



Good afternoon and welcome. I am pleased to be here representing the Village of Mt. Gilead as we recognize Herb Hoffman as the recipient of the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Dr. Nathan Tucker Award. The purpose of this award is to recognize individuals who like Dr. Tucker, demonstrate an extraordinary commitment to community service and care for others.

Let's go back in time..... young Herb Hoffman was working at North Electric when he received an invitation from Uncle Sam in 1945. After serving as a member of the United States Air Force during World War 2, Herb returned home to his job at North Electric. In 1947, there had been a big fire in town at a local feed store which caused considerable damage. North Electric was located in what I know as the Professional Building and the feed store fire got pretty close to their building. Call it a sense of community or just protecting their assets but either way, North Electric asked Herb and a few others to help the local Fire Department. Herb remembers the whole department consisted of about 6 people prior to his joining the group. His history as a fireman includes the following positions:

Firefighter 1948-1955

Lieutenant. 1955-1956

Captain 1956-1962

Assistant Chief 1961-present

During his 62 years of service, Herb served 4 different Fire Chiefs: Harold Ullom, John Houpt, Dick Young and Don Staiger. (Herb was the acting Chief for 3 months in 1991-92). It should be noted that Herb's son Tim has been a Mt. Gilead Fireman since 1982, currently serving as a Lieutenant. Like father, like son.

In addition to his years on the Fire Department, Herb has also been an active member of the local Lion's Club since 1967. He served as President in 1973 as well as 1985.

I would hate to guess how many thousands of hours Herb Hoffman has given to help keep Mt. Gilead and Morrow County safe over the past 62 years. Since he was often called away from work to fight fires, I also wonder how many white shirts and pairs of dress pants Herb ruined early in his career! We asked Herb about some of the changes he's seen with fire safety over the years. He commented that his personal protective equipment in 1948 consisted of a rubber coat and an old helmet. Finally, Herb mentioned that the Mt. Gilead Fire Department had a creative way of raising funds when he first joined the department. He talked about the big weekend Bingo games held on the square in town to raise money for a new fire truck.

While North Electric changed ownership a few times during his tenure, Herb Hoffman worked for them for 59 years in total. This along with 43 years in Lion's Club and 62 years at the Fire Department leaves no doubt about the importance of loyalty and commitment to our honoree. In closing, when asked why he joined and stayed with the Mt. Gilead Fire Department, Herb said "it's simple....we serve people in need at anytime and for any reason". For a lifetime of service to this community, I'm proud to present this year's recipient of the Dr. Nathan Tucker Award, Mr. Herb Hoffman.