The City of Holland Mourns the Death of Former Mayor William A. Sikkel

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The City of Holland marks the death of former Mayor William "Bill" A. Sikkel, who passed away on January 3, 2013, after a brief fight with cancer. Sikkel was mayor from 1983 until 1987, and is fondly remembered as a man of great character and leadership.

His funeral will be held on Monday, January 7, 2013, at 11 a.m. at Faith Christian Reformed Church, 85 West 26th Street, Holland, Michigan 49423. In honor of his life and service, Mayor Kurt Dykstra has ordered all flags at city facilities flown at half staff from Monday, January 7, until Wednesday, January 9.

Below is Sikkel's biography from the City's webpage:

> William A. Sikkel was born in Holland, Michigan on November 25, 1920. His father, Peter C. Sikkel, immigrated to Holland from the Netherlands in the late 1890s. His mother was born on a farm located where the present day Johnson Controls building is located now on Blue Star Highway.
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> Sikkel graduated from Holland Christian High in 1938. He took additional classes as needed for business purposes, and attended the United States Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas after serving in World War Two.
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> Sikkel's military career started when he joined Holland's Company D, 126th Infantry on his 18th birthday. He was activated for federal duty in October 1940 and was shipped to Louisiana for what he though would be a year's training. Just as the war in Europe was escalating his active duty was extended and was soon followed by the bombing at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. After the United States declared war on the Axis powers Sikkel's military career was extended for more than five years, 3 ½ years of which were in the South Pacific. During his time in the South Pacific area he was part of the famous crossing of the Owen Stanley Mountains in the New Guinea Campaign. During his military career, Sikkel received several awards and ribbons, which included the Combat Infantry Mans Medal, Bronze Star, Pacific Theatre Ribbon with 2 Stars, Presidential Unit Citation, Pre-Pearl Harbor Ribbon, as well as others.
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> Upon returning home from the Pacific Sikkel met, dated and married Elaine Vos in June of 1946. Together they raised three children.
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> While on active duty, Sikkel received several promotions as an enlisted man to include PFC, Corporal, Sergeant, and Staff Sergeant. In 1946 Sikkel returned to the states as a captain and was asked by the Governor of Michigan to reorganize and serve as captain of the Holland unit of Company D, 126th Infantry.

In 1972, after 32 years of service, he retired from the Army of the United States, and the Michigan National Guard as a Lt. Colonel. In 1989, Sikkel was appointed a full Colonel by Governor John Engler to serve as a commander, and later, a General Staff Officer (Civil Affairs), in the Michigan Emergency Volunteers (MEV).

Sikkel's political career began when he was elected mayor, never having served as a city councilman. But he credited his successful election to his past involvement in community activities, many as the Company D commander during many Memorial Day and two Tulip Time parades. Later community service included becoming a Life Member of the Salvation Army Board, serving on several Chamber of Commerce committees, serving as President of the Holland Board of Realtors, President and Lt. Governor of Kiwanis, and Sunday school superintendent, elder, and deacon for Faith Christian Reformed Church of Holland.

Sikkel also takes pride in having a part in the construction of brick paths in Centennial Park. After observing a veteran trying to access the gravel path to view the Veteran's Memorial in a wheelchair he suggested constructing the paths to the Holland Historical Committee and others, including councilman and future mayor Philip Tanis, who led the "Buy a Brick Campaign."
Some accomplishments Holland made during his tenure included the park paths, the completion of, and dedication of Evergreen Commons, the opportunity to participate in the final phases of the acquisition of Tulip City Airport, the opportunity to be host to the first Michigan Mayor's Conference, the inaugural Amtrak run to Chicago, the visits with the Netherlands Ambassador in Washington then having him and his wife visit Holland for Tulip Time. He greatest disappointment was not being able to bring a modern municipal marina to Holland.

After being defeated by Philip Tanis in the 1987 mayoral race, Sikkel left politics for a few years, but returned in 1994 when elected to the Allegan County Commission. In November 2002 he was elected to a 5th term, and now is serving as the vice chair, chair of the Law Committee and committees such as County Planning, Board of Public Works (BPW), County Services, Economic Development. He also serves as treasurer of the West Michigan Regional Planning Board, as a member of the Michigan Association of Counties (MAC) Transportation Committee, the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council, and the Military Academy Selection Committee for Congressman Peter Hoekstra.

Web Links

Official Obituary -- Langeland Sterenberg Funeral Home

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