

GOOD EVENING TO YOU ALL –

I WANT TO THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING OUT THIS EVENING TO HONOR SOME VERY DESERVING PEOPLE.

I ALSO WANT TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO STRESS HOW VERY GRATEFUL I AM FOR THE HONOR BESTOWED ON ME LAST YEAR. IT IS VERY HUMBLING TO BE SINGLED OUT FOR SUCH A REWARD AND I AM TRULY HONORED TO BE INCLUDED WITH THE GOOD PEOPLE WHO WERE CHOSEN BEFORE ME.

I AM VERY PLEASED TO BE THE ONE TO AWARD THIS HONOR TO A PERSON SO WELL KNOWN AND RESPECTED BY EVERYONE.

I HAVE PERSONALLY KNOWN THIS PERSON FOR OVER 20 YEARS.

THIS PERSON WAS BORN IN ALMA, HAS BEEN MARRIED TO THE SAME PERSON FOR 34 YEARS, HAS 3 CHILDREN AND 2 GRANDCHILDREN, AND WORKED FOR THE SAME EMPLOYER FOR 40 YEARS BEFORE RETIRING.

OKAY – A LITTLE HINT – IT IS A MAN!

HE LIKES TO GARDEN, BUILD THINGS IN HIS GARDEN, READ, AND DOES A LITTLE WRITING.

HE IS A VERY COMMUNITY MINDED PERSON AND SERVES ON THE GRATIOT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, THE ST. LOUIS LIBRARY BOARD, THE WORSHIP COMMITTEE AT CHURCH, AND HAS HELPED WITH THE ALMA PUBLIC LIBRARY’S EXPANSION PLANS.

HE’S ALSO A GOOD NEIGHBOR. LAST YEAR AFTER A BAD WIND STORM HE WAS ON A LADDER WITH HIS CHAIN SAW HELPING A NEIGHBOR CUT OFF A LIMB SO IT WOULDN’T DAMAGE HIS SHED. WHEN THE LIMB CAME DOWN, THE TREE, WHICH WAS ROOTED AT THE BASE OF THE MILLPOND, REMAINED UPRIGHT. THUS, NO SUPPORT FOR THE LADDER! WELL, HE TOSSED THE STALLED CHAINSAW - AND FELL BACKWARD ONTO HIS SON WHO HAD BEEN HOLDING THE LADDER! HIS WIFE AND YOUNGER DAUGHTER WATCHED IN HORROR UNTIL THEY REALIZED NO ONE WAS SERIOUSLY HURT. THEN THEY PROMPTLY BURST OUT IN LAUGHTER. THE ONLY REAL DAMAGE WAS DONE TO THE BUTT MUSCLES OF HIS SON!

OH – I FORGOT, HIS “LITTLE WRITING” INCLUDES 5 BOOKS ALREADY PUBLISHED, A REVISED EDITION OF THE SARATOGA BOOK, A 25 YEAR HISTORY OF GRATIOT COUNTY (WHICH IS NOW BEING PROOFED), AND IS NOW WORKING ON A BOOK ABOUT ALMA, WHICH IS PART OF A SERIES COLLECTED BY A CHICAGO BASED COMPANY.

I AM NOT A FLYER! BUT, DURING ST. LOUIS'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY THIS MAN AND I SHARED A HELICOPTER RIDE OVER THE AREA. THINKING I WAS ABOUT TO GET A MINI HISTORY LESSON, I WAS SURPRISED HE WAS MORE INTERESTED IN FLYING OVER HIS HOUSE THAN ANYTHING ELSE!

BEFORE RETIRING, OUR RECIPIENT SPENT 40 YEARS TEACHING AND TOUCHING THE LIVES OF HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS IN ALMA. HE WAS A FAVORITE AND ALWAYS HAD TIME FOR HIS "KIDS"

OVER THE YEARS THIS MAN HAS COLLECTED A NUMBER OF BOOKS ABOUT THE TITANIC. HE ALSO HAS A MODEL OF THE TITANIC ENCLOSED IN A GLASS DISPLAY BOX. HE SET OUT ONE ICY DAY TO DELIVER THE MODEL TO THE ALMA LIBRARY FOR DISPLAY, SLIPPED AND FELL DOWN HARD ON THE ICY DECK! BUT HE DIDN'T LET GO OF THE TITANIC. I GUESS YOU COULD SAY, "CAPTAIN DAVE WENT DOWN WITH HIS SHIP, BUT THEY BOTH SURVIVED"!

IT IS WITH GREAT PLEASURE THAT I INVITE CAPTAIN DAVE MCMACKEN TO JOIN ME AS THE 2007 RECIPIENT OF THE "SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS" AWARD!