



“Building our community, one child at a time”

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## The Downtowner

*Newsletter of the Kiwanis Club of Allentown*

September 1, 2025

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### August 14 Meeting



**Lt. Governor Owen and Enos**

Our club’s dinner meeting on August 14, featured **Enos Martin** receiving a 2025 Kiwanis “Hero in Service Award” from Division 17/18 Lt. Governor **Janet Owen**. This was the second time that Enos has received the award. And rightly so! He was nominated by our club President **Karen Baker** and selected by Janet as the award winner from our Division. Enos has been the heart and soul of our club for over 25 years. He continues to be our advisor to the Raub Middle School Builder’s Club and the Southern Lehigh HS Key Club. He participates in nearly every service project and fundraiser. As our club’s President-Elect he is laser-focused on membership growth in the year ahead. And he is graciously donating all proceeds from his book sales to our club’s administrative fund. Enos and Susan are amazing members of our Allentown Kiwanis family. Congratulations, Enos!

There was no speaker at the August 14 meeting. Instead, President Karen brought materials for a table-top service project to benefit Caitlin Smiles, a non-profit out of Harrisburg that provides arts and crafts materials to sick children in hospitals. Our members decorated bags to be filled with art supplies and donated to children to bring out their creativity as they recover from illness or surgery. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed this project!



## Back to School Bash



The annual Allentown School District “Back to School Bash” at Cedar Beach Park in Allentown was held on August 13. **Enos Martin** coordinated the event and set up our display on the far end of the promenade. Once again this year we handed out Early Learning Guides to families in both English and Spanish. Despite our location, there was a healthy amount of foot traffic throughout the event. Enos was later joined by **Katelyn Quinn**, as well as several volunteers from the Allentown Northeast Kiwanis Club. Later in the afternoon there was a severe thunderstorm. Fortunately, Enos was able to pack up and get under shelter by the time it arrived. Others did not fare so well! Not only did Allentown School District Superintendent Dr. Carol Birks stop by at our display, but two visitors expressed interest in joining our club! So despite the weather, this was a highly successful service project.



## Rose Sale

Please support this year's **Pennsylvania Kiwanis Foundation Rose Sale** by ordering dozens of fresh, multi-colored roses, boxed with baby's breath and tree fern, that benefits the Pennsylvania Kiwanis Foundation and our club's treasury. The roses sell for \$26 per dozen, and our club keeps \$9.50. Our goal is to sell 60 dozen roses, the same as last year. The deadline for orders is **Thursday, October 2**. Roses will be delivered on **Thursday, October 23**. Contact **Peg Harp**, our Rose Sale Coordinator with your order at 610-428-9878 or pegharp@ptd.net. She will be forwarding Rose Sale order sheets and posters to our members. Brighten up the day of your loved ones, friends, and coworkers with these beautiful roses!

## A Glance Into Our Past

### ***100 Years Ago – September 1925***

At the September club meeting, both Harold "Haps" Benfer and J. Birney Crum were welcomed to the city as new athletic coaches and administrators at their respective educational institutions. "Haps" Benfer, a first team All-American fullback at Albright College, was hired by Muhlenberg College and served as a teacher of religion and coach of the football, basketball, and baseball teams. He was also the director of admissions for Muhlenberg from 1935 to 1963. He would serve Muhlenberg as a coach and administrator for 40 years from 1925 to 1965. J Birney Crum starred at Muhlenberg as a football, basketball, and baseball athlete and graduated in 1923. Several years later in 1925, he was hired as the football, basketball, and baseball coach for Allentown High School. He served in those capacities until 1950. Unbeknownst at the time, both men would become icons in the area of athletics in Allentown.

### ***75 Years Ago – September 1950***

On September 23, the club hosted 60 children with disabilities on National Kid's Day at Elkwood, a beautiful summer home in Alburtis. The children played games, watched movies, took pony rides, and enjoyed lots of food and refreshments.

### ***50 Years Ago – September 1975***

The club's foundation awarded several grants including \$500 to Casa Guadalupe for direct aid to Spanish-Americans, \$2,000 to the Negro Cultural Center to assist in mortgage payments, and \$1,100 to Threshold to train people to work with prisoners. The club also sponsored a bus trip to the Phillies game for children from Casa Guadalupe.

### ***25 Years Ago – September 2000***

The club completed the 1999-2000 fiscal year with balances of \$5,081.55 in its administrative account and \$2,504.10 in the Youth and Community Services account. The club finished the fiscal year with 52 members.

- ***Enos Martin***

## Rest in Peace Our Good Friend



**Robert Ashcraft , 1952-2025**

Finally, all of us were shocked when our good friend and 23 year member of the Kiwanis Club of Allentown, Bob Ashcraft, passed away on August 6. I had lunch with Bob on June 27 at the KI Convention in Pittsburgh. He was his usual self, joking around and decked out in Pittsburgh Steelers apparel. After lunch, he registered as a Delegate-at-Large for the convention Business Session the following morning. He visited the “Cathy Szymanski for Vice-President” booth and was looking forward to voting for her the next morning. That evening, he attended the Pirates game with a friend of his from Emmaus HS. He had a great time cheering on the Pirates as they thrashed the Mets. The next morning he woke up in excruciating abdominal pain. He was rushed to the ER. Over the next few days, hospital tests revealed that he had advanced liver cancer that had metastasized into his lymphatic system and lungs. Nearly every day I received text messages from his daughter, Sonya. I shared those updates with our club and others. Bob is a fighter and a survivor of many health crises. Despite severe pain every day, he attended therapy and even Zoomed into our Board of Directors meeting on July 25! He was scheduled to undergo immunotherapy in the weeks ahead. There was an outpouring of best wishes and prayers from our Kiwanis community. I hoped that there would be a miracle, and Bob would bounce back. But at 11:16 AM on August 6 I got a phone call from Sonya. Her mood was somber. My heart sank. I sensed what was coming. She told me her dad passed away during the night. I tried to hold back my emotions to offer her comfort. But I was in despair after the call. I have known Bob since the late 1990’s. I sponsored him as a member of our Kiwanis club. He was one of the most generous Kiwanis members that I have ever known. Both in his time and money. He loved children. He loved coming to our annual LVCC Christmas Party and other events. He sponsored the annual Mother’s Day Flower Pot service project. If there was a shortage of funds for a project, he would generously donate whatever was needed. He served as President of both our club and foundation, and as Lt. Governor of the former Division 18. Enos Martin, Vic Mazziotti, Young Chang and I attended his funeral on August 13, which would have been his 73<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Our condolences went out to wife Cindy, son Michael and his entire family. Just back on June 12 Bob, his brother John and sister Helen joined us for a fun night at the IronPigs game. Less than 2 months later, Bob was gone. I still can’t believe it. We always kidded about Bob’s hectic schedule. “Where’s Bob?” was like “Where’s Waldo?” I often had to call him at the beginning of Board Meetings to remind him to attend. But no one was a more loyal and giving member of our club than Bob. No more need to ask “Where’s Bob?” He is in heaven. Rest in Peace, my good friend. Your memory lives on in my heart.

– **Tom Harp**

## Upcoming Meetings and Activities

**MONTHLY MEETING** – Thursday, September 11, 6:00 PM (Social Hour from 5-6 PM) at the Shanty on 19<sup>th</sup>. Our speaker will be Jim Higgins, Executive Director of the Lehigh County Historical Society. On this anniversary of 9/11, Jim will offer a brief talk about the loss of our age of innocence, and responses by local Kiwanis clubs to the tragic event.

**SERVICE PROJECT** – Thursday, September 18. United Way “Day of Caring.” Project to be announced.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING** – Thursday, September 25, 5 PM on Zoom.



### *September Birthdays*



20- Barry Frick  
28 - Mary DeFebo  
28 - Rudy Shadle

**September Club Anniversary**  
**Keith Reynolds - 22 years!**

- Tom Harp, Editor  
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HAPPY  
★ ★  
*Labor Day*