



from your Executive Director

By Bryan E. Smith

TOI Executive Director

Thanks to a Counterpart!



LARRY MERRILL, Executive Director of the Michigan Township Association is thanked for his years of service to NATaT by NATaT President and TOI Executive Director Bryan Smith

IT MAY SEEM UNUSUAL for me to write an article about someone that most likely none of you know. There might be a few “old-timers” who remember him, but most of you won’t.

His name is Larry Merrill and he has been my counterpart at the Michigan Township Association (MTA) since 2000. Larry first joined MTA in 1980 as their Education Director and he became Deputy Executive Director in 1985. Prior to this, Larry worked in a county government in Michigan. Larry’s tenure in township government started when he was 10 years old and helped his father, a Township Trustee, pass out fliers supporting a tax for a new township fire truck.

During his career at MTA, Larry earned the reputation as an expert on organization administration and governance, public finance, and public safety regulations. Larry has written several publications helping Michigan Township Officials, but it was the publication he co-wrote *Survival Guide for Local Elected Leaders* that was published by National Association of Towns and Townships (NATaT) many years ago, that was my first glimpse at his work. Long before I was around in the early 1980’s, Larry came to a TOI Conference and presented in a session.

In 2000, Larry became the Executive Director of MTA and that is where I really got to know him. He became a member of the Board of Directors of NATaT where I had been serving since 1996. We quickly became friends and have been through a lot during the years we’ve served on the NATaT Board together.

The first time I served as NATaT President, back in 2003-2004, we were faced with the challenge of finding a new director for NATaT. The process was challenging to say the least, and I appreciated Larry and his steady work ethic to help us find the right person we needed. A few years later, 2012-2013, Larry had his term as President of NATaT and I hope I gave him the support he gave me when I was in the position.

I’m currently serving as NATaT President again, and Larry has been there helping us guide NATaT as we advocate for township government in Washington, D.C.

However, all good things must come to an end. Larry retired at the end of June after almost four decades with the Michigan Township Association. I got to see Larry and honor him on behalf of NATaT at the NATaT Fly-In in early June. It was a sad moment for me, saying good-bye, but I wish Larry only the best as he starts this new chapter in his life. I’m sure he will keep plenty busy in retirement, and I wish him the best. Thank you, Larry Merrill, for your leadership and commitment to Township Government, but most of all, thank you for being a friend.

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