

# Walter Ritzman

For many in Barberton, Walt Ritzman's was the friendly voice at the pharmacy for years. Following those doctor's appointments, mom or dad would take you to Ritzman's to fill that prescription and there was Walt. The medicine may have been the cure, but the healing started with a pat on the head or a tweak of the ear from Walt. He could bring a smile even when that fever made life seem pretty bleak.

Barberton is unique beyond question. The passions run deep. In the middle of all that passion is Walt, not seeking accolades or praise. Generations to come will feel the impact of Walt's work.

It would be a disservice not to start with the Barberton Community Health Clinic, where Walt continues as chairman, but also volunteers countless hours as the in-house pharmacist. During off hours, there is a good chance you will find Walt at the Clinic making sure the operation is ready for its next session. Walt created an endowment fund at the Foundation in support of the Clinic. He also prepared grant applications that resulted in grants to the Clinic from the Foundation and from Tuscora Park Health and Wellness Foundation. As a result of these grants, the Clinic has been able to expand its hours of operation.

Walt spent much of 1996 working toward the approval of the sale of Barberton Citizens Hospital and the subsequent creation of the Barberton Community Foundation. The sale placed \$75 million into the Foundation, but the work few know came afterward. Walt chaired the Tuscora Park Company, which resolved the hospital's pre-existing liabilities. His efforts led to millions of additional dollars being transferred to the Foundation.

While a member of the Foundation's Board of Directors, Walt served on the Executive, Finance, Grants, Development and Search committees. He was chairman of the Program Related Investments Committee and served a term as vice-chairman.

The thousands of hours Walt has given to the Foundation, the Clinic, Tuscora Park Company, the Barberton Auto Club, the Barberton-South Summit County Chamber of Commerce, the Summit County Welfare Reform Planning Committee, the United Way of Summit County and numerous other organizations have all been unpaid service. It came as no surprise this past April when Walt was honored with the Summit County Human Services "*Making a Difference*" award for his many charitable works.

Walt's alma mater, Ohio Northern University, bestowed on Walt an honorary doctoral degree October 15 of this year for his contributions.

It is for his decades of service that the Barberton Community Foundation is honored to present Walt Ritzman as the Outstanding Citizen for 2003.

