

Russell Gleason New Project Award – Background



The Rotary Club of Lakewood Foothills is the sponsor of an annual award for the best

District 5450 new project initiated during the past Rotary Year. This information is being provided to all clubs in our district to be sure that this year's club presidents know the procedure for having their project considered for the Russell Gleason New Project Award and encourage their participation.

Russell Gleason New Project Award

Named for Russell Gleason who was the President of the Rotary Club of Lakewood Foothills in 1981/1982 and Governor of District 5450 in 1992/1993. This award is given to the District 5450 Rotary Club that has initiated a significant new project that had results during the past Rotary Year. The project must fall within one of Rotary International's Seven Causes.

About Russell Gleason

Russell Gleason lived a life of service, and he epitomized Rotary's motto of *Service Above Self*. But what made Russ special were his visionary innovations. Like all Rotarians, he recognized needs in his community, but also within Rotary itself. His solutions were not only visionary, but he was a go-getter with a "let's-get-'r-done" attitude. As District Governor in the early 1990's he oversaw the transition of District 5450 to the age of computerization. He also set a challenge for district clubs to plant 1000's of trees. This was 28 years before *Protecting the Environment* became Rotary's Seventh Cause. Russ also served on the District 5450 Expansion Committee for many years and he was responsible for several new clubs being chartered.

He used his innovative woodworking skills for several years to design and build a children's playhouse which was then won in a drawing as a club fundraiser. The playhouse he would mention most often was the year the purchaser donated the playhouse to the Ronald McDonald House at Children's Hospital. He also served high school youth on Warren Tech's Industrial Partner Board for the Small Engine & Power Mechanics Program, Russ's business at that time. The Industrial Partners Board members offer curriculum advisement and experiential student learning opportunities in their career field.

Russell Gleason often contributed his innovative Service Above Self energy to his community, even when not doing so as a Rotarian. He served on the City of Lakewood's Senior Services Committee and was a member of the award-winning City of Lakewood's 2017 Volunteer Green Team for Community Sustainability. Russ helped design and build the physical activity stations at the Daniel L. Schaefer Athletic Complex and he created and sponsored the Bicycle Race during Lakewood on Parade.

Perhaps the most visible way Russ served his community was volunteering at Lakewood's Heritage Center, especially the cider presses that hundreds of families still use at Lakewood's Cider Days every October. The Center had one antique press, but Russ found a source that manufactured replica presses with an 1876 patent. He got three and then built the solid oak stand for each. Russ seized the opportunity over 20 years ago for Lakewood Foothills Rotary to run the Cider Pressing Booth where the community gets an historic hands-on experience dating from the 19th Century in "the land west of Denver" which would become Lakewood.