

Journal News

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IN OUR VIEW

Congratulations, Jim Blount

Local historian Jim Blount is a very smart man. In fact, in our newsroom, when we have a question about Butler County history, we don't Google it, we BLOUNT it.

However, he does not know the meaning of the word "retire."

Since "retiring" in 1994 after years as a teacher and journalist, he has worked nonstop as a volunteer, lending his special skills as a historian, as a writer and as a tireless booster for this area.

In 2005, he gave the Lane Libraries a 50-year collection of the history of place names in Butler County. For years, the library staff has turned to Jim for help in answering patrons' questions. That's pretty impressive when you are the information source for the library!

Jim worked with the staff of the Soldiers, Sailors and Pioneers Monument to obtain a state historical society marker — the sixth such marker Jim has helped secure for various groups in the city. He also has researched and written signs for Hamilton parks, historical medallions for the new High-Main Bridge, and the plaques that surround the Alexander Hamilton sculpture.

He helped the police set up memorial displays, he helped the sheriff's department with research for their statue, he even helped with local information for the Washington, D.C., memorial to fallen peace officers.

Jim regularly speaks to the Leadership Hamilton class about the history of the city, and he is a featured speaker with the Miami University Colligan History project, a project he helped found.

"It is never about Jim," Colligan Project director Michael Carrifello told us. "He is extraordinarily generous as a scholar and unsurpassed as a role model and an inspiration for those who teach and love history. He wants to inculcate that love of learning."

So it is entirely fitting that Jim was nominated by several people to be honored as the Citizen of the Year at the annual Greater Hamilton Chamber of Commerce dinner last night. One nominator said: "our community is a better place because of Jim's life work in education, journalism and community service. He has been an outstanding citizen for many more years than 2005."

How lucky we are to have this wonderful, brilliant, selfless resource, freely giving of his time and wisdom to all who ask. All he asks in return is that we LEARN something. That we walk away with a little better understanding of our town, the forces that shaped it, and therefore our lives and ultimately ourselves.

Those ignorant of history are doomed to repeat it. Thankfully, because of Jim Blount, we can embrace the future because we understand our past.

Thank you Jim, and congratulations on your award. You deserve it.