



GRINDSTONE AWARD



1973

Loni Flagner

The 1973 Outstanding Citizen of the Year might not answer to her real name if she heard it. According to Loni Flagner, baptized "Ilona," she has had her nickname for so long the original tends to get lost. "Loni is easier," she says "Besides, everybody knows me by that name."

Loni's parents came to Cleveland from Austria in 1921, settling on the west side. Loni was born in and attended schools in Cleveland. After attending Baldwin-Wallace, she worked for Union Commerce Bank and American Greetings before her marriage to Louis Flagner.

Without Loni's vision, and unstinting efforts, the Berea Senior Center, with all it means, and has meant, to nearly 600 golden-agers in this area, might not have happened.

How did it happen? "I felt there was a need, and decided to do something about it," says Loni. "God has been good to me, and I wanted to give something back."

After considerable research on senior centers in other communities, Loni, through her church, St. Paul's Lutheran, opened the Berea Senior Center as a place where senior citizens could find fellowship and regular weekly, all-day activity suited to

their needs. The Center opened in the spring of 1970 with 14 members and with Loni as Director.

Programs at the Center include recreational, educational and inspirational activities, ranging from ping-pong and disco dancing to discussion groups on social security and other matters of interest to the elderly.

Crafts are popular, and the Center's craft shows produce income, which goes toward program support and outside activities.

Loni has recruited drivers to transport Members, as well as specialists, such as a chiropodist, willing to share their skills with members. She and the County Library set up a lending library and a book discussion group at the Center. Loni keeps the Center going the year 'round, always searching for new and interesting ideas. She receives no compensation for her full-time duties as Director.

Mrs. Flagner also has served as a driver for the Southwest Development School for Retarded Children, as a volunteer for Southwest General Hospital, and in many service and leadership capacities for St. Paul's church.

Loni Flagner is a living disciple of the Christian service ethic.

Presented January 29, 1974

Strosacker Hall, Baldwin-Wallace College