



GRINDSTONE AWARD



1989

Mary R. Hart

Mary Hart was chosen Citizen of the Year and the 24th recipient of the Grindstone Award in 1990, but the reasons for this recognition go back more than thirty years and number in the thousands.

You see, Mary cares for people, and if one summarizes her busy life of civic service it could be to serve tirelessly and anonymously as a Teacher and Volunteer.

Mary received a master's degree in education at West Liberty College and first taught in elementary grades in Illinois. In these early days, she married her husband of 43 years, Dr. Robert Hart. The young couple moved to Berea 34 years ago, to 242 Front St., where Bob started his practice in optometry and Mary, the following year, opened a nursery school, as she puts it, "to teach children their ABC's and the fine art of getting along with people." The Mary Hart Nursery School became a Berea tradition. Mary estimates that 3000 youngsters have "graduated" from her preschool, many being children of former pupils.

Throughout the years, the rear rooms of their downtown home and office have served as meeting and party rooms for many church and school groups.

Mary keeps up her elementary teaching by volunteering as a part-time teacher at St. Mary's School.

Church is another large facet of Mary's life. She has been involved for more than 30 years with the St. Mary's Women's Guild. She has led the Confraternity of Christian Mothers and has worked and volunteered in fundraising, religious education and many other parish projects and activities.

Another of Mary's major contributions to a better life for local citizens has been as a volunteer at Southwest General Hospital, where, since 1960, she has marked nearly 10,000 hours, roughly the equivalent of five years of full-time work! Here her caring touch has been evident in the chaplaincy program, nutritional services and the information desk. She is Vice President of Friends for Southwest and a member of the Board of The Old Oak Boutique.

This truly dedicated woman finds time, quietly and without fanfare, to serve Berea Boys Town, Catholic Charities, a blood bank, and, with her husband, Bob, as longtime patrons of Berea Summer Theatre.

No job is too small or too great for Mary. As one of her nominees said "This is a good person who gives all and never asks anything in return."

Presented March 15, 1990

Baldwin-Wallace College Union