman was 69 when he died. His passing is a blow to sportsmen everywhere and to everyone who loves the out-of-doors in all of its infinite beauty. As one of his former colleagues at the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center said on Friday, “The world is worse off because he’s gone.” Dale was my senior by not quite 12 years, but he was more like a father to me than a brother, even though he surely would have walked me into the ground on even my best day in the woods. Izaak Walton and Dale will always stand shoulder-to-shoulder in my memory. Dale was a natural man – a scholar, a hunter, a teacher, a lover of wild things – and for the past 35 years until his untimely passing, he strove tirelessly to preserve and protect the natural world for all of us. He was the living embodiment of the IWLA pledge: *To strive for purity of water, the clarity of air and the wise stewardship of the land and its resources, to know the beauty and understanding of nature, and the value of wildlife, woodlands, and open spaces; to the preservation of this heritage and to man’s sharing of it . . . I pledge myself.*”

Most men initiated in the 1950s are enjoying the early years of their retirement. Many others have passed on. Our Chapter is greatly indebted to the men of this era. As a group, they enhanced the stature of our Fraternity and had stellar professional careers. They provide solid evidence that FarmHouse is, indeed, “Builder of Men.”