Destination Lodi

A Historical Journey

Vernon A. Anderson

With Christmas around the corner, I have so many wonderful memories. I am blessed. One of those memories was going to Anderson Nursery for our Christmas tree. For $5.00 you could buy an eight footer. Of course, it would never stand straight so we had a permeant nail in the wall to stabilize the tree with wire.

 Vernon Anderson was born in Cleveland, Ohio on April 20, 1912. He was a graduate of Denison University I 1934, majoring in botany and philosophy. Vernon began Anderson Nursery in 1936, on County Road 29 in Lodi. He married Emma J. Gibbs from Canton, Ohio on January 4, 1939. Emma also was a graduate of Denison University.

 In 1948, Vernon moved Anderson Nursery to 611 Wooster Street Lodi, which he maintained until his passing in 2005. He built and developed the Evergreen-Hemlock-Hawthorn neighborhood behind his property.

 Vernon Anderson was a long time Lodi resident and community leader. He was recipient of Lodi’s Community Service Award, Vernon accomplished a litany of achievements that would leave the average person in awe.

 A partial list of his accomplishments includes:

Village Council member seven years, four as president. Zoning and Planning Commission since its original beginning in 1957, chairman for four years. Founded with three others, the Lodi Shade Tree Commission, whose work earned Lodi the honor of receiving “Tree City USA”, in 1987, also serving as president. Helped organized and directed the planting of 200 trees on Lodi streets with volunteer help as part of the Bicentennial celebration in Lodi. This was a project of the Bicentennial Committee. Contribution time and effort to the project that resulted in Lodi receiving a national merit award from former First Lady “Lady Bird Johnson”. Was instrumental in establishing Lodi Community Park. For more than a decade he and Mrs. Spechalske’s fifth grade classes at the Lodi Elementary School planted trees in the park as an Arbor Day project. Helped build Richman Field on Wooster Street. Member of the Lodi United Methodist Church for over sixty years, serving as trustee for fifteen years and taught Sunday school for four years. He served as assistant scoutmaster for the Boy Scout Troop 454 for four years. Was on the Lodi Community Hospital Board, member of the Chamber of Commerce and was twice named business: “Person of the Year”. Member of the Rotary Club for fifty years’ ad presented “Service Above Self” award in 1890. He received “Goodyear Conservation Award” from Medina County Soil and Water Conservation District for being one of the first people on the county to initiate and promote soil and water conservation practices. Vernon initiated and was a principle worker in Rotary Club’s annual project of weeding, trimming, mulching and fertilizing some 80 Rhododendron bushes at Woodlawn Cemetery, a project recognized by the national association dedicated to the plant’s propagation. He developed a specimen of upright evergreen shrub and named it the Lodi Yew, which is registered and on display at the OARDC Arboretum. He served as volunteer for American Cancer Society and Kidney Association regularly driving patients for treatments. We need more like Vern.

Vernon and Emma also raised four children, Judith of Alaska, Shelly of Colorado, Daniel of Ohio and Thomas.

Lodi Harrisville Historical Society membership drive has started. Memberships are yearly, running from Jan-Jan for $20 that includes six (6) newsletters. We are in need of volunteers. Check out our Facebook and website lodiharrisvillehistorical.org.

Happy Holiday!