

KEITH WILKOWSKI - BIOGRAPHY

Keith Wilkowski was born in Toledo, Ohio November 11, 1955, Veterans' Day. He grew up in North Toledo with his parents, Art and Eileen Wilkowski, his older sister Kathy and his younger brother, Craig. Both of his parents were school teachers but his father went on to become a lawyer and later moved into the political arena. Art Wilkowski used his time in Ohio Legislature, from 1969 to 1983, to promote large initiatives, in particular a plan for high speed trains connecting Ohio's large cities. Keith's mother Eileen was a talented artist and ran a ceramic shop.

Keith attended Toledo Public Schools, Hamilton Grade School and Woodward High School. He graduated from Woodward in 1973. At Woodward, Keith played basketball and served as a class officer (Sgt. at Arms). In his senior year, Keith played the lead role in Woodward's musical, "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown", which helped ignite a lifelong love for live theater.

Keith attended Ohio State University, where he graduated cum laude with a degree in History in 1977. After graduation, Keith returned to Toledo and took a year off before starting law school. During that year, Keith worked a variety of jobs, including working as a bus boy at The Hungry I restaurant where he met his future wife, Barbara Martel. Like Keith, Barb had graduated from college and was working at the restaurant while seeking a job in her field, social work.

Keith and Barb married on January 5, 1979 and celebrated their 30th anniversary earlier this year.

Barb Wilkowski worked for a short time as a social worker at the Lucas County Children Services Board and then took time off to raise their four children. Barb later returned to school to become a registered nurse. Barb worked at Toledo Hospital for over 17 years until moving to a clinical setting a couple of years ago.

While Keith and Barb were starting their family, Keith worked during the day and attended law school at night at the University of Toledo. Daughters Erica and Emily were born while Keith was in law school (1980 and 1982). Keith graduated from law school in 1982, and despite working during the day and raising a family, Keith graduated magna cum laude, 2nd in his class, including the day and night divisions. Son Greg arrived in 1985 and Joe followed in 1988.

Keith began his political career in 1983, when he was elected to the Toledo Board of Education. Keith was re-elected to the school board in 1987, and served as both Vice President and President of the Board.

In 1983, Keith began to practice law with his father's neighborhood law firm, Wilkowski & Bloom, on Lagrange Street in North Toledo. As a businessperson on Lagrange Street, Keith immediately became involved in efforts to improve the neighborhood. Keith is one

of the original founders of the Lagrange Street Polish Festival, which recently celebrated its 26th year as one of the largest and best street festivals in the region.

In 1985, Keith moved to a larger Toledo firm, now known as Cooper & Walinski. The firm had developed a reputation for attracting some of the best and brightest lawyers while maintaining a family friendly work environment. Today, Cooper & Walinski is one of the largest majority women-owned law firms in the nation.

In 1988, Keith expanded his public service and ran for Lucas County Commissioner, winning with about 61% of the vote. As a Commissioner, Keith helped put in place a plan that brought Burlington Air Express (now BAX Global) to the airport along with 1,000 jobs. The Commissioners extended water and sewer services to the site so that it could be developed. They also partnered with the Port Authority to develop a creative financing plan to build the necessary improvements.

As a County Commissioner, Keith also helped lead the effort to save the old downtown YMCA building. The building had become vacant and fallen into disuse and seemed headed for demolition. The county purchased the building and converted it to a facility serving the criminal justice system with a residential component.

In late 1990, the long-time head of the Toledo City Law Department left the city and Keith became the City Law Director. As Law Director, Keith settled a long-standing dispute between the City of Toledo and the City of Maumee over 1400 acres of land Toledo had purchased in the 1980s in Monclova Township, intending to annex the property to Toledo. The dispute was settled by creating a Joint Economic Development Zone Agreement or JEDZ. As a result, local government officials began working together to permit the development of the property, rather than fighting. Keith then also led Toledo's effort to establish joint economic development zones for Toledo with Rossford and Monclova Township (and Maumee). Today, there are between four and five thousand jobs in those JEDZ areas and Toledo is receiving in excess of a million dollars in annual tax revenues.

With the 1993 municipal elections, the City of Toledo moved from the City Manager to the Strong Mayor form of government. For the final month or so of that year, Keith served as the City's acting City Manager when City Manager Tom Hoover took a job as City Manager in Wooster, MA. Keith therefore served as the City of Toledo's last City Manager.

In 1994 when Keith returned to the private practice of law at Cooper & Walinski, he continued to be involved in civic and public affairs. Keith served as the part-time solicitor for the Village of Waterville, and as the part-time law director for the City of Rossford. Keith also served as the Chair of the Lucas County Democratic Party from 1994 to 1997.

As a result of Keith's extensive experience in local economic development, Keith has been a speaker at conferences around Ohio sponsored by the Ohio Municipal League on

the topic of joint economic development zones, as well as cooperative development agreements between school districts and cities.

In 2005, Keith ran for Mayor of Toledo, finishing third behind then incumbent Mayor Jack Ford and the eventual winner, Carty Finkbeiner.

Keith and Barb are proud parents and grandparents. Erica graduated from Ohio State University in 2003 with degrees in French and Business. She works for a Toledo area company as a marketing specialist and regularly uses her French language skills on trade excursions to Europe. Emily graduated from the University of Dayton in 2004 with degrees in French and Political Science. She is a special education teacher. Emily and husband Lenny are the parents of Colin, age 2 and their new daughter Abigail, who was born July 23, 2009. Son Greg is 23, is a graduate of the University of Dayton with dual majors in History and German. Greg recently moved to Washington, D.C. where he is working for the Holocaust Museum in the office of the Chief Historian. Youngest son Joe is 21 and a senior at Ohio University majoring in video production.

Keith is an avid jogger, hiker and (still) basketball player. He has hiked the Grand Canyon annually over the last 10 years, including leading several trips from the North Rim to the South Rim of the Canyon with members of his family and friends. Keith enjoys reading, and has a special interest in economics and history.

Keith and Barb have resided in Toledo's Old Orchard neighborhood since 1991. Keith and Barb are members of Corpus Christi University Parish, led by Father James Bacik.