

OUR CENTURY

1985

AT A GLANCE

Voinovich re-elected with little opposition

On Lincoln's birthday, George Voinovich broke the suspense. He would run for another term as mayor. He would not run for governor in 1986, despite Republicans' attempts to draft him.

One potential opponent said Voinovich might not even survive the primary. He was too "lethargic" and "unimaginative," according to State Sen. Michael White.

Two weeks later, White decided not to run. So did a lot of other prominent Democrats. The best-known of those who did was Councilman Gary Kucinich, who represented his brother's old West Side ward. James Barrett, who had been Mayor Dennis Kucinich's safety director, also ran — the first well-known black candidate in 20 years.

In the lowest primary turnout in decades, Voinovich got 33,000 votes to 13,000 for Kucinich. Barrett, with 5,000, was eliminated. Kucinich had little money. Many prominent Democrats declined to endorse him. In November it was Voinovich, 82,000-32,000.

Mabel Gant, 66, died when her home on E. 50th St. was firebombed on June 2. She had obviously been targeted because she was one of the few blacks in the Slavic Village neighborhood.

As tensions mounted, extra police patrolled the area. They arrested three teenagers and charged one with murder. He was acquitted in October. A 20-year-old was later sentenced to two years for lying to police in the investigation, but no one was ever convicted of the murder.

Christoph von Dohnanyi ended his first triumphant season as music director of the Cleveland Orchestra during the summer of 1985 with a spectacular production of Mozart's "The Magic Flute" at Blossom Music Center. Not only did Dohnanyi conduct the performances, he conceived and directed the production, which melded classical elements with contemporary references.

By presenting a full-scale mounting of the Mozart opera at Blossom, Dohnanyi stretched the artistic reach of the orchestra. He also stretched the budget, which became so stressed that the Musical Arts Association told him he had to find another way to perform opera at the orchestra's summer home. In 1986, Dohnanyi found one: a co-production with the National Opera of Belgium of Franz Lehár's operetta "The Merry Widow," with Anja Silja (then his wife) in the title role.

The partnership helped the bottom line, but not enough to keep opera at Blossom. Since 1986, the center has presented opera only in concert performances. Dohnanyi, dissatisfied with the narrow scope of Blossom, withdrew from the summer home after 1989.

Under new coach George Karl, the Cavaliers got off to a 2-19 start. Then they turned it around, winning 34 of their last 61. That gained their first playoff appearance in seven years, but Boston eliminated them, 3-1, in the first round.

A deal to sell the Indians to New York lawyer David LeFevre fell through, leaving the team still owned by the estate of F.J. O'Neill. Peter Bavasi was the new president. The 1985 team lost 102 games, tying the franchise record. It drew only 655,181 spectators, fewest in the majors.

Bernie Kosar, star quarterback of the Miami University Hurricanes, completed his college credits in three years. In a move that made him an instant Cleveland hero, the Boardman native said he would turn pro if he could play for the Browns.

Art Modell quickly arranged a trade with Buffalo for the top pick in the supplemental draft.

Kosar moved in as a starter when Gary Danielson hurt his shoulder in the fifth game. With Ernest Byner and rookie Kevin Mack each rushing for 1,000 yards, Kosar led the team to an 8-8 record, good enough for the Central Division title. The Browns took a 21-3 lead over the Miami Dolphins, but the Dolphins rallied to a 24-21 victory, ending the Browns' season.

Backers of a new sports stadium weren't giving up, despite rejection of their bond issue in 1984. They formed the Domed Stadium Corp. and won state funds to begin buying land in the Central Market. Voinovich ruled out a rival plan for a six-sided stadium called the Hexatron between City Hall and Lakeside Courthouse.

Voinovich got another \$8.4 million from the state for a pet project of his — a 7.4-acre "inner harbor" to be dug out of fill land northeast of the Stadium. It was modeled on a waterfront development in Baltimore.

Clevelanders rallied to the support of still another civic project. Citing Cleveland's role in rock, Celeste, Voinovich and civic leaders urged the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum Foundation to build its museum in Cleveland rather than New York as planned.

Other cities reacted with their own bids. USA Today asked readers to vote, at 50 cents a call, on where the hall should be. Radio stations turned the poll into a civic crusade. Cleveland won by a huge margin. There was one slight problem: Nobody knew who would pay for the hall or how.

Holliday suicide focuses attention on continuing turmoil in schools

By Fred McGunagle

It ripped through Cleveland like the bullet through Frederick Holliday's heart.

"The fighting among school board members and what petty politics is doing to the system has sickened me," said his bitter suicide letter. "Use this event to rid yourself of petty politics, racial politics, greed, hate and corruption. This city deserves better. The children deserve better. Cleveland deserves better."

In a P.S., Holliday added: "Kids, if there are any errors in this letter, I did not proof it carefully."

Holliday's body was found by a student reporting for classes at Aviation High School at 8:30 a.m. Monday, Jan. 28. He apparently had shot himself after typing out his letter in the principal's office.

The letter touched off an orgy of re-creation — one which Holliday started with a beyond-the-grave shot at a critic. His letter spoke of "one school board member" — obviously Edward Young — who had "dedicated himself to 'getting' Holliday." He added, hollowly, "I forgive him."

"He got me," was Young's response. "I can't think of a more effective way of getting someone."

It was Holliday's parting criticism, rather than his plea, that set the tone. His supporters figuratively tried to smear his opponents with his blood. Politicians issued pious statements that politicians — meaning other politicians — needed to mend their ways.

The suicide was puzzling in that many Greater Cleveland superintendents had been through stormier times than Holliday. At first it appeared he acted in response to a 4-3 school board vote two days earlier that suggested his contract would not be renewed.

But City Council President George Forbes revealed he had worked out a deal with Stanley Tolliver, one of Holliday's school board critics, to give him an extension. "I told Fred he had another year and he seemed pleased," Forbes said.

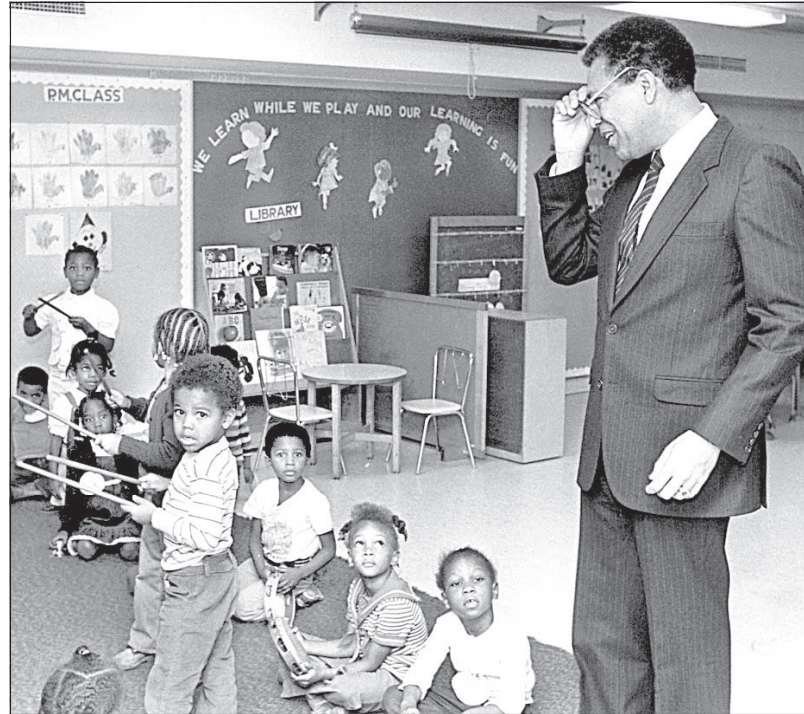
Holliday's conduct over the previous two days also was strange. He appeared "joyful" during a radio interview at WJMO on Saturday morning and afterward phoned WJW talk show host Merle Pollis to make a lunch date for Tuesday. But he had also written checks to pay bills that would come due and had cashed in an annuity and sent the money to his two daughters with a farewell letter.

His suicide was a jarring ending to a superintendency which, on the surface, seemed the most successful in years. Parents liked his call for tougher discipline. Voters passed a 9.9-mill levy — the first in 13 years — allowing the system to balance its budget and escape state fiscal supervision.

But he alienated labor unions by attempting to replace the board's bus drivers with a private contractor and by bringing in replacements for security officers during a "sick-out." He angered black leaders by trying to get rid of Business Manager Harrison Dillard. He irritated the majority of the board by his close relationship with board President Alva "Ted" Bonda, through whom he communicated with the others. In particular, the three black members — Young, Tolliver and Mildred Madison — complained that the city's first black superintendent paid too little attention to desegregation.

With Holliday's contract up for renewal, the three teamed to make Ralph Perk Jr. the new president. Board member Joseph Tegreene said, "My worst fear is that Ralph Perk traded the career of Fred Holliday in exchange for the board presidency."

The charge appeared to have substance when Perk joined Holliday's critics in hiring lawyer Kenneth Seminatore to help evaluate the superintendent. Seminatore was an ex-board member who had been critical



PLAIN DEALER FILE PHOTOS

Superintendent Frederick Holliday, shown above visiting with a first-grade class, committed suicide, leaving a bitter letter condemning the bitterness and petty politics that plagued his tenure.

of Holliday.

Tegreene started a "save our supe" drive. "Fred Holliday is more popular in the Greater Cleveland community than he is on the board," he said.

He seemed even more popular after his suicide. One columnist called him a "martyr." Callers to radio talk shows castigated his critics. Tolliver complained of "a lynch-mob atmosphere."

The division on the board remained. In a 4-3 vote, the majority named Alfred Tutela as acting superintendent. Tutela was "the last of the Leftwich seven" — the staff brought to Cleveland in 1978 by unpopular desegregation director Charles Leftwich. Tegreene charged that Tutela would be a puppet for board member Madison.

Tutela was a finalist for the permanent appointment, but in September the board chose Ronald Boyd, deputy superintendent in Compton, Calif., and a former Elyria principal. The vote was officially unanimous, but the board had split 4-2-1 in an earlier executive session. Perk and Young backed Tutela, while Madison abstained. Tolliver joined Bonda, Tegreene and Joseph Gallagher to cast the key vote for Boyd.

"I am the Terminator," Boyd announced on his arrival in Cleveland. The allusion was to a recent Arnold Schwarzenegger movie role. "I'm out to get illiteracy, drugs, unfair treatment, the lack of reading ability, the lack of winning teams here in the city," he said.

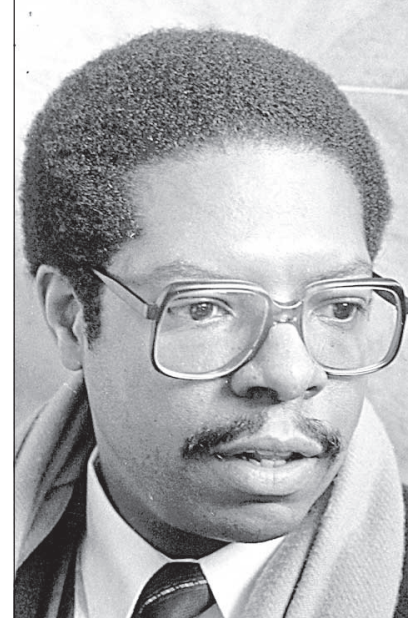
There was one more score to be settled. In a heavy turnout, voters re-elected Tegreene and Tolliver to the board. They also chose two well-known political names — Benny Bonanno, former county recorder, and James Carney Jr., former Cleveland councilman. Young finished eighth. Bonda did not run.

As the year ended, a board-sponsored "school climate survey" showed parents' confidence in the system had deteriorated. A Cleveland State University survey of homebuyers found that those with children who would attend public schools were avoiding the city.

In other news . . .

It seemed as though Ohio's share of the national recovery had been exported to Japan. A survey showed the city had lost 99 manufacturing plants in the previous year. During a conference at the Federal Reserve Bank, an economist from Philadelphia said cities had to face facts: "Manufacturing is gone."

Dennis Kucinich had been among those mentioned as potential Voinovich opponents. His decision was a



Holliday thought school board member Edward Young, above, was out to get him.



Christoph von Dohnanyi was named musical director of the Cleveland Orchestra for the 1984-1985 season. (Details in At a Glance.)

surprise: He would not run for mayor, and he would not seek reelection as Broadway area councilman. Instead, he would run for governor as an independent against the Democratic incumbent, Richard Celeste.

Lacking campaign funds, Kucinich set out on a 250-mile walk from Cincinnati to Cleveland to attract media attention. He arrived footsore but still only a blip in the polls.

The Cleveland area wasn't directly involved, but the collapse of Home State Savings Bank in Cincinnati sent shock waves through Ohio and the nation. The thrift's accounts had been insured by the private Ohio Deposit Guarantee Fund, which many depositors thought was a state agency.

The fund couldn't cover the losses. That started runs on a half-dozen other ODGF thrifts. The state closed them. With weeping depositors standing by, the legislature voted for a bailout. It was a forerunner of the national savings and loan debacle to come.

Forty-one tornadoes, 14 of them labeled "killer tornadoes," ripped through Ohio, Pennsylvania, Ontario and New York the evening of May 31. Greater Cleveland escaped with heavy winds and rain, but one tornado cut a 47-mile path through Newton Falls, Niles and Hubbard before entering Pennsylvania.



Bernie Kosar completed his college degree work in three years and said he would turn pro if he could play for the Browns. (Details in At a Glance.)

Ten people died, but none in Newton Falls, even though the tornado went through the center of town and destroyed 400 homes. Volunteer storm spotters were watching from the roof of City Hall and sounded sirens 60 seconds before the twister hit.

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LOOKING AT A YEAR

March 17: Iraq and Iran engage in the heaviest fighting yet in their five-year war, a war in which the United States sides with Iraq.

April 29: President Ronald Reagan stands by his decision to lay a wreath at the graves of Nazi soldiers at a cemetery in Bitburg, Germany.

June 21: Investigators from several

nations announce they are 99 percent certain they have exhumed the body of Nazi death camp doctor Josef Mengele.

Sept. 1: A team of French and American researchers find the wreckage of the Titanic off the coast of Newfoundland.

Sept. 11: Pete Rose gets his 4,192nd career hit, breaking Ty Cobb's 57-

year-old record.

Nov. 29: Police in New York City report sales of a new drug, crack cocaine.

Dec. 16: Paul Castellano, head of the Gambino crime family and reputedly the most powerful Mafia boss in the country, is shot to death outside a New York restaurant.

Dec. 30: Palestinian terrorists kill

10 people in coordinated attacks at check-out counters of El Al Israel Airlines in Vienna and Rome.

Dec. 31: Rock singer Ricky Nelson dies in a Texas plane crash. Drug usage is suspected as the cause of the crash.

Deaths: Actors Orson Welles, Rock Hudson and Yul Brynner, and Watergate-era Sen. Sam Ervin Jr.