



WILSON ROBERT BRADLEY

When you come right down to it, Wilson Bradley might be the best known citizen in Evesham Township.

Bradley Funeral Home is a veritable landmark on Route 73, and that certainly has something to do with it. But really, generations of local folks know Wilson, if not for his involvement with the Marlton Rotary Club, the Marlton Rec Council or the Marlton First Aid Squad and Fire Company, then for having sat on his lap while he deftly played the role of Santa Claus over the years.

If the truth be told, he is Santa Claus, for few can match (and no one will dispute) his record of generosity.

He is the undisputed recipient of this year's Lloyd Ritter Community Service Award, and the Volunteer Center is pleased to have the opportunity to tell his story. It is quite a story.

For starters, early in his working career, Wilson was the liaison between the Evesham Township Seniors and the Township Council. Through that affiliation, the free Senior Citizen Bus Transportation was founded.

He also was a volunteer for the Marlton First Aid Squad and Fire Company for eight years, and he has been a longtime annual supporter and benefactor of the Marlton Rec Council and Lenape Performing Arts Center.

Wilson has been a board member of the Evesham Education Foundation for nine years and Virtua Foundation for 12 years – which enables him to contribute time and resources to the health care needs within the community.

Local schools have not escaped Wilson's attention. At Christmas time, over the years, Wilson could be found playing Santa at the elementary schools and within the town. He also volunteered his time to the Health/Physical Education classes at Cherokee High School, educating young people on the realities of death and dying.

For the past 15 years, Bradley Funeral Home has given a scholarship to a deserving graduating senior at Cherokee High School, who Wilson has had the honor of choosing.

He has also been a Board Member of the RAP ROOM of Marlton since its inception; the RAP ROOM provides strength, hope, and support for parents and children struggling with alcohol and drug addiction.

Since 1974, Wilson has been an active member and past president of the Marlton Rotary Club, and, for the past 19 years, has successfully co-chaired the Burlington County Thanksgiving Prayer Breakfast. Also through the efforts of Rotary, Wilson has been able to jump into other community activities, including the distribution of dictionaries to all Evesham third graders, and sharing in the organization of the First Responders Picnic.

Wilson has been a member of Marlton United Methodist Church since 1968, sitting as a member of the Marlton United Methodist Men, serving up roast beef dinners, and manning the grills for BBQs. He was been the director of the Youth Group for over 10 years, Sunday School teacher, trustee, usher, Chairman of the Stewardship Drive and Chairman of the most recent building project.

Bradley Funeral Home is also a member of the Veterans Memorial Family Care, which focuses particular honor upon serving veterans and their families at the time of death.

Wilson has run cell phones campaigns for the troops and, in the wake of 9/11, he organized a community-wide memorial service for Evesham Township, attended by more than 7,000 residents. He is a Founding Member of the Flight 93 Memorial in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

Wilson was nominated by Samaritan Hospice for his tireless efforts within the funeral industry to open doors for hospice and he received the NJ Spirit of Hospice Award, which is given by the NJ Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

Within the funeral industry, Bradley Funeral Home is also a 25-year-plus member of the Order of the Golden Rule, an organization of family-owned and operated funeral homes which strive to serve their communities by "the Golden Rule."

Bradley's is also affiliated with the Selected Independent Funeral Homes, an association of funeral homes whose members, by invitation only, are selected to be part of the organization because of the ethical standards and lengths they go to serve their communities.

How did Wilson find his way into Evesham? Following his graduation from the Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science in 1967, Wilson became a funeral director in 1967, returning to Camden, where he helped his parents run the family-owned funeral home. A year later, Wilson and Cindy Bradley purchased the property and building on Route 73 and Evesham Road.

Thus became Wilson Bradley's "investment" in the community-at-large.

In accepting the Volunteer Center's honor, Bradley is joining a distinguished list of past honorees, including Dr. Robert Messina, President of Burlington County College; Mary Wells, Director of Family Services of Burlington County; Millie Gama, Executive Director of the Burlington County Chamber of Commerce; Burlington County Freeholder Vincent R. Farias; former Burlington County Superintendent of Schools Walter Keiss; Dick and Doris Alaimo of Mount Holly; Robert V. Santare, President of Champion Fasteners; former Burlington County Clerk Edward A. Kelly, Jr.; Joseph Laufer, former Associate Dean at Burlington County College and current County Historian; and, Burlington County Consumer Affairs Director Renee Borstad.

Now in its 15th year, the Volunteer Center serves as a clearinghouse for volunteer opportunities by connecting volunteers of all ages with community organizations and projects that need their services. The Center maintains a website at www.volunteercenterburlingtoncounty.org.

Wilson has been blessed to share his honor with his wife, Cynthia Probst Bradley (they have been married 42 years) and his daughters, Jennifer Bradley and Jill Bradley Ingram, who work with him at the funeral home. He has three grandchildren, Lily Vale, William Maxwell III and Bradley Wilson Ingram.