

75 Years

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STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN

75TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL FEATURE

From the Archives:

# Saving Teddy Roosevelt

By Mike Eidelbes

Spend 50 years in any line of work and you're bound to have an interesting story or two to share. Attorneys are no exception; in fact, based on the sheer number of people from various walks of life lawyers interact with on a regular basis, the memorable moments for long-time practitioners are likely greater than similarly experienced people in other occupations.

One of the many highlights of the upcoming State Bar of Michigan Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids is the luncheon on Friday, October 1 honoring attorneys marking their 50th year in the profession. The 50-year celebration is typically held each spring, but the 2011 event was moved up to coincide with this year's Annual Meeting, during which the Bar will commemorate its 75th year of existence.

As part of the State Bar's 75th anniversary celebration, the *Michigan Bar Journal* has been looking back at notable moments in SBM history. The following item from the November 1962 issue of the *Michigan State Bar Journal* pertains to a former Michigan attorney of unknown whereabouts who celebrated his 50th anniversary in the profession that year—a half century after he saved the life of a former U.S. president:

## State Bar Hero Revealed

National attention of the inadvertent type was given to the recent convention ceremony honoring Michigan lawyers who were admitted to practice 50 years. It happened this way: of the 50-year men whose whereabouts were unknown, one was a hero in 1912 because he had saved the life of President Theodore Roosevelt!

The heroic story of Elbert E. Martin, graduate of the Detroit College of Law and former Detroit resident, came to light as the State Bar at its 27th annual meeting prepared to cite members who had been admitted 50 years.

Martin's last known address was Salmon, Idaho, but a check by telephone failed to identify him.

Interest in locating Martin became national in scope when it was learned that 50 years ago—during the presidential campaign of 1912—the 29-year-old graduate, fresh from law school and serving as Teddy Roosevelt's secretary and bodyguard, saved the Bull Moose candidate's life by seizing the gun hand of a crazed man named John Schrank.

On that October 14th, Roosevelt was appearing before a crowd outside a Milwaukee hotel when the would-be assassin fired a shot which was partly deflected by Roosevelt's eyeglasses case, but wounding the ex-president in the side. Martin, according to an Associated Press dispatch, "leaped on the man like a wild animal," preventing him from firing a possible-fatal second shot.

Roosevelt recovered, but GOP President William Howard Taft lost his bid for election on the Bull Moose ticket. The eventual winner was Democratic Woodrow Wilson. Martin slipped from national prominence, but served for many years



as a member of the Vermont legislature. He retired with his wife to Salmon, Idaho, where he died September 1, 1956, according to Reginald R. Reeves, lawyer for the Martin family. He said that he had heard about the State Bar's search on a news broadcast over radio station KTWW, Idaho Falls. ■

*Mike Eidelbes has been with the State Bar of Michigan since 2005, the last year as a copy editor and writer. His past contributions to the Michigan Bar Journal include features on the 8th Circuit mental health court, the legal and social work communities coming together at a juvenile justice seminar, and the SBM Practice Management Resource Center. He can be contacted by e-mail at meidelbes@mail.michbar.org.*