

Richard E. Davis

As a former employee said of Richard E. Davis: “He was an extraordinary man who typified excellence, intelligence, devotion to the law, community service, and human kindness to all.”

Dick was born in 1921 in Niles, Ohio. He attended a one-room schoolhouse during the years of the Great Depression and skipped two grades because of his academic abilities. He would later credit that experience with his dedication to helping all students have good educational opportunities. He graduated from Niles McKinley High School at 16 years old and immediately began attending Mount Union College.

World War II interrupted Dick’s college career. He enlisted in the Army Air Corp the very first day that the United States entered the war. He served as a bombardier-navigator in the Pacific Theater. After returning home, he

finished his degree at Mount Union in 1946 and earned his law degree from the University of Cincinnati in 1949.

Dick met his wife Charlotte while at Mount Union, and they carefully studied the area near their families to find the best place to settle. They decided upon the Village of North Canton, and Dick began his law practice at the Gross Building which was located where City Hall is now.

Throughout his legal career, Dick evolved from his solo practice to a larger Canton practice and eventually joined Day, Ketterer, Raley, Wright, and Rybolt in 1979.

Besides his work, Dick made profound impacts on the North Canton community. He and friends, Richard Werstler and Robert Braucher, soon realized that North Canton's schools were not adequate to address the needs of the Baby Boomer generation. The three ran together for school board in 1952 and under their tutelage, the district built Hoover High School on Fair Oaks, Clearmount, and Orchard Hill to accommodate the growing number of students in the

growing town. When Dick had completed his 16th year on the board, he chose to not run again. Nevertheless, because of his experience, judgement, and leadership, local citizens created a write-in campaign to have him elected for a fifth term. Even after his service on the board ended, Dick continued to serve as legal counsel for the district.

North Canton Schools was not the only school community that benefited from Dick's devotion to promoting education. He was a member of the Stark Technical College Board of Trustees for 12 years including three consecutive terms as chairman. Additionally, he was a member and chairman for the Stark County Joint Vocational Board of Education.

Dick supported the North Canton community in other ways as well. He was elected to the North Canton Charter Commission and was actively involved in the development of the city's initial charter in 1960 and later to the city's first Charter Review Commission in 1970. He served and often

led organizations such as the North Canton Junior Chamber of Commerce, the North Canton Jaycees, the North Canton Rotary Club, the North Canton YMCA Men's Club, the Stark County Bar Association, the Stark County Law Library, the Canton Hospitals Building Fund, the Red Cross, and the city's Board of Zoning Appeals. He was heavily involved with a citizens group to expand the Akron-Canton airport.

During his lifetime, Dick was honored for his work. He earned the Air Medal and the Distinguished Flying Cross while in the service. He was named North Canton "Man of the Year" in 1953. He received the Distinguished Service Award from the North Canton Junior Chamber of Commerce, the North Canton YMCA, and Stark Technical College.

Dick was a member of Community Christian Church for over 25 years – serving for some time as Deacon. At the time of his death in 1988, Dick was a member of Faith Methodist Church. Dick enjoyed golfing, fishing, hunting, and woodworking. He and Charlotte had a daughter, Susan, and

son Richard, who gave them 5 grandchildren. Charlotte passed away in 2021.

Dick strove for and achieved excellence in his life and work. It is with much esteem that the North Canton Alumni Association receives Richard E. Davis into its Hall of Distinction.