

# Honoring lives spent in service

**IN A YEAR OF GRIEF AND LOSS**, we find comfort and peace in the stories of Buckeyes who lived the values of their alma mater, always paying forward — whether to students and neighbors, colleagues or constituents. Though they are no longer here in body, their legacies persist. We can honor them by following their examples of lives lived well and with integrity.



## Willie J. Young Sr.

**1949–2020** | His three P's: "Where you have people, you're going to have problems, but you also have potential."

**THOSE WHO LOVED** Willie J. Young Sr. — and there were many — remember a mantra he recited often: "Every flower doesn't bloom on the first day of spring." Young, 71, who had COVID-19 when he died of a heart attack in November, spent his entire career in student services, helping thousands of students to bloom and achieve their potential. Born in Alabama, Young grew up on Cleveland's

East Side and earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Bowling Green State University. He worked at several higher education institutions before joining Ohio State in 1990. Eight years later, he was named senior director of Off-Campus and Commuter Student Services, a post he held until his death. His duties were legion, including organizing programs to engage commuters

Photos: Kevin Fitzsimons (Young), Michael Gruber (Meyer at ComFest), courtesy of Meyer family (Frisbee)

and off-campus students in the life of the university. Known as the "mayor of the university district," Young spent countless hours traversing neighborhood streets talking with students and helping to resolve problems they shared with him. In encounters that came even years later, Young would astound students and alumni with details he remembered — their names, sure, but also their hometowns, majors and even high school mascots.

Young's encyclopedic memory was legendary. He was known to recite all 88 Ohio counties in alphabetical order and to organize trivia contests for trips to and from bowl games.

"Willie used his extraordinary memory as a way to connect with people," says alumni association President and CEO Molly Ranz Calhoun '86. "He believed passionately in the power of personal, face-to-face interaction, taking time to listen carefully to what people needed and then helping them with just that."

Young always went the extra mile. He resolved problems with landlords, organized ride sharing, even once paid for the hotel stay of a student whose house burned down — all with extraordinary warmth.

"I'll always remember Willie for his gigantic heart, his patience, his dedication to his family, job and community," says Dilnavaz Cama '00, '16 MA, a colleague who relied on his mentorship. "His genuine interest in others and his involvement with people is what really made him stand out."

Young earned much recognition throughout his career, including the Ohio State Distinguished Staff Award in 2003 and a spot on Bowling Green's 2010 list of its 100 most prominent alumni of all time.

"Willie's impact is really too great to capture," says Molly Roe Hegarty '06 JD, managing director of Student Legal Services. "I'd say we could fill the 'Shoe with all the people he impacted, those who loved him and those he helped both directly and indirectly." — **RICH WARREN** ✪

Whether it was tossing a Frisbee with his foot, something he was known for during college, or turning out to support a cause such as Columbus' annual Community Festival, Tom Meyer was always all in.



## Tom Meyer '74

**1949–2020** | A dogged idealist in politics, from his neighborhood to the Statehouse and beyond

**TOM MEYER WAS AT HOME** in political arenas from a young age. In 1972 alone, at 22, he volunteered for the campaigns of Shirley Chisholm and George McGovern and bested John Glenn to serve as an Ohio delegate to the Democratic convention.

Meyer, 71, died in December of complications from COVID-19. He worked for 33 years on Capitol Square for former Gov. Richard Celeste and Attorney General Lee Fisher and as a communications officer for Ohio Senate Democrats. He also was an ardent community activist who loved Columbus, leading him to battle plans that would have razed homes in Harrison West and Victorian Village and spearheading a ballot referendum to

preserve a wooded area in Marble Cliff. "Tommy was incredibly passionate in his quest for social justice," says Sandy Theis '81, who knew Meyer from her time as a reporter covering Statehouse politics. "Everyone who knew him knew that was how he lived his life personally and professionally, trying to make the world a better place."

Jerry Friedman '72, '77 JD knew Meyer from their undergraduate days, as a neighbor and as a fellow Statehouse staffer for a time. He considered Meyer a thought leader who used lessons from history to put complicated matters in context. With a chuckle, he also called Meyer a contrarian. "He enjoyed going up against convention, questioning it when it had become ossified or wasn't well thought out," Friedman says.

Friedman recalled how Meyer made a point to climb a tree every year on his birthday. "He saw it as a personal challenge but also said it helped him get a new perspective," he says. "It seems fitting that someone who was always trying to give others new perspectives kept trying to find new ones of his own." — **RICH WARREN** ✪





**Richard Sizemore**

**1956–2020** | Known for the joy he spread and the service he so gladly rendered to alumni and staff.

**RICHARD WAS A JACK (AND MASTER)** of many trades: customer-service rep, courier, collector, handyman, to name a few. He was a bright presence in Longaberger Alumni House, home base for this alumni association staff member of 33 years. Friends remember him as devoted, conscientious, lovable, efficient and delightfully quirky.

He died Nov. 24, 2020, of complications from diabetes.

In an obituary he wrote himself — “so Richard,” say loved ones — he expressed pride in always remembering friends’ special occasions with greeting cards. Yes, folks confirm, a card would appear to mark their milestones as predictably as Richard arrived for work each morning.

One colleague calculated he had affixed some 10,000 stamps, mailed more than 12,000 packages to alumni and friends, and logged over 72,000 miles in campus deliveries. One of his most common responses: “The answer is yes. What’s the problem?”

Richard’s priority was ensuring all ran smoothly at the alumni house, where he will be long remembered as the magic behind the curtain. — **MARY ALICE CASEY** ✨

**Patrick McGrath ’64, ’68 JD**

**1942–2020** | Fair and fun are among the qualities admirers valued in this judge.

**A NATURAL-BORN STORYTELLER.** A gifted musician. Someone who always had a smile on his face. Friends of Judge Patrick McGrath ’64, ’68 JD knew him to be all of these and more.

After law school and a short time in private practice, McGrath joined the Columbus City Attorney’s Office, where he rose to the position of chief counsel. In 1988, he was elected to a seat on the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, a position he held for 16 years. He then served six years on the Tenth District Court of Appeals, which covers Franklin County. Choosing not to seek re-election in 2011, he most recently was serving an appointment as a judge on the Ohio Court of Claims and was a visiting judge for other courts across the state, duties he was still pursuing when he passed away in December from

complications of COVID-19. He was 78.

Among peers and those who appeared in his courtroom, McGrath had a stellar reputation for fairness and integrity. “He always listened intently and based his decisions on the law and the facts that were presented before him,” says Bill Creedon ’92, a Columbus lawyer who argued cases before McGrath.

“He always felt you should look at the person, not the party, when voting for judges,” notes Ohio Court of Claims Judge Dale Crawford ’65, ’68 JD, a close friend of McGrath for 60 years, dating to their time as roommates in law school. “Pat was very proud that Democrats, Republicans and independents would cross party lines to vote for him.”

McGrath also was renowned for his upbeat nature. “He was an eternal optimist,” says Lisa Sadler ’80, a judge on the Tenth District Court of Appeals and friends with McGrath since their time in the City Attorney’s Office. “He was always positive. You couldn’t be down whenever he was around.”

Crawford concurs, adding it would be impossible to choose a favorite memory from his long friendship with McGrath. “My memories are mostly of laughter.” — **RICH WARREN** ✨



Judge Patrick McGrath sits on the bench of the Supreme Court of Ohio, one of several Ohio courts on which McGrath served as a visiting judge. McGrath was known to share, when asked, helpful feedback to lawyers on how they might have strengthened their arguments.

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