

# Bloomfield Hills

AN EXCLUSIVE NEWSLETTER FOR THE RESIDENTS OF BLOOMFIELD HILLS

FEBRUARY 2018

# Living

## **Henry Baskin**

*has served our community  
for 50 years.*

Read about his contributions in  
**Making a Difference.**

Photography by Paula Buzzawa



## meet your neighbors

By Susan Kehoe, Ph.D.

Photography by Paula Kurzawa

# Henry Baskin: 50 Years Of Service

*"When you live in this community, you give as much as you can for as long as you can."*

Henry Baskin

Recently I had the opportunity to talk with Henry Baskin on the occasion of his induction into the Gold Circle from the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Michigan Chapter for 50 years of service. You may be thinking, "An award for television? I thought he was a family law attorney?" Baskin is a master of both — and a great deal more.

Baskin was practicing law when Motown was putting down roots. One night he received a phone call from Motown Records asking him to resolve a family issue. Afterward, they wanted to meet with him, and at that time he learned about a new talent from Washington D.C. named Marvin Gaye.

He developed a contract for Gaye providing more rights of ownership and profits than the standard music industry contract. That was the beginning of a successful entertainment practice during a legendary time in Detroit. He worked directly with Motown greats such as Smokey Robinson and The Temptations. In this role, he also represented top talent, such as the Rolling Stones, when they appeared in Detroit.

Later, Detroit producers invited Baskin to talk about the "live" television scene that was taking shape in Detroit. A local news channel acquainted him with Bill Bonds, John Kelly, Marilyn Turner, Jerry Hodak and most of the first celebrities in live news broadcasting in Detroit.

"Henry Baskin has been a major presence in Detroit media circles for decades. He was my agent and advisor for more than 35 years and had a significant influence on the direction and fortunes of my career. I will be forever grateful for his wise counsel and valued friendship."

**Jerry Hodak**, former Chief Meteorologist on WXYZ.

Detroit was ripe for television news growth in the 1960s and the following decades because it was the seventh largest audience for marketing and advertising in the country, with a population well over 1,000,000 residents.

When Baskin first graduated from Central High in Detroit at 17 years old, he didn't have a vision of either entertainment or fam-





ily law. He went to Wayne State and dabbled in real estate, drove a lumber truck, and served as an Oak Park police officer for side jobs. Because of his ability and interest in chemistry, he studied pharmacy for about two years. "It's a good profession, but it just wasn't for me," Baskin concluded.

He was working at a children's camp when some counselors planted the seed of law school in his mind. Ever since he received a gift from the Goodfellows as a child, he had a desire to help children and the disadvantaged. It fell into place when he realized that law was a great way to help families in distress. Over the years he became one of Michigan's foremost advocates for family law and children's causes, both inside and outside the courtroom.

Baskin authored Michigan's *Child Custody* Act that laid out what's known as "the child's best interest factors." He said, "When making custody decisions, we need to see the world through the *child's eyes*, not the way the parents and attorneys see it."

Baskin also took action on the dangers to women in potentially harmful custody and divorce situations. "One time a client asked me to provide legal protection for his daughter while she was in a nasty divorce. I said I would, but court orders could not be put in place quickly. A few days later, that woman was shot to death by her ex-husband." That's when Baskin began work in Lansing heading up a domestic violence task force and authoring legislation to provide Personal Protection Orders (PPO) for adults and children in danger. Since the 1994 bill, PPOs can be issued significantly faster than through court dockets and can simultaneously download to the Law Enforcement Information Network, which enables the speedy arrest of violators if an incident occurs.

He also wanted to take action for children from single-family homes who wanted to continue their educational pursuits after child support stopped. So Baskin founded a scholarship fund at Oakland University to help these young adults with educational assistance (the Baskin Family Foundation at Oakland University).

Among Baskin's many divorce cases, he was one of the first attorneys to qualify a non-working spouse's value to the family in dollars and cents. He also won the case to award a spouse remuneration for the other spouse's medical degree. Many of us don't realize he represented one of the first bi-racial custody cases and a grandparent custody case.

**Virinder Moudgil, Ph.D.**, President, and CEO of Lawrence Technological University, says of Baskin: "Having known and observed Henry Baskin for over 20 years as a passionate leader for equality, economic and gender diversity, education and healthcare, I remain in awe of his continued commitments to social causes. As a university trustee, he helped establish Oakland County's first and nationally regarded *Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine*."

Baskin has contributed his time and talent to numerous charitable and professional organizations over the years. He co-founded and directed the Mental Illness Research Association and *Family AIDS Network*. *CARE House* received their first modern facility thanks to Baskin and he has been a mainstay of *Variety*, *the Children's Charity*, supporting its projects for many years. He has been a board member and president of the *Children's Orthogenic School* for emotionally disturbed children and adolescents and is prominent in Oakland County's *Haven* organization that assists victims of violence.

Evidence of professional awards hang on Baskin's office walls from the: U.S. Department of Justice; the State Bar of Michigan; Lawyer's Weekly; Best Lawyers — and let's not overlook the Emmy for hosting the long-running local television show *Due Process*. There are far too many awards from the past 50 years to mention.

It's a challenge to adequately recount all of Henry Baskin's achievements in his vocation of law and contributions in his avocation of causes for children and the disadvantaged. The story of Henry Baskin can be nothing but an example of living a purposeful life.

