

Dr. Eldon Hill receives Governor's Financial Literacy Award

By Valorie Brecht

One generous donor has been recognized for his lasting contributions to the Loyal community. Dr. Eldon Hill, a former Loyal resident, was selected by the Governor's Council on Financial Literacy to receive the Governor's Financial Literacy Award for 2019. Hill and the other award winners were recognized in a ceremony at the capitol last Wednesday.

The Governor's Financial Literacy Awards include the Innovation and Legacy categories. Hill received the Legacy Award, which is only given to a recipient once in his or her lifetime.

According to the award's nomination form, "The Legacy Award is given to an organization, business or individual whose purpose and heritage is ingrained in sustained financial literacy and capability, and whose reputation in doing so is held in high regard in serving as a model for others in carrying on the work of supporting financial literacy and expanding opportunities through financial capability."

Hill made it possible for the Loyal School District to start a K-12 financial literacy program. He did this by establishing the Draper Hills Financial Literacy Endowment Fund through the Eau Claire Community Foundation, which will support the program ad infinitum.

"Eldon's reaction to receiving this award is one of sincere appreciation and satisfaction that his estate will be able to motivate the youth from Loyal to better their financial literacy," Hill's son, Carter, wrote.

The financial literacy program began spring semester of last year. Jessica Zarnke was hired as Loyal's full-time financial literacy teacher. In total, over 300 students have received financial education through the program thus far. Hill's intention is to eventually expand the program to adults by providing financial education in evening classes.

"Dr. Hill's vision and passion for financial literacy, and his giving heart, have impacted the small, rural community of Loyal," Zarnke wrote in her nomination of Hill. "The results are measured simply by the fact that a financial literacy program did not exist before Eldon's innovative implementation of his vision for students within the Loyal School District."

In 2014, Hill decided to place the majority of his estate into endowments to benefit his hometown. To understand Hill's reasoning for that decision, one must understand some of his background. Hill was born in Loyal in 1921. Hill's father, Harold, lived in Fred and Amy Draper's boarding house in Loyal, which is where he met and eventually married Eldon's mother, Anna. The Drapers' only daughter, Bernice, became like an aunt to Hill.

Hill grew up as an only child being raised by the community he lived in during the Great Depression years. He graduated from Loyal High School. The

Drapers and Hill's mother, who was a teacher, always encouraged him to get an education.

Hill worked a variety of jobs growing up, including raising animals, growing potatoes for the feed mill and working for Orin Trindal. Hill attended UW-Madison and worked throughout college. One of his mentors, Dr. Bessie Edsall, helped with his college expenses during his first two years at UW-Madison. Her only request was that one day he would pay her kindness forward. Hill went on to become a medical doctor and later, an obstetrician-gynecologist.

Hill retired at age 65 and spent his later years living frugally and carefully investing.

"Eldon, like most us, made multiple poor lifetime financial decisions – life insurance, investments, wants versus needs, car and home loans, asking brokers to manage his investments and not appreciating compounding interest," his son wrote. "At age 65, he taught himself the principles of investment by subscriptions to Motley Fool advisory. In the last 30 years, he was able to 10-fold increase his life savings, which is the basis of his gift of endowments – self-perpetuating funds which if managed carefully, should last forever."

"[Hill] was most proud of the fact that the most of his multimillion dollar estate was earned during his retirement period and not during his medical career," his biography reads.

Hill lived a variety of places in the U.S. throughout his life and now resides in Redmond, WA. The Draper Hills Financial Literacy Endowment Fund is one of two sources of funding that Hill has put in place. The other is the Draper Hills Scholarship Fund. Each year, the Draper Hills Scholarship Fund provides two \$12,000 scholarships to Loyal High School graduates attending four-year institutions and at least one \$5,000 scholarship to a Loyal graduate attending a two-year institution.

The funds were named after the Draper and Hills families because they both played significant roles in Hill's life. Anna Hills, Bernice Draper and Bessie Edsall all believed in the importance of education. In establishing these two funds, Hill kept his promise to Edsall in enabling future generations of students to receive an education and learn financial lessons early in life.

"With this legacy, motivated students will hopefully pay [it] forward to future generations, which has the generational potential of spreading this educational program to other communities," said Hill's son Carter. "He is continually mentioning to me how the small but close-knit community nurtured and supported him, especially the Draper family and his schoolteacher mother Anna."

More about Loyal's financial literacy program

The financial literacy program aims to teach students the principles they need to



Submitted photo

Dr. Eldon Hill, formerly of Loyal, set up an endowment through the Eau Claire Community Foundation to fund the Loyal School District's K-12 financial literacy program. Hill was honored in a ceremony last Wednesday in Madison. Those attending the ceremony included (l-r) Jessica Zarnke, Loyal School District financial literacy teacher; Sue Bornick, ECCF executive director and Meredith Hill Stockford, who accepted the award on behalf of her father.

be financially successful as adults. Core principles are built upon in each year of instruction. Zarnke teaches all of the elementary students as part of their weekly specials rotation. The elementary classes receive age-appropriate instruction starting with things as basic as coin counting. Students learn about different financial topics through hands-on activities. For example, they learn about supply and demand by running a virtual lemonade stand. Students in second-grade discuss budgeting by creating a "spend, save and share" jar.

Zarnke also teaches Exploring Finance, a required class for eighth-graders and Personal Finance, a required class for juniors. In Exploring Finance, students learn about investment

principles such as the rule of 72 and different types of investments, among other topics. In Personal Finance, students create resumes and reference lists, complete mock interviews with community members and go on job shadows. They also learn practical skills such as how to balance a checking account. In addition, Zarnke teaches the elective Senior Investing course. That course relies heavily on "The Motley Fool Investment Guide."

Students have also gained knowledge of financial principles through the annual Financial Literacy Fun Night and financial literacy summer school programming.

Zarnke said that to her knowledge, no other school district in the area offers a K-12 financial literacy program such as Loyal's.

Wolves From Front Page

al operations, Clark County is concerned that the relocation of problem wolves in the county would significantly impact recreational opportunities and agricultural operations."

From 1985 to April 5, 2019, the state paid \$2,488,729.57 total in wolf damage payments due to wolf attacks to calves, cattle, hounds, pet dogs, deer, sheep, horses or donkeys, llamas, pigs, goats, chickens and turkeys. The total also includes bills paid for vet services for cattle, hounds and pet dogs.

The resolution was approved unanimously by members who were in attendance at the meeting. Copies of the resolution will be mailed to Gov. Tony Evers, Clark County's state legislators, DNR secretary Preston Cole and the Wisconsin Counties Association for "consideration."

An interview request to the DNR hadn't been granted or denied prior to deadline.

Winter carnival From Front Page

Judges for the Miss Winter Carnival pageant were 2018-19 Miss Neillsville Teeghan Mahoney and Clark County Fairest of the Fair coordinator Trena Abbott. All participants received flowers and a gift envelope.

Brekke locates medallion



Photo courtesy of Central Wisconsin Broadcasting

Anna Brekke was the winner of the WCCN/WPKG gold medallion search, part of Neillsville's 50th Winter Carnival. Brekke found the medallion buried in the snow under the big pine tree next to the gazebo in Sniteman Town Square just before 5 p.m. on Friday. She was awarded \$120 for her efforts.

The Miss Winter Carnival pageant, now in its third year, is open to students ages 11 through 15. Michelle Friemuth, the program organizer, said it was started to provide a bridge between the city's Little Miss Neillsville and Miss Neillsville programs. Kyra Rakovec was the city's first Miss Winter Carnival.

Board From Front Page

consumer-price index.

The salaries were proposed by the executive committee. The board approved the salaries with 25 yes votes and one no vote.

The board also unanimously approved supporting the Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach (CVSO) Act, pending federal legislation sponsored by Wisconsin Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Madison).

"The number of veteran suicides nationwide continues to rise with approximately 14 of the 20 veterans who die by suicide each day are not under the care of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)," the resolution states.

The resolution points out that county veteran service officers are often the first

point of contact in the community for veterans services and they provide assistance on a range of benefits that are service-connected. The benefits also include enrollment in VA health care, VA home loans, education and job-placement assistance.

According to the resolution, county veteran service officers are local county employees who are nationally accredited by the VA to prepare, present and prosecute VA claims. However, there is no federal funding for the officers.

The CVSO Act would authorize \$50 million annually for five years to expand and support county veteran service officers or other people or organizations that provide similar services.

The VA would award competitive grants to states to create, expand or support programs that promote health and wellness, prevent suicide and reach veterans who need help navigating the VA process.

States could submit an application with a plan for the use of the funds, and the secretary would develop guidance for outcome measures to figure out the effectiveness of the programs.

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(715) 743-2600

FAX: (715) 743-5460

editor@clarkcpress.com

newsreporter@clarkcpress.com

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