



THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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Livingston County Resident Receives Philanthropy Award from Rochester Area Community Foundation

Mary Anne Palermo, a resident of Livonia, is one of four individuals being recognized by Rochester Area Community Foundation with a 2021 Philanthropy Award.

She received the award on August 11 at an event at Frontier Field before an audience of more than 300.

Mary Anne's connection to the Foundation began in 1993 when she and her late husband, Dick, created their first fund to make their philanthropic giving easy. That fund allowed them to provide grants to a host of organizations to which they had a personal connection, many of them serving Livingston County. A second fund – one that is endowed — was established a few years later to expand and extend their giving that will support broader community needs today and into the future.

Trained as a nurse, Mary Anne is especially interested in supporting programs that provide access to medical care, treatment for mental illnesses, and education for children with learning disabilities and those from families in need.

Whether it was philanthropy or community activities, Mary Anne and Dick were a package deal. When one was involved, the other played a supporting role. Together they helped to launch Livingston County Catholic Charities, and she served on that board and the diocesan Catholic Charities board for many years.

The Freedom Bridge and Gardens in Lakeville, which honors all five branches of military service, was supported by the Palermos. They also helped to initiate creation of the Chip Holt Nature Center on Conesus Lake, named for a friend who worked with Dick at Xerox.

When the Foundation began recognizing philanthropists, starting in 1991, award recipients included companies, organizations, and family foundations that were nominated by members of the community. Dick Palermo was nominated by St. Joseph's Villa (now Villa of Hope) and received a Philanthropy Award in 1998. Since 2001, the focus of the awards has shifted to individuals who are connected to the Community Foundation and selected by the Foundation board of directors.

After Dick died in 2006, Mary Anne continued their family tradition of giving back to their community, to organizations they both loved, and to causes they care about.

"It has been very joyful to see some of the changes take place because of our giving," says Mary Anne.

In recent years, Mary Anne established the Richard C. & Mary Anne Palermo Fund for Livingston County at the Foundation, which will support the critical work of nonprofits that serve individuals and families who live in the community she loves and has called home for many decades.