The Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency (MCCD) is celebrating its 60th year of promoting state justice policies that are fair, effective and affordable.

Since it was established in 1956, MCCD has been a trailblazer in Michigan, partnering with communities on crime prevention strategies, promoting fair and equitable access to justice, expanding community-based alternatives to incarceration, and improving outcomes through safe and effective treatment.

Over the next few months we are commemorating MCCD’s 60 years of service by showcasing its legacy of accomplishments throughout the decades. These briefs lead up to MCCD’s 60th Anniversary Gala on September 9th at Weber’s Inn, Ann Arbor, MI—we hope to see you there!


By the end of MCCD’s inaugural project with the Michigan Dept. of Corrections (MDOC), the Saginaw Project, state prison rates dropped by half from 1957-1960 by “expand[ing] probation and parole staff and “encourag[ing] sound and tested techniques.” The National Council on Crime and Delinquency evaluated MCCD’s and MDOC’s progress and authored a report urging the continuance of trained probation and parole staff. In fact, it warned of a “radical” 3,000 person increase in Michigan prison rates if present trends and probation and parole usage did not continue. It continued to warn that expenditures between nine and fourteen million dollars were projected to occur in through the 1970s as a result of increasing incarceration and crime rates.

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2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
Unfortunately, the predictions came true. While incarceration rates dramatically dropped during the Saginaw Project years, prison populations nearly doubled during 1966-1976 from 6,754 to 12,465. This astounding increase in numbers was largely due to a dramatic increase in Michigan’s population coupled with a decreased reliance on probation and parole.

**Youth-Led Participation**

In 1976, the Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency began hosting a youth participation project called the “Three O’Clock Lobby” in their Lansing office.

Operating as an after-school youth participation with the Michigan’s Office of Juvenile Justice Services (OJJS), the Three O’ Clock Lobby formed several juvenile justice task forces led by youth in the East Lansing community. With the joint efforts of MCCD and OJJS, the youth-led group put forth efforts to promote advocacy and legislative action for teens under the age of 18. In 1977, the group expanded its vision, holding conferences and creating workshops on educating young people of their legal rights. The presence of the Three O’ Clock Lobby held an important role in exemplifying the benefits of youth-led empowerment and community organization in the late 1970s. Although it disseminated in the early 80’s, it was the predecessor of what is now the Michigan Juvenile Justice Collaborative and laid foundational roots for MCCD’s active engagement juvenile justice advocacy.

**The Push Back Against Death Penalty Begins**

In 1847, Michigan became the first English-speaking territory in the world to abolish the death penalty. In 1962, a constitutional convention passed a proposal to abolish the death penalty for all crimes in Michigan by a 108 to 3 vote. Yet, despite this legacy, the Michigan Coalition Against the Death Penalty (MCADP) was formed in the late 1970s as a response to legislative efforts to reinstate the death penalty in Michigan for first-degree murder convictions. Partnerships with the National Coalition Against the Death Penalty and the Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency helped focus the communities’ efforts on the provision of public

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7 Ibid.
9 Ibid
and accurate data regarding the ethical, legal and practical implications of capital punishment. MCCD and other citizen action organizations released a multitude of press materials, publications, newsletters, and personal statements against the reinstatement of the law. Although just introduced in the late seventies, these efforts to combat the death penalty continued for many years to come, remaining a rich part of MCCD’s work over the next decades.

**Beth Arnowits Joins MCCD**

Starting in the early 1970s, Beth joined MCCD’s team. One of her first big projects was working as a state field consultant on the National Study of Women’s Correctional Programs, an initiative funded by the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, a division of the U.S. Department of Justice. This was one of the first large-scale projects that focused on women as a separate population within the correctional system.

By 1977, Beth had become MCCD’s new executive director and stayed in this position for the next 34 years, paving the way for decades of criminal and juvenile justice reforms to come.

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**MCCD Board Members & Staff 1966-1976**

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<th>Dr. Charles Anspach</th>
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<th>James T. Malsak</th>
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<td>Elizabeth (Beth) Arnowits</td>
<td>Jack Green</td>
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10 Michigan Coalition Against the Death Penalty records, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan
MCCD’s history becomes even richer over the next years. Stay tuned for our next installment with highlights of our next decade, 1976-1986.

Mark your Calendars!

**MCCD’s 60th Anniversary Gala**

*September 9, 2016*

*6:30pm – 10:00pm*

Weber’s Inn

Ann Arbor, MI

*Special guest: Jr. Walker’s All-Star Band: A Motown Collection*