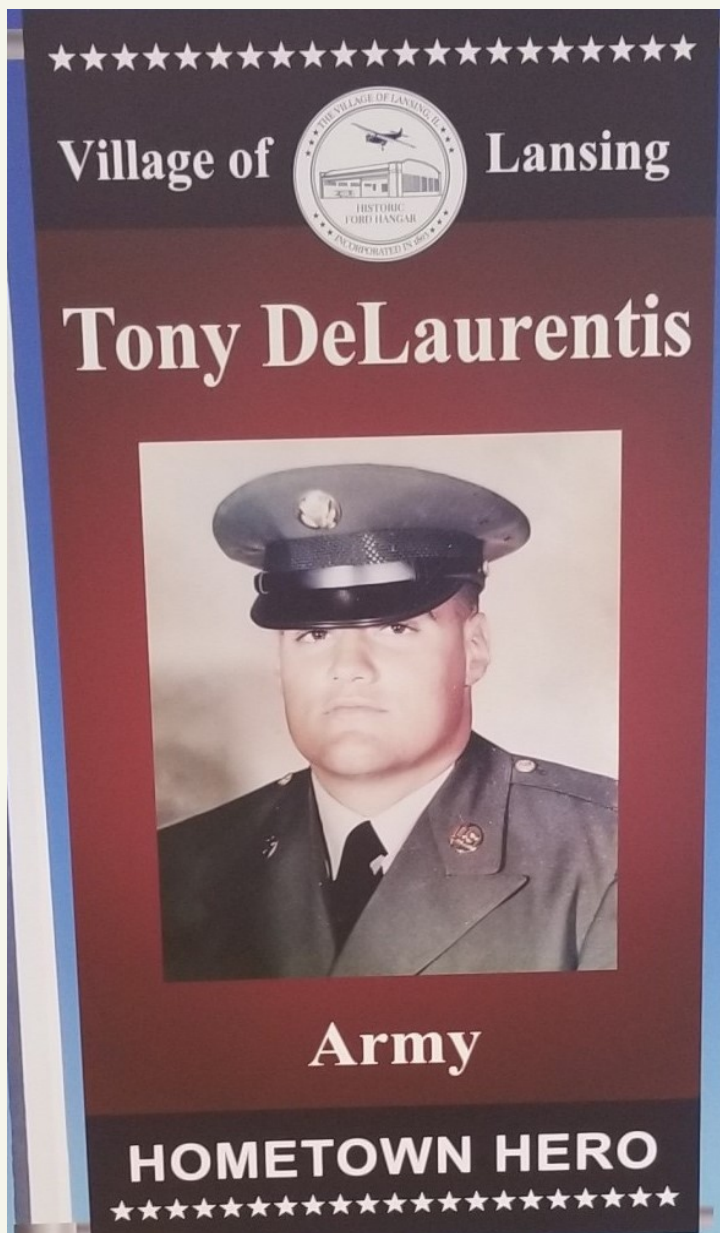


# LANSING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

August 2020

## *Village of Lansing introduces Hometown Hero Banners*



### LANSING HOMETOWN HEROES BANNER PROGRAM

The Village of Lansing is proud to offer this program to exclusively honor current or former residents of Lansing who have served or are currently serving our country in a branch of the military.

Our very own, Tony DeLaurentis, has been chosen as the Village's "Poster Child" for this program! Tony served in the Army during the Vietnam War from 1966-1968. We are very proud and thankful for his service and to all veterans and those currently serving our country.

If you or someone you know is in the service or have served in any branch of the military, is interested in participating in this banner program, more information and an application is available at the Village Hall. It is a first come, first served basis and all applications must be received by December 11, 2020.

# FROM THE PRESIDENT ~ Bill Benne

With all that has happened in the last few months with the Coronavirus, and due to renovations to the lower level of the library, we have had to close the museum for the rest of 2020, cancel our general meetings and programs, and postpone our Annual Banquet. Hopefully, by January, we will be able to schedule our meetings. In the meantime, we have tentatively rescheduled our Banquet for May 17, 2021.

I'd like to thank you all for your support with the bakeless bake sale. Your donations are truly appreciated.

Just a reminder to view the Presidential Papers Collection hosted at the Thornton Historical Society. For information visit [www.thorntonilhistory.com](http://www.thorntonilhistory.com).

Please stay safe and healthy.

Bill Benne

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MUSEUM CURATOR:	Barb Dust
ADVISOR:	Tony DeLaurentis

## Barb Dust ~ Museum Curator

Even with our museum's doors closed due to the COVID 19 and the library remodeling, it is still our mission to present Lansing's stories and provide inspiration and a way for people to connect with our community.

To that end we will try to share our history in several other forms. We plan to post interesting stories and photos on our Lansing Historical Society's Facebook page and web site. People can still visit the museum by making an appointment to meet a guide for a private tour. People can also bring in donations of artifacts, photos, etc. by calling for an appointment. If you would like to do so, please call me at 312-969-0385 or send an email to [barbd728@aol.com](mailto:barbd728@aol.com). While it is sad that we did not get to exhibit our wonderful bridal gown collection and will not be able to host the Festival of Lights, we will be posting on Facebook a virtual Christmas Tree display with accompanying text on Christmas customs of many different countries!

The year of 2020 will certainly go down in history. So we encourage you to save and donate items that illustrate the many changes we have all been making as we pull together to get through this.

These are difficult times to be sure, but we can all take inspiration from Lansing's history. Our people have always been hard-working people of faith. The town has had to re-invent itself several times and we can do so again!

### WITH HEARTFELT SYMPATHY

Lansing lost a fount of historical knowledge with the passing of Herb Krumm on April 12<sup>th</sup>. Herb served as a director for the Historical Society board and most significantly as a faithful museum guide several times a week for years. He was always eager to tell visitors stories of Lansing's past and shared many of these stories in writing for this newsletter. Herb was honored as our Volunteer of the Year at the last Evening of Thanks. He received the same award for the Golden K Kiwanis for their work with school age children. Herb will be remembered as a great storyteller and a true gentleman. Our sympathy goes out to his daughter Donna and the rest of his family.

LHS also extends our sympathy at the passing of our members, Mary Clark on April 11 who was 96, and Arnold Vierk on May 9 who was 88.

### *Welcome!*

We welcome new Lansing Historical Society members:  
Carolyn (Kiestner) Burns  
Kalpana Sharma

### CATHERINE LANTING

A Part of Lansing History

Since the Lansing Historical Museum will be open only by appointment for a while, we will be sharing Lansing history in this newsletter and in online formats.

We'd like to start out by sharing the story of Catherine Lanting, one of Lansing's great business women of the past. For many years Catherine ran the Ben Franklin store on Ridge Rd. as well as Lanting's Department Store next door. We thank Catherine's grandson, Greg Severin, for this fascinating biography.

In year 1888, Mrs. C. Lanting (my grandmother) was born to a poor family with 12 siblings in the Netherlands. Her childhood family home was a boat. At age 20, she responded to an ad that invited young Dutch women to apply for 3 years servitude as a live-in maid for a wealthy family in Chicago. My Grandma was chosen out of 100 applicants and passed through Ellis Island, New York.

After her three years of servitude, she met her husband, Peter, also a Dutch immigrant, moved to Lansing and signed a long-term lease to rent farmland near the intersection now known as Wentworth Avenue and 180<sup>th</sup> street. At the time people could "register/record" a land lease like that with the local government and that was her turning point. Soon after the farm lease was "legally registered/recorded, the landlord (name unknown) wanted to break the lease to subdivide the land for residential construction. Since my grandma's long-term lease was recorded, the landlord offered her a monetary settlement to break the land lease.

(Con't. on page 4)

## CATHERINE LANTING (con't)

This monetary settlement was enough to purchase a 25 foot frontage of commercially zoned property: 3312 Ridge Road which is now known as part of "old downtown Lansing." In 1922, using the land as collateral, she obtained a construction loan (from one of the first Lansing banks) to build a 1500 square foot "dry goods" retail store with a second floor residence for her and husband and two young children (Bessie and Jacoba).

She would take a wagon to the train station stop in Lansing to wheel back goods to sell in her new little store.

Then came the Great Depression of the 1930's. Still being in debt for the construction of her store, the bank offered her (if, she could find a way to continue to make payments) a waiver of interest charges on her mortgage and instead, apply all payments made to principle payoff. Working hard, during the depression of the 1930's, she came across another problem at the start of WW2.

WW2 mandatory rationing of materials reserved for the war effort was detrimental to her "dry goods" store as materials that made her inventory were being diverted to the war effort. One of her memorable mantra's was, "You can't sell goods from an empty wagon!"

Fortunately, the local government agency granted her business "the place" to redeem WW2 ration cards for shoes (and such) for the Lansing community. This allowed her to stay afloat and payoff her store mortgage by the end of WW2.

After the war, she expanded the store twice (once in the late 1940s and for a final time in 1959). The store's size today is as she completed it in 1959/1960 (at 8500 sq. ft. on the main level).

Grandma went on to invest in multiple commercial properties in Lansing during the 1960's.

In the 1970s, when some of her adult children suggested that being in her 80's (age) she should stop searching (to acquire more Lansing commercial/investment property): she agreed to their request.

That is when, she recruited her youngest grandson (at the age of 13) to "learn the business." Indoctrinating him in the "art" of commercial real estate investing. At 14 years of age (with grandma's guidance and mentoring), the young grandson was calling Realtors from "for sale" signs representing commercial land for sale: Can you imagine a 14 year old asking how a commercial property was zoned, the square footage/dimensions of the property for sale, and real estate sale tax information. Needless to say, that grandson spent the rest of his life, somehow, always involved in investment real estate.

In 1983, Mrs. C. Lanting passed away at the age of 95. She will always be remembered as one of Lansing's first downtown merchants on Ridge Road. With a smile on her face, she would greet her customers asking about their children and other family members and truly being concerned for everyone's well-being.

(The grandson mentioned above, is of course, Greg Severin.)



Catherine as Parade Marshal of Lansing's Spring Parade in the late 60's.  
(now known as The Good Neighbor Day Parade)



Catherine Lanting



Lansing Historical Society  
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#### MUSEUM HOURS

Lansing Historical Society meetings and programs are normally held the fourth Monday of most months.

No meetings are scheduled in June, July and August.

We welcome new members! Invite your family, friends, neighbors and coworkers to come see what we're all about!

MUSEUM IS OPEN BY APPOINTMENT ONLY UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE