

Harvey Woods

Harvey Woods impacted thousands of parks and recreation professionals throughout Ohio.

Harvey grew up in Akron, Ohio. While in high school, he worked for the Akron and Columbus YMCAs, part-time in youth leadership positions. Harvey graduated with a Bachelor's of Science degree in Social Work with specialization in youth leadership in 1958 from The Ohio State University.

From 1956-66, he worked for the City of Cuyahoga Falls starting as a playground leader part-time and summers while going to Ohio State. He was the first full time Recreation Program Supervisor for Cuyahoga Falls. He developed recreation opportunities for all ages in sports, the arts, theater, and senior programs.

In 1966-74, Harvey was the Superintendent of Parks and Recreation for the City of Salem. While there he operated and maintained a 400-acre park system, recreation center, outdoor swimming pool, tennis courts and a fishing and boating facility.

In 1974-88, Harvey worked in the City of Steubenville as the Director of Parks and Recreation. He was responsible for operation of 400-acre park system with a golf course, swimming pools, recreation center, senior center, athletic fields, tennis courts, and a park-cemetery.

In 1988, after 30 years of service, Harvey retired. Almost immediately upon retirement, he became an ambassador for OPRA. Harvey helped OPRA by visiting parks and recreation agencies, expanding membership, and editing the Ohio Leisure Leader, which was OPRA's monthly newspaper. He also performed many agency assessments, presented numerous seminars and workshops, and volunteered at Conference. He did these duties mostly out of the goodness of his heart and with very little, if any, payment. Harvey was our number 1 volunteer.

We calculated that he made over 2,500 agency visits, park openings, meetings, conferences, in 13 years. Actual member contacts were well over 500 per year whether by phone, fax or email...over 6,500 in 13 years. Harvey averaged 9,000 miles each year as he traveled the state...over 120,000 miles driven to promote the endless benefits of parks and recreation in 13 years.

Harvey was an expert in our profession. He was our resource person who could answer any and every question asked about creating and operating a local park and recreation agency. He was a historian, a teacher, a boss, an employee, a friend, a volunteer, a photographer, a buckeye, and a certified park and recreation professional. One of our nation's first. Harvey spent over 50 years of his life working in parks and recreation. The number of lives that he touched is incalculable.

Quotes about Harvey Woods:

"I think God called Harvey up on Monday because God needed the world's best Ambassador in heaven to greet our countries victims from New York and Washington D.C." —*Maureen McGinty*

"Harvey was such a great person and I know we are all better people for having had the privilege to know him. I can't recall not receiving the warmest smile and greeting whenever I saw him. He did so much for parks, conservation and recreation in Ohio throughout his life. He pulled us together and demonstrated that together we are much stronger." —*Molly McClure*

"Harvey was a great friend mine and of our agency and the parks and recreation profession. We are all better professionals because of his example of dedication and passion for our field. —*Charlie Shoemaker*

"Harvey taught me to enjoy the profession. He taught me to always look on the brighter things of our profession. How much joy and laughter we bring to so many people. I like to call it that special feeling. —*Frank Gustoff*

"There are few people in this world that are irreplaceable... Harvey is one. I know one thing is true ... knowing Harvey, OPRA can expect a membership application from God..." —*John Houser*