

Ray & Judy Kucharek

The 2016 Otsego County Fair is dedicated to Ray & Judy Kucharek, long time volunteers of the Otsego County Fair.

Congratulations, Ray & Judy!

Ray & Judy are lifelong residents of Otsego County. They raised two daughters; Gail Wait, Lynn (Steve) McMillion and are foster parents to Tung "Tone" Pham. Ray and Judy have three grandchildren Michael Wait, Wade & Chad McMillion. Their commitment to the Otsego County Fair spans over 30 years.



It all started with Gail and Lynn wanting to show bunnies at a young age. They decided that since the girls needed to be at the fairgrounds to feed their bunnies; they would spend fair week camping in their trailer near the small animal barn. During the week they helped feed other exhibitors bunnies and chickens. Judy went to the office to ask if there was other ways they could help and after that she encouraged Ray to join the fair board.

Ray was on the fair board from 1982 to 1993. He was fair secretary in 1985 and 1986 and fair president from 1987 through 1990. Some of you might remember that during Ray's presidency Little Jimmie Dickins performed in the grandstand. One of Ray's most memorable moments was when he was asked to be one of the "Kiss the Pig" contestants. This contest works a little different than most; the more money that was raised for a contestant; the better the chance was that he would kiss the pig. RAY WON, and being the good sport he is, whole-heartedly joined in the fun!!

Ray and Judy spent many summers at the Otsego County Fair cutting grass, painting, working on buildings and in the fair office. The family would camp at the Fair throughout the summer and Fair week. Lynn said "she grew up at the Fair and the entire family and lots of friends helped." Ray and Judy were the superintendents of the small animal barn and built a pond for the ducks and geese. They helped build Patty's Place a small pavilion by the small animal building. This pavilion was named after Patty Behnke who was on the fair board. Patty was always in charge of the flowers until she suddenly passed away. Ray and Judy make sure that Patty's Place is kept up in Honor of Patty. Ray and Judy continue to volunteer at the fairgrounds before the Fair and during the Fair, selling 50/50 tickets during grandstand events. It has become an expectation to see their friendly faces under the grandstand each evening.



Ray and Judy's legacy lives on as family members continue to be involved in the fair. Their daughter Lynn is a well known face on the fairgrounds and served as a board member during 2012 and 2013. Their son-in-law Steve was on the fair board from 2006 through 2011 and served as president in 2011 and 2012, at which time Ray would often offer his expertise to Steve as he did for many of the past presidents. Judy's sister, Dawn Ellison and her family also have been board members and volunteers, as well as Dawn's presidency from 2001-2005.

Ray and Judy's volunteerism extends far beyond the fairgrounds. They both donate "tremendous time, energy and talents throughout the community. Judy was a 4-H leader for a teen club for many years, taught CCD class at St. Mary's for three years. Ray and Judy are still involved with Toys for Tots and Coats for Kids where they have impacted 2700 children in need. They also volunteer for RSVP and Holy Redeemer Church in Vanderbilt. Ray has been involved with the Knights of Columbus for many years and started them at Holy Redeemer in Vanderbilt two years ago. "As individuals and as a couple, Ray & Judy have touched many community members, leaving legacies of love and happiness."

Ray & Judy have been a valuable part of our "Fair Family" for many years. The Otsego County Fair Board and members would like to **"THANK YOU, RAY & JUDY"** for your dedication to the Otsego County Fair.