



# The Empire State Elk

Official Publication of the New York State Elks Association  
& The New York Elks Major Projects Corporation



**Lawrence Contratti**  
**State President's Message**

As I travel through this great state of ours, the Empire State, to the seventeen districts and the 125 lodges of the New York State Elks Association, I am constantly and pleasantly shown "fraternal ties that bind us" to each other (as we are reminded in a section of classic ritual). In addition to the social aspect, the good works we do are astonishing even after observing this for thirty-five years, as an Elk since 1977.

When touring the Mid-Hudson District I had the opportunity to tour a state-of-the-art CP of New York affiliated facility of the Hudson Valley Cerebral Palsy Association. My traveling companions and I had a thorough tour of this remarkable facility, hosted by Executive Director Howard Yager. The thing that struck us most at the still-incomplete building was the thousands of toys for the children and the names of doctors on the doors, a specialist for every problem. Major Projects begins with the Home Service Program but does not end there. Every conceivable disease, affliction and condition is treated there and no one is turned away. The contributions you make to Major Projects, plural, goes to an Elk state effort second to none in the nation.

The Hudson Valley Cerebral Palsy Center is but one of the 20 to 25 similar facilities throughout New York State, doing immeasurable good in every corner. I can assure you with the evidence of my own eyes that this is a charitable endeavour nonpareil, much like the Elks National Foundation on the national level in that it provides help and good works in many areas. We do not perhaps currently bring in half a million dollars plus each year as we used to do when our NYSEA membership was 92,000, but we hold our own and clearly do not forget that "Elks Care -Elks Share." Please continue to contribute generously. I wish to thank the lodges which have made donations to Major Projects during my district visits as well as the many Elks who made individual generous donations to same.

I am the first NYSEA President from New York City since Judge George J. Balbach in 1969, and the first from New York Lodge No. 1, "The Mother Lodge of All Elkdom," since Daniel J. Kerr in 1934. At New York # 1 we have a significant and growing Heritage Room filled with the treasures and memorabilia of early

Elkdom, not only things of New York, New York Lodge, but those of many other lodges of the NYSEA Association, particularly the lodges which have merged with NY # 1 over the years. On behalf of the lodge, in the building which was formerly Lynbrook Lodge No. 1515, 57 Hempstead Avenue, Lynbrook, I invite you to view our collection. Among the hundreds of things on display is a photo of General Pershing addressing the lodge in 1919, ancient minutes of regular meetings and an apron worn in an early ritual of initiation by a member who later went on to become an early Grand Exalted Ruler. If available, Curator Al Hoffman, PDDGER, will be glad to give you a tour.

I look forward to visiting with more of you as the year progresses. Remember my motto for this year and try to be true to it: "Cherish Elkdom"! This precious thing of ours will only be with us if we care enough to strive for growth and improvement!



**Past Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight,**  
**Past State President, Richard T. Moore**

In 1964 Richard T. Moore went to work for the City of Yonkers as a bookkeeper in the Water Bureau. During that same year, he was initiated into the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, in the JFK Class, in Yonkers Lodge #707. Thus began two distinguished careers with one common goal. For the next thirty-five years, Richard dedicated himself to the service of others through local and state government and through the fraternal Order of Elks.

He remained with the City of Yonkers, becoming the first appointed Record Control Supervisor until 1978 when he joined the staff of State Senator John E. Flynn. This position afforded him the flexibility to begin his twenty-two year career as State Secretary for the New York State Elks Association.

His remarkable career with the BPOE started immediately upon his initiation. He served his lodge as Est. Loyal Knight in 1964, Est. Leading Knight in 1965 and Exalted Ruler in 1966-67. In 1968 he took over the position of Lodge Secretary, a position he held until Yonkers and Mount Vernon Lodges merged in 1993. He was elected State Vice President for the NY South District in 1975 and served as District Deputy Grand Exalted Ruler in 1978. That same year he became State

Secretary, where he served until his retirement at the 1999 State Convention. In addition, in 1987, he was appointed to the Grand Lodge Credentials Committee where he served for four years. During this period, he was instrumental in putting the Convention Registration on computer. His service as State Secretary was interrupted for one year when he accepted the honor of serving as President of the New York State Elks Association during the year 1990-1991. Richard served the Grand Lodge as Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight in 2001-2002.

Richard also distinguished himself in service to his community in many other capacities. He was a three-time Commander of St. Mary's Post, Catholic War Veterans. He served as a trustee of the Yonkers Historical Society and contributed frequently to its newsletter. He was awarded their "Key to History" award in 1993. He served as Chairman of the Veterans Day and Memorial Day Parades in the City of Yonkers. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Yonkers YMCA and served as its President in 1994 and Treasurer until 1998. He was a member of the Hudson Valley Bank Business Development Board from 1982 until 1998. He also served as a member of the Landmarks Preservation Board.

Richard remained active as a member of the New York State Elks Association Advisory Board until his passing. He dedicated his life to "Caring and Sharing", and will be missed by Elks throughout the nation.