

Political Update – February 2009
By Nina Albano Vidmer

Hank Gianvecchio

Henry (Hank) Gianvecchio is serving his last term as Bloomingdale Township Assessor, an office he has held since first elected in 1973.

A product of the Near West Side of Chicago, Gianvecchio was born to immigrants Shipione and Helena. Tough times awaited the family. “I was a first generation Italian American. My dad couldn’t speak any English and therefore he stressed the importance of learning the language and getting an education.” After his parents died when he was nine years old, Gianvecchio didn’t realize that his luck would soon change for the better. He met Moose Brindisi, a Westside social worker and organizer, who took him into his home and along with his wife Mary, raised him as their son. “Everything I am today I owe to Moose. He was my idol and my guiding star,” says Gianvecchio.

Growing up on the rough-and-tumble streets of Chicago, Gianvecchio learned life lessons that he still embraces today. “This was an area where your word and your name were everything. Keeping your word and having a good name are keys in life and politics,” he says. Moose also instilled in Gianvecchio a commitment to community. “Helping people, that’s what it’s all about. And that’s a perfect background for politics.”

Gianvecchio was drafted and sent to Vietnam, serving in the 4th Infantry Division. He earned a Presidential Unit Citation while in Vietnam, Vietnam Campaign Ribbon and achieved the permanent rank of Sergeant E-5 before returning home. His military experience gained him a new outlook on life. Like many vets, Gianvecchio was anxious to start a new life and moved to Du Page County where homes were cheaper. Strapped for cash with a large tax bill, Gianvecchio became motivated to institute a fairer process for taxpayers and ran for assessor in 1973, the office he still holds today. He notes that in his first election he had everything going against him: he was a young, bearded city kid with an Italian name in a primarily German area. The newspapers didn’t even consider him viable. “I had some good ideas but they thought I had no chance,” says Gianvecchio.

Gianvecchio has served the Bloomingdale Township Republican Central Committee as Precinct Committeeman, Precinct 11, (1974 to 1986); and Precinct 13 (1996 to present). He has served as chairman or vice chairman of the Bloomingdale Township Republican Central Committee since 1980. He was appointed by Governor Thompson to serve as a commissioner on the Illinois Commission on Delinquency Prevention in 1980 for a two-year term. He was also appointed by Governor Edgar to serve as a member of the Commission on the Recodification of the Revenue Act of 1939 and to serve as a member of the Commission on Property Tax Reform in 1998. Gianvecchio was a member of the Tax Cap Advance Organization for Governor’s Task Force from 1990 – 1991. He continues to serve as a member of the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, an appointment he received in 1999 from then Senate President James “Pate” Philip.

Gianvecchio's proudest achievements are assisting Darlene Ruscitti in her election to the office of Regional Supt. DuPage County Schools, and Franco Coladipietro in his election to State Representative, 45th District. Gianvecchio says he proudly serves Bloomingdale Township with other Italian Americans, including: Ed Levato, township supervisor, and trustees Joe Salerno, Marilyn Menconi, and Fran Scalafini. "I believe Italians do well in politics because of their family values and love of life" says Gianvecchio.

Gianvecchio resides in Bloomingdale with his wife, Geri (nee Faruzzi). "My proudest personal achievements are my three children: I have an engineer (Richard), a doctor (Christopher) and an attorney (Natasha). We have 9 grandchildren; seven girls and two boys," he beams.