

# Sobczak Family



he name Sobczak has no historical ties to this community but the name is being featured in this room because Joseph M. Sobczak was one of the partners in the architectural firm, Toshach and Sobczak Associates, Inc., which designed the Bavarian Inn

Lodge.

During Mr. Sobczak's years of professional practice he served as a Project Architect and/or held major responsibilities for a wide variety of building types, especially with commercial, educational, municipal and industrial type projects.

Joseph H. Sobczak was born in Dortmund, Germany to Andreas and Kathrina Sobczak. Joseph, the fourth of nine children, was employed as an office worker in a Ruhr Valley coal mine. Joseph and his oldest sister, Pauline, immigrated to the United States from Germany, arriving at Ellis Island on January 20, 1926. The brother and sister proceeded on to their Uncle Michael Soltysiak's home in Bay City, Michigan. Uncle Michael operated a tailor shop in Bay City and was able to help them in their early years in the United States.

During his years in Bay City, Joseph worked as a wood finisher at the now defunct Bay City Veneer Works, and later as a delivery driver for the Farmer Peet Packing Company. In 1941, he purchased a neighborhood grocery and beer store which he operated until his retirement in 1966.

Josephine V. Schwarz was the oldest of eight children born to Wilhelm and Josephine nee Mueller Schwarz in Westerhofen, Germany.

Josephine immigrated to Deer Park Long Island, New York in 1928 to live with her father's brother and his family.

During this time she had the privilege of becoming good friends with the Broadway musical entertainer, Ethel Merman.

In 1930, she came to Bay City to live with an aunt. During her early years in Bay City she worked as a domestic in Frankenlust Township for several prominent Bay City families.

Because of the great influx of immigrants during this period of United States history, the Bay City YWCA conducted ethnic social evenings and English language classes. It was at one of these evenings that she ultimately met Joseph Sobczak. The couple was married on June 6, 1931 in Bay City's St. Boniface Church. The wedding dinner and reception were held at Zehnder's in Frankenmuth.

Joseph and Josephine's marriage was blessed with two children: Joseph M., a prominent architect in the Saginaw area and John W., an aeronautical engineer, who resided in Newport News, Virginia.

Joseph M., of the firm Toschach and Sobczak Associates, Inc., received his elementary and high school education at St. James Catholic Schools in Bay City. After attending Bay City Junior College he entered the U.S. navy from 1951-1955, attending Naval Draftsman School and serving with Mobil Construction No. 2 in the Philippine Islands. After an honorable discharge in 1955, he served inactive reserve until 1959.

Joseph M. married Jolly Ann Guire in 1958 and received his Architectural Engineering degree from the University of Detroit in 1961.



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