



Dworaks recognized for philanthropic work

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COLUMBUS — Don and Judy Dworak live their lives by a simple lesson.

"We were taught to share if you can share," Don said.

The couple have been doing just that in numerous ways, impacting both the community and state.

For their contributions, the Dworaks were selected as the 2017 Distinguished Philanthropist Award winners. They received the award during a Columbus Area Philanthropy Council program.

The honor is appreciated, but not something the two were expecting.

"They stretched," Don said. "When I look at the previous recipients, I think we are not in that league."

That humility covers more than 60 years of giving to the community.

The two are originally from David City and moved to Columbus in 1969. Don said it was instilled in both of them early to perform charitable acts.

"I think we feel that way because we had pretty good guidance from our parents and grandparents. They helped people," he said.

Don was a teacher for two years, then worked for an insurance agency before the couple opened

their own insurance business. When they weren't working, the two were active in supporting many nonprofit organizations, especially in the area of education.

Recently, Don served on the board for the Children's Scholarship Fund of Omaha, which provides tuition assistance for low-income families to send their children to private or parochial schools. The Dworaks have been active supporters of Scotus Central Catholic, as well as St. Bonaventure and St. Isidore Catholic churches.

The two believe education is important and served as honorary chairs during the effort to build a new library/cultural arts center.

"There's a real need for it," Judy said of the project that got turned down by local residents during an April bond vote.

They also started the Judy and Don Dworak Endowment for the Columbus Community Hospital Foundation. That endowment assists patients who need help paying hospital bills.

Don has supported more than a dozen other groups as a member or by serving on the board, including the Boy Scouts, Rotary, Eagles, American Red Cross, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Nebraska Wildlife Federation and Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation.

He was able to explore his lifelong interest in politics by being

elected as a senator to the Nebraska Legislature for two terms starting in 1974.

"That was one of the greatest experiences in my life to be able to help people," he said.

A piece of legislation he is particularly proud to have introduced is the habitat stamp program passed in 1977. The program has raised millions of dollars used to purchase thousands of acres of land for public hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation.

He also headed up an effort to purchase and renovate the Nebraska State Museum building and served as a delegate to Republican National Conventions in 1976 and 1980.

Even with a long history of giving

back, the two feel like what they have done isn't that special.

"We've probably taken more than we've given, if you want to be honest about it. All of us are in that position," Don said.



COURTESY PHOTO

Judy and Don Dworak were named the 2017 Distinguished Philanthropist Award winners for their contributions to Columbus and the state.



Rotarians to have Family Fun Night booths

The Shenandoah Rotary Club met Tuesday, Feb. 20, at the Waubonsie Room at the Greater Shenandoah Historical Society building.

First Vice President Kate Thompson presided over the meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance and 4-Way Test. Pastor Nancy Thomas prayed a blessing. Lance Cornelius won the free lunch drawing. No students were present.

The club will participate in Family Fun Night at Shenandoah High School March 2. Volunteers are needed to run the Toilet Bowl and Paper Toss booth. Sign up sheets for shifts were passed around, as were those for the After Game Meal for the Flight Basketball

Squad that will be playing an exhibition game against a local team of Rotary MAYHem starting at 7 p.m. Friday, March 16.

Doors open at 6 p.m, with reduced price tickets available from any Rotarian and at businesses, as well as regular-priced tickets available at the door that night. This benefits MAY Mentoring and Shenandoah Rotary, as well as provides positive family entertainment.

Rotarian Matt Sells introduced Renae Johnson, a Sidney native, who is a board certified nurse practitioner now working with Dr. Woods in Uro-Gynecology at Shenandoah Medical Center.