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## Community leader Dwyer pulled people together

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CRYSTAL LAKE – From the roads to the Raue Center to the Crystal Lake Gala Festival, William “Bill” Dwyer Jr. always was pulling people together to do great things.

“I can’t recall an individual who has been so active and positive for our community,” said Richard Kuranda, executive director of Raue Center For The Arts in Crystal Lake. “He will be sorely missed.”

On Wednesday, at age 83, Bill Dwyer passed away. He was born in Chicago and served in the military during the Korean War before moving with his family in 1973 to Crystal Lake. It wasn’t long before the ambitious Dwyer became an active member of the community.

“I think certain people are predisposed to getting involved,” said Gary Reece, president of the Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce.

In the 1980s and ’90s, Dwyer was a member of the Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce and later became a chamber ambassador. He was elected to the McHenry County Board in 1990 and served 10 years as transportation chairman, responsible for the building of Rakow Road. He also was a leader in the formation of the McHenry County Road Coalition. In May 2009, he was honored by the city of Crystal Lake by having a street named “Bill Dwyer Way.”

“Bill was always there to lend a hand, always had a smile, and just had a real can-do attitude,” Reece said. “You have some people that can paint a picture, but he was the kind of guy that would be right down there making sure things got done, too. He would be there with you, in the trenches.”

For all of his projects, however, those who knew Dwyer best say his greatest legacy is the Raue Center.

“[Dwyer] believed that the arts elevated every individual’s life and inspired them think about how they could be better,” Kuranda said.

“The Mission Imagination Program was, I think, [Dwyer’s] biggest love,” said Matt Turk, president of the board at Raue. “That we could bring artists to the kids in schools, he was so proud of that. There are thousands of young people who have experienced art because of the Raue Center and Bill.”

Turk first met Dwyer in 1993 at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church in Crystal Lake, he said. He has admired Dwyer ever since.

“Bill was a tremendous man of faith, and that faith led him to serve,” Turk said. “His love and zeal for whatever he did really inspired me, and I have always wanted to mimic that.”

Dwyer is survived by his wife of 30 years, Joyce (Grismer); his children, Daniel Dwyer, Robert (Renee) Dwyer, Mary Krikorian, Maureen (Stephen) Regele, Thomas O’Connor and Daniel O’Connor; and several grandchildren.

The visitation for Dwyer will be from 4 to 8 p.m. Monday at Davenport Family Funeral Home, 419 E. Terra Cotta Ave. (Route 176), Crystal Lake.

Prayers will be said at 9:45 a.m. Tuesday at the funeral home, proceeding to St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church, 451 W. Terra Cotta Ave., Crystal Lake, for the 10:30 a.m. celebration of the Mass of Christian Burial.

Memorials may be made to Raue Center for the Arts, 26 N. Williams St., Crystal Lake, IL 60014-4404.

- A full obituary appears on page 6B.

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