



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Valpo Parks and Dr. E. Ric Frataccia honored by Indiana Parks and Recreation Association.**

Indiana Parks & Recreation Association honored award winners from around the state Wednesday, February 20, 2019 at its annual conference in French Lick, Indiana. Valpo Parks received the Exceptional Park Design Award for Tower Park and the Leaders Giving Back Campaign. The Tower Park renovation began with lead gifts by Valpo natives Robbie Hummel and Jeff Samardzija and the Samardzija family, along with Purdue standout basketball player Brian Cardinal, and Purdue Community Hoops. With the completion of two new signature basketball courts, Valpo Parks' first pickleball court, and a state-of-the-art, all-inclusive AstroTurf youth ball field, the renovation of this 70-year-old park set the course for future park improvements. The Tower Park Courts celebrated their grand opening in September 2017 followed by Samardzija Field in June 2018.

Also honored was Dr. E. Ric Frataccia with the Distinguished Citizen Award. Dr. Frataccia served on the Valparaiso Park Board from 1990 to 2018 and is the longest tenured Board member in the 74-year history of Valpo Parks. Known simply as "Doc", Ric Frataccia received many awards and titles throughout his years including Community Leader of the Year, Superintendent of the Year, and Distinguished Hoosier. Dr. Frataccia was a champion of kids and an advocate for Parks. As a servant leader of education and volunteerism, his greatest accomplishments were the ones that he gave without reward. Noble values of selflessness, integrity, humility, perseverance, compassion, and paying it forward to future generations is what he lived, encouraged, taught, and passed on through everything he did. Mrs. Kaye Frataccia and son Rick Frataccia accepted the award on behalf of the late Dr. Frataccia.

IPRA is a professional organization that strives to advance healthy lifestyles and environmental stewardship by providing education, professional development, resources and advocacy to its members. To be honored by their peers is a great compliment to these agencies. Dr. Frataccia and Tower Park and The Leaders Giving Back Campaign are only two examples of many efforts put forth by the City of Valparaiso, the Park Department, Park Board and Valpo Parks Foundation.



PHOTO: Dr. E. Ric Frataccia was honored by the Indiana Parks and Recreation Association with the Distinguished Citizen Award. Dr. Frataccia served on the Valparaiso Park Board from 1990 to 2018 and is the longest tenured Board member in the 74-year history of Valpo Parks.



PHOTO: Tower Park's newly renovated courts and field. Valpo Parks received the Exceptional Park Design Award for Tower Park and the Leaders Giving Back Campaign from the Indiana Parks and Recreation Association.