

About Jim McKee, DG 2016-2017



Born in Geneva, Ohio and growing up in Ashtabula, living in Kent, Cuyahoga Falls, and North Canton, Ohio, Jim McKee has never lived far from District 6630. Moving from Ashtabula Harbor to Plymouth Township as a child, Jim attended the Ashtabula City Schools from Kindergarten through graduation.

At Ashtabula High, Jim was the announcer at the basketball games, was on the cross-country team, participated in the school plays and student government. He still relishes his role as class president planning class reunions.

While at Ashtabula High, Jim enjoyed amazing opportunities which helped shape his future. Participating at Buckeye Boys State, graduating from the three-year American Youth Foundation Leadership Conference program, and being a Junior Delegate at the 1980 Republican Convention were all tremendous learning opportunities.

After high school, Jim started college at the Kent State Ashtabula Campus. The two years there were spent thoroughly absorbed in student activities. As student body president, there was a flurry of functions which led to his receiving the Outstanding Student Service Award in 1981.

Moving to Kent was necessary and leaving Ashtabula was difficult. Jim remembers being the new guy after knowing everyone in town! 'It was a tough change from being the center of everything going on to not belonging or knowing anyone.' It is fair to say it was an adjustment Jim managed. At Kent State, Jim became involved with student government and was twice elected to the Student Senate. After his second election, he was voted Executive Director of Student Government.

Establishing a typing room for students, creating a commuter lounge, helping save the King Kennedy Center in Ravenna, starting a hot line service for students, assisting in keeping the Kent State Airport property, adding a student to the Board of Trustees, saving the Pass-fail option, and beginning student leader compensation.... All were projects undertaken during his term.

His 3 years at Kent started with early mornings and ended late at night, but he found it very worthwhile. The Kent years ended with a degree in Public Relations and a Commuter of the Year Award. Working through high school and college, Jim had worked at Sambos for 3 years in Ashtabula, then in Mentor. When the stores failed, Jim worked for Caseys in Ashtabula, Chardon and Painesville. When the restaurants became Godfreys, Jim was a manager in Akron. Graduation from Kent also meant leaving restaurant management.

Finding a career in carpet cleaning by accident, Jim saw the field as a stepping stone to business ownership while attending law school at the University of Akron. Surprisingly, he found it to be enjoyable, profitable, and challenging. After graduating from law school, the decision was made to continue starting and selling mom and pop businesses in the industry.

Jim started Special Touch Carpet Cleaners in 1986 and still owns and operates the business today. During its 30-year term, the firm has won five Beacons' Best

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Awards, several service awards, a Green Business Award, and Jim received the Business Person of the Year Award in 2013-14 from TEEM, a business owner group. Jim also is the owner of American Storage in Kent. He is a strong advocate of alternative energy. He owns a CNG fueling station and uses solar power at his farm in North Canton. He uses compressed natural gas to power his carpet cleaning fleet.

He lives in North Canton with his 2 daughters, Kelsee and Kaylee. They are both high school students at Glen Oak High School. Cattle, chickens and horses are part of the lifestyle. Jim and the girls enjoy the outdoors. Jim has classic cars and loves convertibles. Cruises are an annual vacation choice.

Joining the Northampton Rotary Club in 1996, he has served 4 times as Club President and has held many club positions. His favorite club projects have been Student of the Month, The Speaker Book gift program and most recently, Rotary Swims.

He has served on the District 6630 Board of Directors, was a member of Leadership 6630, serves currently on the District By-laws, Finance, and Conference Planning committees.

Jim received a Leadership and Education Award, a Cluster Recognition Award, and is a multiple Paul Harris Fellow. He believes Rotary enables everyday people to do extraordinary things. He looks forward to the wonderful opportunities Rotary presents.

Jim is sincerely humbled to serve as DG for our district and is honored to serve with such a dedicated team. Jim believes the more a person does, the more a person finds he/she is capable of doing. Jim looks forward to supporting all the worthy projects of Rotary for many years to come.