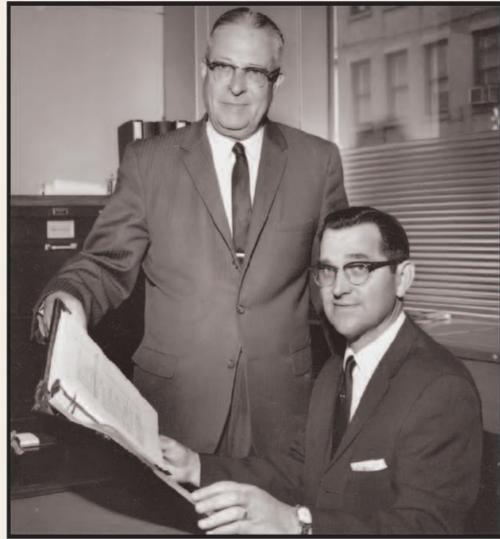


The Charter of 1967 | Establishing the County Executive



COUNTY CLERK FREDERICK SMITH

Courtesy of the Poughkeepsie Journal

County Clerk Frederick Smith was a strong supporter of the county executive post from the early 1960s. Citing the rise in population and the concomitant increase in his department's business, Smith called for an executive post to streamline county government by better coordinating department operations.

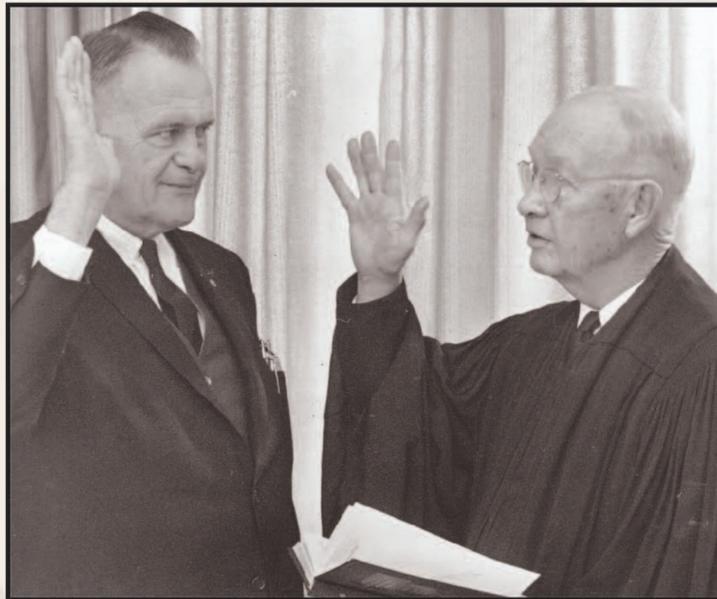


THE CHARTER COMMISSION TRIUMVIRATE

Courtesy of the Poughkeepsie Journal

On February 10, 1967, key members of the charter commission presented a draft of the county charter, which included an elected executive who would be directly responsible to the people, ahead of the April 17 referendum vote. Seen here from left to right were W. Carlton Bernard, the committee's sole non-enrolled member; Jack I. Lippman, Professor at Dutchess Community College and Commission Chairman, and Attorney Robert L. Ostertag, Attorney.

The post-World War II population and economic boom generated increasing demands for county services. Beginning in the late 1950s, the Dutchess County Board of Supervisors explored a variety of options, ranging from an executive assistant for the board to adopting a charter form of government. The example presented by Westchester, which introduced its first county executive in 1938, and other counties eventually convinced the supervisors to draft a new county charter. Work began in earnest in 1965, culminating in the charter of 1967, which designated the county executive as the steward of Dutchess government.



ADMINISTERING THE FIRST OATH OF OFFICE

Courtesy of the Poughkeepsie Journal

On January 3, 1968, the new charter went into formal operation when Supreme Court Justice Leonard J. Supple administered the oath of office to County Executive David C. Schoentag and the new board of representatives. This moment marked the first major change in Dutchess county government in over 200 years. Schoentag, the long-serving Town Supervisor of Beekman and the last chairman of the board of supervisors, represented an important element of continuity within the government.



DUTCHESS COUNTY'S FOUR CANDIDATES

Courtesy of the Poughkeepsie Journal

The charter's successful passage paved the way for the first elections for county executive in Autumn 1967. Four candidates stood for office (l-r), Republican David C. Schoentag, Democrat Robert C. Fouhy, Conservative William S. Quimby, and Liberal Satiro Kazolias. The diversity of viewpoints represented testified to the county's engagement with the new charter system.

CHARTER COMMISSION OPPONENTS

Courtesy of the Poughkeepsie Journal

Raymond Dylewski, Arnulf Muller, Henry Springer, and Anthony Chickery (l-r) were among the 45 people who attended the February 1967 charter presentation. Inquiries focused on the limits of executive power, implications of appointed department heads replacing elected positions, and the relationship between the executive and legislative branches.

