



Atrium
Medical Center

F O U N D A T I O N

LEGENDS

LEVEY FAMILY LEGENDS

*A Tribute to the Men and Women
Who Made It Happen*

ISSUE 16:

The Levey Family

Once asked how he wanted to be remembered, Ohio State Senator Barry Levey thought for only a few seconds before responding, “That I cared for all the people.” Barry passed away at age 73 on February 5, 2004. He is indeed remembered lovingly as a generous and compassionate man. You might say Barry came by his largesse and civic-mindedness naturally. His father, Elliott Levey, an attorney, real estate developer and president of the McGraw Construction Company, was, in his time, among Middletown’s leading citizens.

Contributions to a Healthier Middletown



Not long before Elliott’s death in 1996, he and his beloved wife, Mae – “She’s been a staunch supporter of everything I’ve ever done” – donated funds to establish a state-of-the-art cardiac catheterization laboratory at Middletown Regional Hospital. At the time, the Leveys’ gift was the largest private contribution ever made to the hospital. Speaking at the dedication of the Mae and Elliott Levey Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory, Elliott noted, “One person who truly believes can accomplish more than 100 who

only have opinions. You will find others who will share your dreams and help you create a finer community.”

Barry’s philosophy evolved naturally from his father’s. Although Barry passed away before Middletown Regional Hospital became Atrium

Medical Center, his wife, Marilee, feels certain he would have been a part of it. She explains that her husband believed in protecting quality of life for everyone. His approach was simple: Always do the right thing, and know what the right thing is.

“Barry was a progressive thinker,” Marilee notes. “If something was good for the community, he was behind it.” To honor her husband’s legacy and his commitment to Middletown’s well-being, Marilee made a significant gift to Atrium Medical Center Foundation. The Levey Rotunda celebrates her gift. Located at the hospital’s north entrance, the rotunda connects the hospital with the professional building, the Compton Center, Atrium Pharmacy and an outdoor courtyard.

All in the Family

Elliott Levey’s reputation as a civic leader dates to the late 1940s, when he served on a committee of civic leaders who helped develop Middletown’s city charter. Elliott built Middletown’s first motel, the Ranch Inn, and is credited with the commercial development of Breiel Sivana Estates. Elliott also helped establish Doty House (now Abilities First), a non-profit activities and training center for the disabled, and was instrumental in Middletown receiving the 1957 All American City Award presented by the National Municipal League and Look magazine for a decade’s worth of achievement.

Although he once described himself as “sort of quiet and reserved,” those who remember Elliott Levey can attest to his ability to ignite an overwhelming spirit in others to become involved in their community.





During the mid-1980s, Armco president William Verity led a fundraising campaign to establish an independent Middletown Community Foundation. Elliott challenged the community to raise \$2 million to which he and his wife, Mae, would add another \$1 million. Thanks to the community's fervent response, the campaign raised significantly more than its \$6 million goal, creating an auspicious beginning for the Middletown Community Foundation, which today remains a powerful advocate for Middletown citizens and a generous supporter of Atrium Medical Center Foundation.



Elliott was also among the Middletown civic and business leaders instrumental in the successful construction of Miami University's Middletown campus. In the early 1960s, engineering challenges arose in planning the campus. Elliott and McGraw Construction contributed \$8,000 (about \$62,000 in current dollars) for feasibility studies that kept construction moving forward while preserving the

picturesque hills and ravines of the park land Armco had donated for the campus. In later years, Elliott's son, Barry, would become a stalwart champion for the school.

Continuing a Legacy of Caring

When asked to name the high points of his life, Elliott Levey never hesitated to cite the accomplishments of his son, Barry. Born in 1930, Barry Levey graduated from Middletown High School before completing his studies at the University of Michigan and Northwestern College of Law. He earned a doctorate of jurisprudence from The Ohio State University College of Law.

Before joining his father's thriving law practice, Barry served in the U.S. Army as a member of the Judge Advocate General's Corps from 1954 to 1956. Thus began his multi-faceted career as a successful attorney, state legislator, college trustee and board chairman, hotelier, labor negotiator, community leader, loving husband and father of four.

Barry, a Republican, was elected to the Ohio

House of Representatives in 1962 and represented all of Butler County as an at-large district. He went on to win reelection in 1964. After the Voting Rights Act of 1965 required state legislatures to have specific districts, Levey won a seat to represent the new 39th House District. He was reelected to the seat in 1968. In 1970, Barry opted not to run for reelection to another term and returned to his law practice.



One of Barry's proudest moments in the Ohio Legislature was securing \$1 million in "seed" money to build the Miami University Middletown campus. He became a university trustee in 1977 and was elected board chairman in 1980. Levey Hall, which was named for Barry, today houses the university's science departments. In 1988, the university awarded him an honorary doctor of law degree.



In 1985, as testimony to his belief in the community and its downtown, Barry purchased and refurbished Middletown's historic Manchester Inn. Not content to rest on his hotelier laurels, however, Barry made a run for Ohio attorney general in 1986, but lost to the incumbent Democrat. As the proverbial door closed, a window to the state Senate opened. In 1987, Senate Republicans called on Barry to fill out a departing senator's term. Senator Barry Levey went on to serve two full terms and became the only member of the Ohio Legislature thus far to chair both the House and Senate judiciary committees.

One of Barry's major achievements as a senator occurred during the 118th General Assembly when he served as chief sponsor and



advocate for Senate Bill 321, which would become one of the most significant pieces of legislation of the mid-1980s into the early 1990s. With support from business and organized labor, Barry worked with the Ohio State Bar Association to enact this major anti-takeover bill to protect Ohio-based companies, such as Armco Steel.

In 1995, Barry resigned from the Senate. As a legislator, he had worked tirelessly for his constituents and was respected by his colleagues on both sides of the aisle. “Just because we disagree,” Barry was often heard to say, “doesn’t mean we have to be disagreeable.”

Barry went on to serve as chairman of First Financial Bancorp, where he remained until retiring in 2002. But Barry’s commitment to Middletown did not end with his retirement from politics, law and banking. For several years, in the midst of the Great Recession, Barry was part of a group that funded the city’s Fourth of July fireworks. And

in 2004, he organized a group of businessmen who donated \$45,000 to the city to make sure two municipal pools would operate that summer after the City Council had cut them from the budget.

Middletown, southwest Ohio and Atrium Medical Center have been fortunate that so many philanthropic leaders, such as the Leveys, had bold vision and determination that moved the community forward. There is no doubt that both Elliott and Barry Levey left their community and the world a better place – because they cared.

This article is the 16th in a series of profiles celebrating the 2017 centennial anniversary of Atrium Medical Center (formerly Middletown Hospital and Middletown Regional Hospital). The series honors the men and women whose civic-mindedness and genuine caring for others helped Greater Middletown grow and contributed to the first-class medical center the region boasts today.

Past Legends focused on:

Paul Galeese, *Issue 1*; E.O. Bauer, MD, and John L. Bauer, MD, *Issue 2*; Educating Our Caregivers, *Issue 3*; Russell L. "Rusty" Malcolm, MD, and Albert S. Malcolm, MD, *Issue 4*; Ann and Arthur Bidwell, *Issue 5*; Atrium Auxiliary Middletown, *Issue 6*; Dr. Dick and Charlotte Nisbet, *Issue 7*; The Wilbur Cohen Family, *Issue 8*; Middletown Area Federation of Women's Clubs, *Issue 9*; Dolly Frieman Casper, *Issue 10*; The Sawyer Family, *Issue 11*; Southwest Ohio Businesses, *Issue 12*; Dr. Raymond and Jean Anne Kiefhaber, *Issue 13*; Richard "Dick" Slagle, *Issue 14*; Celebrating 100 Years, *Issue 15*.

Special thanks to the W.E. Smith Charitable Trust for partial funding to produce Legends.



Atrium
Medical Center

F O U N D A T I O N

One Medical Center Drive | Middletown, Ohio 45005 | 513-974-5144
Foundation@AtriumMedCenter.org | AtriumMedCenter.org/Foundation