

# Gauvry

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the second wave of assault vessels at Omaha Beach. Gauvry was discharged at the Cape May Naval Air Station (now the Coast Guard Training Center), and made Cape May his home.

It was here he met his first wife, Eleanor Conway, who was his "first lady" when he served in office.

Gauvry was in the insurance business and owned his own office, the Harbor Agency, in Cape May in 1962. His business later became National Associates.

Gauvry was first elected to office in 1964, when he ran with former Mayor Grant Scott and Harry Reeves.

"He was actually the high vote getter but in deference to former Mayor Scott's experience, he ceded the role of mayor," Isabelle said.

Scott died early in the term and Gauvry, as deputy mayor, took over as mayor. He served two terms.

Isabelle Gauvry said her father was instrumental in Cape May's renewal, helping secure the federal funding that enabled the urban renewal.

"He truly was the driving force behind the approval and construction of the Washington Street Mall, which marked a turning point in the town's history," she said.

Isabelle Gauvry said her father's insurance business began to expand in the late 1960s. She said his clients included the New York Yankees, and he wrote policies on Reggie Jackson and Catfish Hunter. She said he found he needed a base that was closer to financial and business centers, so he moved to Delaware, and Philadelphia, and also established a relationship with Lloyds of London.

Isabelle said her father remained active in politics even after leaving office. He was one of the earliest contributors to former Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell's career, when he ran for district attorney. Gauvry was a lifelong Republican, but told others, "Ed is the Democrat that Republicans can love."

Gauvry would occasionally offer counsel to candidates in Cape May elections, and even after they were in office.

"I had always spoken with Frank on a regular basis," Cape May Mayor Ed Mahaney said. "Frank was always helpful with providing guidance and the history of this town."

Isabelle Gauvry said her father earned a degree from LaSalle, and was a compelling speaker.

"Even when opposition was fierce during the early days of developing the mall, my father had confidence in what the town could be and never second-guessed himself," she said.

Isabelle said although her father took up residence in Delaware in the late 1980s, he returned to Cape May often. Isabelle said her father loved Cape May, but didn't like the beach.

"Over the course of his lifetime, I think he may have actually gone to the beach twice," she said.

She said he didn't have hobbies - his work was his main interest, and he remained actively involved in the insurance industry throughout his later years.

"He worked in the business until the day he died," she said. "He did consulting

work for Insurance Associates Incorporated, a company based in Delaware. He was not someone who believed in the concept of retirement."

Isabelle said her father did, however, love a good game of poker, the closest thing she could see to a hobby, but his real hobby was his profession.

"It was amazing, yesterday (April 12) to see all the young men in early to late 20s whom he had mentored at IAI, who came to say goodbye. Many said, 'He taught me everything I know about this business.' One even credited him with teaching him the art of tying a perfect Windsor knot in his tie. His goal was to touch people's lives in a positive way," she said.

Isabelle said while her father was proud to have played such a critical role in revitalizing the town's economy, he felt that his greatest achievement, and the one for which he would want to be remembered, was providing low income, families with safe and affordable modern housing.

That, and his family. Gauvry divorced in 1979

and was remarried in 1984 to the former Kathleen E. Tobin, a travel industry executive with British Airways, in Philadelphia.

Gauvry had two daughters: Beatrice Pessagno of Cape May, and Isabelle Gauvry, of Newtown, Pa.

Beatrice Pessagno, who has carried on her father's commitment to the community through her involvement in several local community organizations, said Gauvry would specifically want to have mentioned his six grandchildren: Francis, Caroline, John, Stephanie, Will and Ben, who range in ages from 12 to 36.

She said it was his specific request to have his funeral services held at Our Lady Star of the Sea, located on the Ocean Street end of the Washington Street Mall.

Mahaney said he spoke to Beatrice Pessagno and said the city would post black bunting over the main entrance to City Hall in respect for Frank Gauvry and his family for his many years of service to the city of Cape May. Mahaney said there would also be a police honor guard at the viewing and

funeral service. Mahaney said he would approach city council about finding another way to give appropriate recognition to Gauvry's service to Cape May and to keep his memory alive.

"Frank Gauvry never sought personal credit for himself for his achievements for the city. My remembrance of Frank is he always exuded leadership and vision for the city of Cape May. His emphasis was always on improving the economic, social, and social status of this town and its residents and businesses, as well as having the best quality of life for its community members," Mahaney said. "We should have some lasting memorial to keep his memory alive for future residents and visitors to know and understand."

A Mass of Christian Burial is being celebrated today, Wednesday, April 20, at 1:30 p.m., in Our Lady Star of the Sea Church, 525 Washington St., Cape May, where there is a viewing one hour prior to the services. Interment is private.

# Query

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the legislature and on his desk.

"All in all, I was very pleased about efforts to move this to the front burner," Muentz said.

The bill is sponsored by Assemblyman Reed Gusiurio, the Dept Majority Leader, and introduced in May 2010. Under current law, the lodging businesses collect the 7 percent state sales tax and a 5 percent state room tax. Then, each municipality has the option to collect between 0

and 3 percent, which goes into the town's general fund. Cape May opted for 2 percent. According to Muentz, 80 percent of the rooms in Cape May are whole house rentals. He said in Stone Harbor and some other places, whole house rentals are like 98 percent.

"This (bill) lowers the tax and applies it equally to all short term rentals," Muentz said.

Under A-2657, all short term rentals would be taxed 7 percent, with 5 percent going to the state and 2 percent to

the city. The bill also requires one-third of city's share to be dedicated to local tourism promotion.

"Right now, in Cape May, the revenue generated from the 2 percent tax is around \$1 million. That comes from less than 18 percent of all the accommodations," Muentz said.

Muentz said, from the 2003 budget, 17 percent of short term rentals were hotels, motels, and B&Bs.

"It's closer to 15 percent now," he said. Fort-five percent of Cape

May rentals were whole house, 23 percent were condo weekly rentals, and 16 percent were apartment weekly rentals.

Muentz said a 7 percent tax would be more in line with what is charged regionally. Ocean City, Md., collects 6 percent, Lewes, Del., 5 percent, Rehoboth Beach, Del., 5 percent, Bethany Beach Del., a maximum of 8 percent. He said the Outer Banks in North Carolina has a 7.75 percent tax.

"And every place on the eastern seaboard with an

accommodations tax applies it to all weekly rentals," Muentz said. "In almost all cases, all those room taxes they are the dedicated funding source for tourism advertising."

"Most of our tax goes to the black hole in Trenton," Muentz said. "Of the 2 percent the city takes, almost nothing comes back."

The city raises about \$1 million from the occupancy tax. Under Bill A-2657, the tax generated by all rentals would raise just over \$4 million. With 33 percent dedicat-

ed to tourism promotion, the city would get \$1.3 million in tourism advertising. The city would apply the other approximately \$2.7 million to the general fund. Given the state caps on budget increases, the association believes the city would be forced to use the money to reduce its tax levy.

"They would have to put \$3 million toward tax reduction," Muentz said. "And lowering the occupancy tax would put (Cape May) back in a competitive mode."

# Hall

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will begin work on the storm drainage system and start re-paving the street. He said the Yacht Avenue project

should be finished in three to four weeks.

Using USDA funding, the city also has improvement plans for Cape Heart Lane, Windsor Avenue, Congress

Street, Grant Avenue, Claghorn Place, Mt. Vernon Avenue and a small portion of Broadway. MacLeod said these projects will include re-paving, replacing and

improving sanitary sewer lines, as well as storm water drainage systems.

Some of these projects began last summer and in the fall of 2009 according to

MacLeod, and the city will be wrapping a portion of them up by mid-June. He said certain re-paving projects will have a base coat applied this summer and then have the final coat of pavement laid down in the early fall.



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