Patrick Kelly was born November 24, 1945 in Mankato. A 1963 graduate of Loyola High School, Patrick attended Mankato State University and was going to be the first city planning intern, but decided to enter the Army reserves. When he returned from service, he graduated from MSU and became a salesman at Kraft Foods.

Patrick was loyal to the Mankato Area. He was appointed to the North Mankato planning commission in 1981 and elected to North Mankato City Council in January 1983. He became president of the Port Authority in 1986. Kelly was a fiscally conservative person and believed in the principle of spending taxpayer money as if it were his own. He played a key role in the growth and development of the area until 1994.

In 1973, Bob Barrett was beginning to develop the Urban and Regional Development program in the Political Science department at Mankato State. He looked to his friend Patrick Kelly for guidance and sound input concerning this program.