

## Memories of Harry Gast

Several leaders issued statements after Thursday's death of Harry Gast:

"The passing of St. Joseph legislator and highly respected former Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Harry Gast should remind all of us of the value of public service.

"Sen. Gast dedicated a large part of his life to serving Michigan residents in many elected posts, including as a township official, state representative and state senator.

"Named as Legislator of the Year by organizations as diverse as the Michigan United Conservation Clubs, the Chiefs of Police and the Michigan Townships Association, he became known for his famous no-nonsense attitude, but ready smile and hearty laugh. He was first and foremost a family man and a very proud farmer. Harry was a fixture in Lansing for over 30 years and was a true problem-solver."

— **Gov. Rick Snyder**

"If they had a Mount Rushmore for public servants in Michigan, Senator Harry Gast would be on that mountain. Harry was a mentor to me, a legend with more than 57 years of public service, and was someone who always told you exactly what he thought.

"My thoughts and prayers today are with Jean (his wife) and Harry's family.

"The best compliment I ever received was when a

constituent told me, 'you've got a little Harry Gast in you.'"

— **state Rep. Al Pscholka  
R-Stevensville**

"Harry was a mentor for me and helped guide and influence my legislative career and the work I have been able to accomplish here at the Capitol.

"So many in Lansing, and throughout our state, loved to work with Harry because he was a straight shooter who always made sure you knew where you stood with him, and that is one of the reasons he was such a great person to work alongside. His farmer's common sense and spirit that he brought to the legislature as our representative made him an effective voice and leader for our community, because he always remembered where he was from."

— **state Sen. John Proos, R-St. Joseph**

"He was as honest and hardworking as the day is long, and I will miss his sage counsel and true friendship."

— **U.S. Rep. Fred Upton  
R-St. Joseph**

"He was a tremendous friend and colleague as well as a true fighter and leader for Southwest Michigan. We extend our deepest sympathies to Jean and family and friends during this difficult time."

— **Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette**

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“He was a strong proponent of community colleges and believed they were essential to economic development for our region. He was passionate about career training programs and championed pivotal LMC capital projects including the Mendel Center, the Bertrand Crossing campus, and the student services one stop at the Napier Campus. ...

“He also fought for Western Michigan University’s presence on the LMC campus. ... He is responsible for helping so many students in Southwest Michigan earn their degrees.”

— **Anne Erdman**,  
vice president of administrative  
services, Lake Michigan College

“Harry was a statesman, well respected on both sides of the aisle, and he was filled with common sense.

“He supported us and always talked about how he had three community colleges in his district, us, LMC and Glen Oaks Community College. He held the chairmanship of the Subcommittee on Community Colleges even when he chaired Appropriations.

“He didn’t just represent us, but the rest of the state very well.”

— **David Mathews**, president,  
Southwestern Michigan College