

DR. JAMES L. BRISTOR



“Doc” Bristor as he is affectionately known is a consummate professional and an advocate of leisure services and has made significant contributions to the advancement of our profession and the MRPA.

His service as an educator, consultant, speaker, presenter, and public servant is well documented. He has dedicated his life’s work to the betterment of humankind by enhancing the quality of life through recreation.

“Doc’s” professional experience is extensive and varied. He served as a professor at Michigan State University for 37 years and Professor Emeritus for four years, as well as over the years he has been a Legal Consultant, Recreation Consultant and even a Recreation Supervisor in his younger years.

The education he received that led him down his career path came from a B.S. from Waynesburg College, PA, M.S. from West Virginia University and his Re.D. from Indiana University.

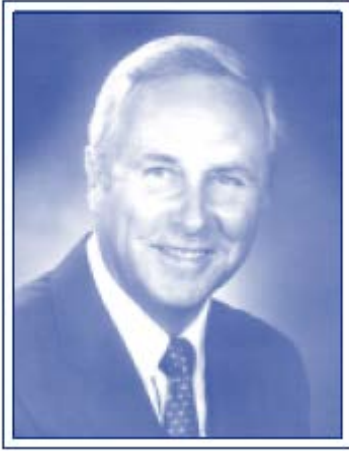
He has been involved with MRPA for as long as he has been with the University; serving as a member, presenter at various conferences, President and Foundation Member and scholarship donor. He also served on various Boards through out his career; such as YMCA, American Camping Association, National Recreation and Park Association, Educators and served as the Chairperson for the East Lansing Recreation and Arts Commission.

His main emphasis during his long career has been in Youth Development, Diversity and Teaching. Some of his involvement has been: Project Coordinator for the Detroit Pistons-Palace Foundation Project “Park Program” Consultant, Ohio Dept. of Youth Services and Dept. of Corrections, Member of Governors Urban Recreation Task Force, Kellogg Youth Project, Kellogg Foundation Grant for Calhoun County, Programs for Urban YMCA Branches in Metro Detroit, Department Diversity Committee, University-wide Task Forces on the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Volunteer Coordinator, National Cerebral Palsy/Les Autres Games.

“Doc” Bristor is an outstanding teacher who has always been dedicated to his students. During the past forty years, he has taught over 6,000 students. During the first twenty-five years at MSU, he focused on “outdoor recreation”, “physical activity” and “youth development”. Since then he has focused on “recreation program management”, “leisure theory” and “recreation administration”. During his career, he played a leadership role in developing recreation and parks curriculum. He was directly involved in three successful NRPA Accreditation reviews and a constant advocate for the recreation and parks profession.

James L. Bristor a revered teacher, respected colleague and untiring advocate for the recreation and park profession.

HARRY L. BURNS



Harry Burns was a dedicated professional in the recreation and parks field for more than 43 years. As the Recreation Director for Grand Rapids, Michigan he was instrumental in establishing numerous recreation experiences for an increasingly diverse population.

Harry was well known by elected officials and community leaders for his diligence in successfully administering a unique, completely co-sponsored recreation program for the City of Grand Rapids and the Grand Rapids Public Schools. Unlimited use of the city and school facilities was one by-product of this joint operation. This joint sponsorship also resulted in the cooperative construction of three swimming pools at local high schools where recreation and school programs made maximum use of the facilities.

These successful endeavors also prompted Kent County to join in the teamwork and help provide an inner city recreation center still operating today. Harry's commitment to the profession is further evident in his service on state, regional and national levels. He served as Secretary of the MRPA Board for 5 years and as President (1960). He was a member of the Board of Directors and several committees for many years and helped establish the voluntary registration certification program for the Recreation Association of Michigan.

Harry served as chairman of the NRPA Great Lakes District Advisory Committee and as its representative on the NRPA Professional Advisory Committee. He also served on several committees of the American Recreation Society. During those years of service, he helped spearhead the merging of the NRA, ARS and AIPE into one membership organization, now the NRPA.

Harry is a recipient of the MRPA Fellowship Award; a major highlight was his selection to receive the prestigious NRPA "Professional Excellence Award".

Harry has been a staunch supporter of the MRPA. He constantly extolled the benefits of membership and becoming active in the organization to his staff. He has made numerous presentations at the MRPA yearly conference sharing his professional expertise with fellow colleagues. He continues to be respected by fellow professionals. Staff at different levels indicate that they benefited from Harry's leadership, regardless of their positions; he was a positive role model, treating them with respect, interested in their ideas and concerns, a teacher of sorts. He stressed the importance of detail that improved the quality of recreation services provided for the public. He was always cordial in meetings with his own staff or staff from other organizations or representatives from different levels of government. His positive demeanor, demonstrated in pressure situations enabled him to be successful where others would have failed.

Harry L. Burns is highly respected by his former staff, professional colleagues and numerous publics he served for maintaining integrity in his decision making and his tireless energy in his work effort.

ARCH R. FLANNERY



Arch R. Flannery came from a modest beginning, born in a log cabin (Berea, Kentucky, 1898). He attended Battle Creek College and graduated from Western Michigan University (1917). During the same year, he became the first full-time physical education teacher in the Battle Creek school system. He voluntarily organized (1920) Battle Creek's first community recreation program with the cooperation of city, school system, industry and ministerial association. He was granted a leave of absence (1923-24) for the purpose of serving as a consultant to the Hawaiian Island school system where he organized a program of physical education. He was hired by the City of Battle Creek as their first Superintendent of Recreation (1935). When the city merged various departments, he was named Director of Recreation, Parks and Buildings (1948). He retired July 1, 1963, after 43 years of service to the profession and people of Battle Creek.

Arch strongly believed in the benefits of establishing a professional organization and being part of the decision making process. He was recognized by colleagues for providing hours of invaluable service, helping provide direction for more that 24 years, for an organization he helped develop and become a reality. He was an officer; first elected Vice-President (MMAAA 1935, 1937; MRA 1938-1940), President (MRA 1941-1942), member and chair of several different committees including educational policy (MRA 1940) representative Department of Public Instruction (MRA 1946); and other committees including Surplus Properties, Awards and various sports. He served at the national level too, a member of the American Recreation Society (ARS), member of different committees for the National Recreation Association and Treasurer of the American Amateur Baseball Congress (AABC 1947-1963).

Arch established a series of recreation and park accomplishments that enhanced Battle Creek's quality of life for all citizens in the present and for the future. This is exemplified by Battle Creek being a leading recreation center in the US, home of the Amateur World Series and one of the finest park systems in the United States. Through his efforts the AABC tournament and headquarters came to Battle Creek. He supervised and developed parks and sports facilities at McRae Park, W.I. Fell Park, Bailey Park and Charles Binder Park. These parks are used heavily through the year appealing to the interests of persons living in Battle Creek and in surrounding areas. The park options include golf courses, a zoo, swimming, skiing, sports complexes, picnicking, trailer parks, trails; all these opportunities and more envisioned by the man affectionately referred to as the "Father of Battle Creek Recreation".

Arch is owed a special tribute for the motion he made at a meeting on May 15, 1935 in Lansing. The major purpose of the meeting was to unite municipal recreation leaders in the State of Michigan. The motion as quoted: "...that the state recreation departments shall unite in an organization to be known as the Michigan Municipal Amateur Athletic Association; that the seven cities present be elected to charter membership, that in future years other newly organized municipal departments shall be eligible for membership, along with definitely organized set-ups that can conform to the eligibility rules of the association."

HERBERT V. JENNINGS



Herb “Two Gun” Jennings was born in Canada and came to the U.S. when he was 25 years old; Canada’s loss was our gain. His desire to be a part of America was realized when he was granted U.S Citizenship in 1932; Herb and his wife Rose demonstrated a strong aspect of the Jennings’ character. They opened their home to relatives and friends during the Great Depression providing a place to sleep and hot food. This love, respect and willingness to help others continued throughout Herb’s professional career and public life.

After the infamous attack on Pearl Harbor, Herb at the age of 36, well beyond draft age, felt it necessary to become involved in defending his chosen country. He entered the Navy and become a Seabee seeing action during the retaking of Guam and stationed there after the island was pacified. Perhaps his interest in providing recreation experiences for others began there. He was assigned the

responsibility of organizing a softball program for the armed forces based on Guam. He was honorably discharged from the U.S. Navy in December 1945.

Herb moved the family to Litchfield, Michigan in 1946. There he began his career as a sales representative for Game-Time, Inc., a manufacturer of park and playground equipment. It was difficult at first but his positive outlook toward life soon enabled him to quickly make contacts, many becoming close friends that continued throughout his lifetime.

When Game Time, Inc. offered a new Cadillac to the first sales representative to sell \$1 million of playground and park equipment in one year, “Two Gun” was there to receive the keys. Referring to him as “Two Gun”, a favorite nickname, Herb encouraged Game Time, Inc.’s President, to develop exciting new products and then enthusiastically supported their marketing programs locally and on a national level.

In the 1950’s and 60’s, the public wanted the recreation and parks profession to improve the quality of services being provided in Michigan. Responding to these needs Herb and other professional recreators believed our state organization should reorganize to meet these challenges. Herb provided the impetus for this new direction for our state professional organization by encouraging our profession to become more involved in the marketing of parks and recreation services.

A well deserved tribute given Herb came after his death. The State of Michigan Legislature honored Herb by passing Resolution, No. 519. A Tribute and Memorial for Herbert Jennings, an epitaph to a legend in his own time.

Herbert “Two Gun” Jennings, well remembered by his colleagues for his leadership, dedication, revolutionary ideas and support for MRPA and the profession as a whole.

HUBERT JOHNSON

Hubert Johnson was the initial recreation leader hired in Detroit, Michigan carrying out an effective recreational sports program for several years. He was the first President of our professional organization MMAA (1935-1937), MRA (1938-1940). In addition, he felt it was important that the President be involved in the committee structure where he was involved as a member and chair of a variety of committees including, Constitution Committee and various sports committees. He also implemented the first baseball and basketball tournaments sponsored by our organization which were held in Pontiac.

Hubert Johnson helped establish protocol for recreation experiences and services that continue with us today.

DAVID O. LAIDLAW



David Laidlaw has provided invaluable leadership to the profession of Recreation and Parks for 38 years. He is quoted as saying, "I decided when I was 14 that park management was my thing." Even as a graduate student in Political Science he recognized the importance of connecting a series of parks along the Huron-Clinton River. David's student paper detailed the development of the regional park system and serves as a basis for the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Agency's official history today.

David participated in hundreds of national seminars and workshops. He served on the National Recreation and Park Association Board of Trustees and was President of the organization. The NRPA presented the coveted National Distinguished Professional Award to him at the National Congress. He received this award because "as Director of the highly respected Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority he was an effective administrator blazing new trails in many areas." He is held in the highest regard by his fellow professionals in the field; there are few his equal.

David was instrumental in developing the NRPA's position on policy option toward urban recreation. He was cited for his contributions to the Association's constitution and by-laws committees. While a member of the Council on Accreditation for the NRPA he developed accreditation standards for recreation and park curricula at universities and colleges.

David was a consummate professional who was proud to be part of the recreation and parks field; he contributed an untiring effort to the advancement of our profession. He gave his time tirelessly and worked until a project was completed. He recognized the need and urgency of preserving open spaces through parks and left a legacy of the finest park facilities in the state, if not the nation. He had a unique awareness of meeting the needs of his clientele; this is evident in his involvement in different organizations where he was Chairman, President, and Board of Directors member. These organizations included: Great Lakes District Council, NRPA, American Park and Recreation Society, Michigan Forestry and Park Association, Governor's Conference on Recreation and Southeast Michigan Travel and Tourism Association. As an important part of these organizations he positively influenced the establishment of policies and procedures that benefit both current and future users of the natural environment.

David O. Laidlaw is remembered for his vision, foresight, and innovation in establishing policies that have influenced the use of the natural environment within urban recreation and parks at regional, state, national, and international levels.

LAWRENCE P. “PETE” MOSER



*Photo courtesy of
Kalamazoo Valley Museum*

Lawrence P. Moser was the first Recreation Director for the City of Kalamazoo, Michigan. He was hired when the recreation division was formed (1924). Initially, the recreation division was located in the Department of Public Health and Welfare being funded by the City of Kalamazoo, the Board of Education and Kalamazoo Township. He directed the Recreation Department (1936) when it became a separate city department until it was combined with the parks department (1965). “Pete” retired as the Recreation and Parks Director after 42 years of service to our profession.

“Pete” was actively involved in MMAAA, MRA and RAM for more than 28 years as President (MRA 1945-1947), the first elected secretary-treasurer (MMAAA 1935-1937; MRA 1938-1944), member and chair of numerous committees including representative to the Michigan Municipal League (1948, 1955-1963), and other committees including legislative, Governor’s Youth Guidance, Juvenile Institute, membership, budget and various sports.

“Pete” made other significant contributions to the profession particularly in 1965 when in the same year, he was secretary-treasure of the U.S. Baseball Federation (USBF), appointed by the USBF as representative to the National Collegiate Baseball Foundation and became Baseball Commissioner for the State of Michigan. In addition, Western Michigan University presented to “Pete” their Outstanding Alumni Award.

Lawrence P. “Pete” Moser was remembered by a colleague and close friend: “They talk about actors always being on stage, Pete was always thinking “Recreation” twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, three hundred and sixty-five days a year. More than once during the 1930’s and 40’s, the Michigan Recreation Association weathered many a storm because of Pete’s cool, calm, analytical and persuasive mind and personality.”

VIRGINIA J. MUNGER



Virginia Munger served the profession of recreation and parks for more than 43 years. She became an intern for her beloved City of Detroit and subsequently became a full-time employee (1966). Virginia's life evolved around her profession and she devoted her time, energy, and dedication to it by extending her specialized efficiency at the city, state and national levels.

Virginia was involved in a number of professional firsts which facilitated opportunities for women and minorities in Michigan and throughout the U.S. These firsts included: Board member of the Michigan Recreation and Park Association and Chair, National Recreation and Park Association Regional Council (19 years), Founder and Chair of Michigan Recreation and Park Association's Minority Affairs Committee, co-founder member and Chair of the National Recreation and Park Association Ethnic Minority Society, and, Trustee and Board member of the National Recreation and Park Association.

Affectionately called "Mother Munger" by many she is one of the true pioneers in our profession of recreation and parks. Her articulate nature clearly expressed her compassion, dedication and importance of our roles as leaders to the communities we serve. Virginia's legacy as a distinguished leader carries on through her co-workers, community groups and our future leaders. She and her leadership team went into different communities to mobilize volunteers, emphasizing teamwork and most of all respect, to establish partnership with businesses, churches and schools in order to educate and inspire people of all ages to use their leisure time peacefully, effectively and professionally. She eagerly dispensed advice and wisdom with class and dignity. She accepted each responsibility with a tenacity that excited those she worked with and for whether she was working with disabled in a recreation center or she had been given a special appointment made by the Mayor of Detroit, or her last assignment for the Detroit Parks and Recreation Department as Specialized Services Coordinator; she always expected to do her best. Although Virginia respected the recreation needs of all ages she had a special interest in meeting the needs of young people, professionals as well as clientele.

Virginia's compassion for others is further demonstrated by her active involvement in numerous civic and social organizations. She was the 17th President of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority (sponsor of Delta Home for Girls at risk), Past President of Women of Wayne Alumni Association, Executive Board member of the Metropolitan Detroit YWCA and North-end Youth Improvement Association – Adopt of Child Program and Advisor and Board Member of the Detroit Striders Track Club.

Virginia J. Munger commanded the greatest respect from everyone who met her, the old fashioned way, she earned it!

KARLA V. PARKER



Karla V. Parker dedicated her life to the service of others greatly contributing to her community, state and nation. She lived most of her adult life in Grand Rapids. She was a member of the Public Recreation Board of Grand Rapids for 25 years from 1939 to 1964. This Board represented both the City of Grand Rapids and the Grand Rapids Board of Education. The Board had the responsibility of operating the total community recreation program. She served as the Board's secretary during her 25 years of membership. She was involved in numerous other civic responsibilities, but she made a special effort to remain an active and involved member of the recreation board which was very special to her.

Karla's civic resume is outstanding, some of those efforts included membership to: Conservation Department, Recreation Division, State of Michigan Advisory Committee; Member, President Eisenhower Committee on Youth Fitness; and Member, Michigan Youth Commission and Participant, White House Conference on Children and Youth. In addition, she was very active at the local, state and national levels for Camp Fire Girls, P.T.A. and YMCA.

Karla was fond of swimming and she and other Recreation Board members became concerned that the Grand Rapids Public Schools were late in realizing that swimming pools were a legitimate part of the school program. After years of urging, the board of education and City of Grand Rapids decided that when the new high schools were built, swimming pools would be included. The new jointly funded school swimming facilities greatly improved the recreation and educational programs of Grand Rapids. Fittingly, one of those facilities was named in her honor.

Karla V. Parker in her numerous leadership capacities always stressed the importance that recreation made a dramatic difference in the quality of life for all citizens' young and old.

R. ERIC REICKEL



R. Eric Reickel served the profession of recreation and parks for over 40 years. He has been a lifelong advocate for quality of life issues. Eric demonstrated leadership qualities that impacted the national, state, and local levels in very positive ways.

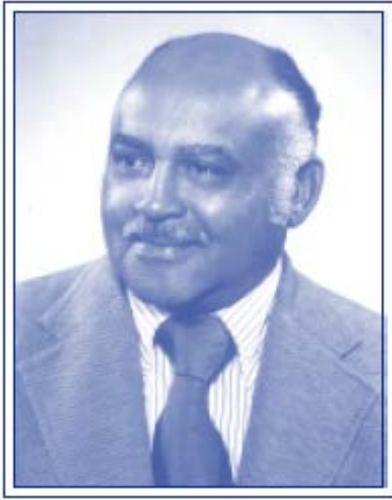
Eric's varied professional experiences and expertise was shown when he effectively managed departments in Wyandotte, Trenton, Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission, Wayne County Park System, and Lansing and as a consultant for Howell. In each of these communities he was successful in completing projects, maximizing the efficiency of his staff, updating master plans and securing millages and numerous grants, acquiring parks and constructing and renovating numerous projects that have established precedents for the profession providing direction for generations to come.

His peers have recognized Eric's knowledge and broad based experiences. This can be readily identified in the different professional organization where he has been an active participant unselfishly sharing his ideas and concepts at all levels. He has served on numerous committees as member, chair and officer of those organizations including: Michigan Recreation and Park Association, President, Treasurer, Board Member and chaired various committees; National Recreation and Park Association, Great Lakes Regional Council, American Park and Recreation Society, NRPA Standards Revision Task Force, North Carolina State University Revenue Sources Management School and Supervisors Management School, National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials, Southeast Metropolitan Council of Governments Recreation Advisory Committee and the United Community Services of Metro Detroit Leisure Services Division. He also was a member of the American Academy for Parks and Recreation Administration and the Trenton Sports Hall of Fame.

His colleagues describe Eric as a consummate Director, a visionary that not only recognized the public need for leisure services but also identified workable approaches to funding sources to gain maximum success for supporting this need. He demonstrated this by successfully lobbying many times for park millages, securing matching funds and significant federal and state grants to expand parkland and the recreation services being provided that benefited many cities. In addition, he is recognized as an innovator willing to take chances for change that would expand the quality of services thus accruing recreation benefits for the people he served. These innovations include his work to create Michigan's first wave pool as well as the first indoor golf dome. His leadership in providing such a successful pool operation in Michigan resulted in the construction of many pools of this type in Michigan and throughout the Mid-West.

R. Eric Reickel has never turned down a challenge and has always remained true to his profession and its goals and has served as a mentor to many.

JESSE RUTHERFORD



Jesse Rutherford was an integral part of the recreation and parks profession for over 30 years. He started his professional career in 1944 as a recreation center director with the Ypsilanti Parks and Recreation Department and became the Director in 1968, retiring in 1974. During this period of time, he was a role model for young professionals. Many of them have remained in the profession because of his commitment to the profession.

Jesse served as a conduit for persons beginning their careers in the field of recreation and parks and encouraged them to get involved in the Michigan Recreation and Park Association through committees and programs in their respective communities. He encouraged many persons employed in the field of recreation, particularly those working in large cities to join the Michigan Recreation and Park Association and to participate in programs offered at the summer conference as well as the annual winter conference.

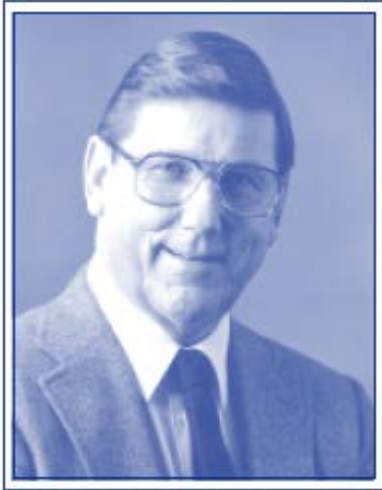
On the national scene, Jesse worked tirelessly to sensitize the National Recreation and Park Association to meet the essential and critical needs of urban recreation professionals serving the needs of the urban communities. At that time, programming and educational sessions at the national conference were primarily designed to address the needs of Directors and Administrators of major cities and large park systems. Jesse's efforts were instrumental in charting the course of the national organization for future professionals at all levels.

Involvement and accepting challenges were key words in Jesse's professional vocabulary. He was appointed commissioner (1973) and served as chairman of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority supporting acquisition of the then proposed Mill Creek Metropark despite local opposition; he designed and directed the development at Hickory Woods, an Executive Golf Course in Ypsilanti, MI; presenter at several MRPA State Conferences, as well as, several NRPA National Conferences. In addition, he was the first minority President of MRPA (1968); founding member of the MRPA Minority Affairs Committee and NRPA Ethnic Minority Society; becoming the first minority to be a member of the NRPA Board of Trustees (1973). As a result of his untiring efforts, he received two prestigious awards, the NRPA Citation Award and MRPA Fellowship Award.

Jesse was a positive force in his community championing the idea that recreation and park services play an invaluable part of everyone's daily life. He carried this message to different organizations within his community where he volunteered. These organizations included: Parents Coordination Council, Juvenile Court Advisory Committee, Business and Professional League and Kiwanis Club.

Jesse Rutherford is recognized as a dedicated pioneer who initiated new directions for the recreation and park profession not taking no for an answer.

JOSEPH S. SEAVEY



Joe Seavey was described as a visionary, a pioneer in the recreation and park profession for more than 40 years. He began his professional career as a Recreation Supervisor for the Denver Parks and Recreation Department and concluded his career in 1987, as the Chief of Recreation Services Division, Department of Natural Resources for the State of Michigan.

Joe was the first and only Chief of Recreation Services for the State. In this position he garnered respect from professional colleagues at the local, state and national levels. He received numerous requests to speak at conferences and workshops sponsored by the National Recreation and Park Association and MRPA, undergraduate and graduate classes at MSU and CMU along with many other speaking and consulting engagements. He made sure that his busy schedule included opportunities for others to benefit from his broad understanding of meeting the needs of Michiganders. He was the mentor to

many!

Michigan residents benefited tremendously from the respect the Michigan Legislature had for Joe. The legislature continually sought advice and direction from him. He not only provided them with invaluable advice, they listened to what he said. He testified before many committees, which resulted in many positive actions for the provision of recreation and park services throughout the state.

He pioneered legislative awareness for the recreation profession. He was responsible for passing many recreation bills and under his direction the Recreation Services Division administered thousands of grants to all the units of government in the state. He was a relentless advocate for inner city programs.

Through his leadership local units of government had to develop five year plans and show their ability to manage the many grants administered by his Division. This resulted in the increase of funding for parks and recreation throughout the state and the creation of many parks and recreation departments.

Joe served the MRPA in various capacities as well as serving as its President. He was recognized with numerous awards including the prestigious MRPA Fellowship Award, but the one award that he was most proud of was the one he received from his Alma Mater, Ithaca College, "Professional of the Year".

The professional field was his passion as much as a career. He provided direction for anyone seeking help throughout the State of Michigan.

BENJAMIN F. YACK



Benjamin “Benny” F. Yack was recognized for his athletic prowess in high school, college and semi-professional career in the early 1920’s and early 1930’s. He received a Bachelor of Science degree from Western Michigan University in 1932, graduating in the midst of the Great Depression. He worked at a variety of jobs: substitute teacher, factory worker, and assistant coach, 1932-1936. In 1936, he became the first Superintendent of Recreation for Wyandotte, Michigan and remained in that position for 37 years retiring in 1973.

Ben was a very active member in MRA. He served on numerous committees as chairperson or committee member. These committees made significant contributions helping define our profession and providing direction and purpose for the future. Ben played an important role in this decision making process. His commitment to the state organization included, different sports committees, legislative committees and gerontology. In addition, he was elected as first Vice President (1956) and President of MRA (1957), and Board of Directors of RAM (1961, 1962) .

Status quo was not in Ben’s vocabulary. This was demonstrated through several highlights of his professional and volunteer accomplishments. Those accomplishments included the introduction of slow-pitch softball in a league format to the City of Wyandotte and the State of Michigan (1937), established on the first lighted softball diamonds at Pulaski Park in Wyandotte (1939); developed the game of T-ball in Wyandotte (1952) and presented the activity at the National Recreation Convention in the same year. This game became an immediate success and presently occurs throughout Michigan and the U.S. In addition, Ben supervised the creation of the Memorial Park and Pool Complex in Wyandotte (1954), adding a baseball diamond suitable for major league baseball (1959). He was President of the Amateur Baseball Association for several years. While serving as President, he conceived and implanted the idea of the first charity game between the Detroit Tigers/St. Louis Cardinals for the purpose of saving the floundering sandlot baseball programs (1964), and was chairman of the event (1964-1966).

Ben received numerous awards for his professional and volunteer services MRA and RAM presented him with two prestigious and fitting awards: the Fellowship Award (1957) and the Certificate of Merit (1965). He also was inducted into the Wyandotte Sports Hall of Fame (posthumously, 1987). An award that few if any of us have received having a facility named in our honor, the Benjamin F. Yack Ice Arena was so named in 1969.

Benjamin F. Yack is recognized for his excellence in providing sports programs for youth and in his administration of Wyandotte’s Recreation program bringing area, state, and national recognition.