

"Federation Corner" column  
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### **MCCF history worth repeating**

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*This week's column is a reprint of the July 13, 2006 Federation Corner column written by then-President of MCCF Wayne Goldstein, who passed away unexpectedly three weeks ago at the age of 56. The following is the early history of the Federation, which I believe bears repeating, as Wayne wrote it.*

I'd like to give a little background about the organization whose members often write this column. The Montgomery County Civic Federation (MCCF) was founded in 1925. A 1938 history stated, "More than a decade ago, thoughtful citizens of the County became alarmed at the gap which was continually widening between local government and its citizens. To close this gap between the citizen and his government, the Civic Association movement gained ground."

"The (MCCF) has succeeded beyond the expectations of its founders," it stated. "Past years have seen local Civic Associations delegating their community leaders to perform volunteer service on their behalf in the Committees of the Federation and to contribute to debate on the floor of propositions of importance to the community." Major achievements of this period included prohibiting county employees from receiving county contracts and placing county police under the Civic Service.

The "Guide to the Records of the (MCCF)" in the county archives includes an administrative history of the group. It states, "The various civic-minded associations created in the early 20th century were all dedicated to improving services in their respective communities. No single organization, however, sought wholesale changes in the system of County government until the Civic Federation took up this challenge in the 1930s."

"Influenced by the New Deal politics and by an influx of progressive-minded Federal employees, the (MCCF) began to work toward home rule," it stated. "The Federation had long advocated a larger, more active County government, but limited its efforts to supporting initiatives of other groups and individuals. By 1936, the Federation sought to develop a home rule charter, create a merit system for employees, and appoint a County comptroller."

In 1937, MCCF formed a committee to study how to improve county government; in 1938, MCCF "passed a resolution calling for the county commissioners to fund a third-party study of County government"; and in 1939, the county commissioners hired the Brookings Institute of Government Research for the study, entitled "Government in Montgomery County," which was released in 1941.

The MCCF records state, "The study recommended sweeping changes to the County government, replacing the Board of Commissioners with a county manager and a nonpartisan County Council, a county employee merit system, and the formation of a Civic Service Commission."

The demand for home rule was opposed by the commissioners. Nevertheless, MCCF voted to establish a Montgomery County Charter Committee, which worked diligently toward a charter referendum that passed in 1948.

"Throughout much of its history," the records state, "the Federation was in conflict with the County government because it championed such politically unpopular causes as a nonpartisan County

government, a County Manager system, and the abolition of state-appointed officials to the M-NCPPC and the WSSC. During the 1950s, the MCCF supported selection of the school board through nonpartisan elections, and contributed to the revision and improvement in enforcement of zoning codes."

A public official recently commented, "The MCCF is against everything." A more accurate statement would be that MCCF has often been for solutions that are opposed by the government, or that MCCF is against government solutions that we believe cause more problems than are solved.

Wayne Goldstein concluded his column, written nearly three years ago, with these words. "In the coming year MCCF will continue to be the strongest and most consistent voice for our member associations and the rest of the county's residents." The statement holds true today, as well.

In 2010 the Federation will celebrate its 85th anniversary as an all- volunteer organization with a mission to preserve and improve the quality of life for county residents. At our upcoming June 8 meeting, MCCF will elect its 49th president. It may be of interest to note that the first woman president of MCCF was elected in 1973, and the first Latino president was elected in 1988.

The MCCF is an umbrella organization that welcomes neighborhood citizens associations, homeowner associations, and other county civic groups to join and send delegates to our regular monthly meetings. The MCCF monthly meetings are open to the public and are held the evening of the second Monday of each month (except July and August, when we are in recess) in the first floor auditorium of the County Council Building in Rockville. Individuals may join the Federation, too. And all MCCF members are urged to serve on one of our dynamic committees--Education, Public Finance, Environment, Planning and Land Use, Public Safety, Transportation, Public Utilities, Legislation, and our newest committee, Parks. For more information on MCCF and an application form, visit our website at [www.montgomerycivic.org](http://www.montgomerycivic.org)

*The views expressed in this column do not necessarily reflect formal positions adopted by the Federation. To submit an 800-1000 word column for consideration, send as an email attachment to [theelms518@earthlink.net](mailto:theelms518@earthlink.net)*