

Outstanding Senior Citizens Honored in 2022

July 28, 2022

There are outstanding people throughout our region, and each county's Council/Coalition on Aging selected and honored its Outstanding Senior Citizen in May for Older Americans Month (OAM). OAM offers opportunities to hear from, support, and celebrate our nation's older adults. The 2022 theme was **Age My Way**, focusing on how older adults can age in their communities, living independently for as long as possible and participating in ways they choose.

The following individuals were selected as Outstanding Senior Citizens in their counties in gratitude for their continued giving to their neighbors, communities and families.



Champaign County

Roger Koerner is described as a kind-hearted and humble person who is passionate and dedicated to helping his community. A member of the Champaign County Board of Realtors and an Urbana Township Trustee, he also serves on the Cedar Bog Board of Trustees and the Champaign County Senior Citizens Board, including its Senior Center Executive Board that was instrumental throughout the planning and construction of the new Senior Citizen Center. In addition, Roger spends his time volunteering and supporting youth at the Champaign County Fair, local sports events and Future Farmers of America.



Roger has lived in Champaign County for over 80 years and grew up on his family farm with his six older siblings. He graduated from Urbana Local School in 1958, where he played basketball. Roger served time in the Army Reserves, then worked as a salesman traveling the United States before beginning his career in realty.



Clark County

Warren Copeland worked throughout his career in public service to bring awareness to the needs of the most vulnerable populations and to build partnerships bringing prosperity and resources to local individuals, businesses and organizations. Warren taught and mentored countless students throughout his teaching career at Wittenberg University, and is described as touching many lives through his service in public office. Warren challenged each student in his classes to carefully consider the experiences of others, confront their own privilege and commit themselves to the highest form of civic calling: service to others.



Warren has been married since 1965 to Clara Coolman Copeland, who taught kindergarten in Springfield City Schools. They are the proud parents and grandparents of three children and seven grandchildren.



Greene County

Jerry Mahan is a retired educator from Ohio State University Extension, where he worked for 40 years. His areas of expertise are many, but much of his work was in the areas of agriculture and natural resources. Close to 30 years ago, Jerry played a significant role in the development of an educational series based on a county-wide survey he developed and distributed. He worked to ensure that this program was more than a traditional financial estate planning course, and the program evolved into what is now the Greene County Council on Aging-sponsored "It's My Money, My Stuff, and My Life" series.

He is actively involved in the Greene County Farm Bureau, a guest columnist for the *Greene County Dailies*, involved in his church and a dedicated volunteer for other local organizations.





Logan County

Patrick Ellis has dedicated his life to community development in Logan County. He led and fundraised for construction projects including the reconstruction of the Bellefontaine High School Stadium, the Bellefontaine High School War Memorial, and development projects at Camp Myeerah and other local parks. Pat serves on many local boards and committees including the Greater Logan County Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Council and the City of Bellefontaine Planning Commission. In addition, Pat serves as president of the Bellefontaine Joint Recreation District Board and the Bellefontaine Parks and Recreation Foundation.

Pat was born and raised in Logan County and graduated from Bellefontaine High School in 1970. Post-graduation, he attended the United States Air Force Academy and graduated from Ohio State University. For 42 years, Pat worked for Thomas and Market Construction, helping the company grow into a large construction firm in central Ohio.



Miami County

Dottie Zimmerman is a retired elementary school math teacher described as having endless energy and compassion for the members of her community. Dottie can be found driving church members to medical appointments, delivering Pillows of Sunshine and birthday arrangements to patients in hospice, visiting nursing homes to build relationships with residents, and donating her time to The Clothesline and the Needy Basket in Tipp City. She is also a valuable member of the Tipp City Seniors where her time and energy supported the center becoming a congregate meal site.

Dottie and her late husband, Richard, raised three sons and a daughter. When Dottie is not volunteering, she enjoys playing bridge, euchre and attending Thursday luncheons.





Montgomery County

Vurniece Jackson is a gifted artist described as having the ability to transform the most mundane into a wonderful setting that can bring joy to others. She volunteers for several social and civic organizations throughout the Dayton area. Vurniece can be found staffing the tables at the annual Diabetes Expo for Diabetes Dayton, raising money for the Diabetes Association Annual Walk-A-Thon, organizing events and activities for the Prime Time for Seniors program at the Kroc Center, and chairing logistics for the Dayton Martin Luther King Jr. Day activities. She also works to spread her love of art to high school seniors by participating at Twentig, Inc., a non-profit that grants high school seniors scholarships to obtain college degrees in the Arts.

Vurniece moved to Dayton with her family as a young child and works to give selflessly to the city she calls home. Upon graduation from Dunbar High School, she began her lifelong career as a federal employee, retiring as an Administrative Officer with the National Archives and Records Administration.



Preble County

Deborah Witt has lived in Preble County for over 43 years and continues to make a difference through volunteering with multiple different populations. Deborah enjoys working with children and has advised the 4H Organization at the Preble County Fair for the last 20 years. She is a member of the Camden Chicago Foundation for Women (CFW) Women's Auxiliary and was an officer for the organization. Deborah is said to be passionate about helping those who are underserved which can be seen in her work at the Camden Food and Fish Pantry. In addition, for the past 20 years, Deborah has volunteered and worked at the Camden Carnival, the Black Walnut Festival and the Pork Festival.

Deborah is a mother, grandma and was a loving wife. When her spouse became ill, she volunteered for the Preble County *Silvertones* band to give him more time to enjoy music while she set up and took down equipment for the band.





Shelby County

Thomas Clark has impacted Shelby County through his commitment to youth development and the improvement of education. In 1997, Shelby County noted that the graduation rate was alarmingly low. Tom served on the committee to determine what factors were contributing to such low graduation rates and discovered that students were stunted by the traditional school day. He worked to create a "second shift" school concept to make a sustainable and long-term improvement to the graduation rate. Tom's leadership led to the opening of the Opportunity School in 2000 which helped increase the graduation rate by 20% in the Sidney and Shelby County school district.

Tom's career has spanned decades and school districts, and those who have been privileged to work with him explain that his compassion for others, work ethic and willingness to be a problem solver are unmatched.

