



# GRINDSTONE AWARD



**1999**

## **Rudolf D. Kamper**

The 1999 winner of Berea's Grindstone Award would take great pleasure in fixing your clock -- literally, for he is an expert clock maker, but not figuratively, for he is a quiet and unassuming man.

Most days you will find Rudi in his Suburban Clock and Repair shop on Front Street, desk piled high with papers and clock parts, but jumping up frequently to do what he likes best, to wait on a customer who has brought in a treasured old-fangled spring-wound clock.

Rudi came to the US from Germany in 1953, with his sister, as times were tough in post-WWII Germany. He first went to work for an uncle in Pennsylvania, who owned a bakery. Upon the latter's retirement in 1956, Rudi moved to Berea to rejoin his sister and another uncle, Karl, who owned a clock shop. Always mechanically inclined, Rudi worked as a machinist at the Tank Plant, now the IX Center in Brook Park, later joining his uncle at the Berea clock store.

Rudi Kamper took over his uncle's business in the early 1960's and the store soon became a fixture on downtown Front Street. "We had found our niche", Rudi said. Under his capable guidance, the business grew and flourished. "We have

150 different cuckoo clocks in the store," he said recently, pointing out that "Preserving something from the past for the future" is his motto.

Rudi has always been a public-spirited citizen (he was naturalized in 1959 while serving in the US Air Force). This has been reflected in his support of every civic cause, his long-time membership in the Berea Rotary Club, and Discover Berea Chamber of Commerce. Most recently, he has actively promoted and given strong financial and moral support for the Berea Triangle's clock tower, for which he donated its four bells and one of its four clocks. Another civic project receiving his support was Grindstone Heritage Park.

Many of his charitable endeavors have been through Berea Rotary, of which he is a past president, especially its ROCKS program, which gives youths an opportunity to learn construction skills while actually working on public projects.

Kamper and his wife, Joan, are patrons of many arts and music programs. Their son, Dolf, studies at the Peabody Institute and intends to be a professional musician.

Time will tell, and it has told Rudi, many times in many ways, how to make a difference in the lives of his fellow Bereans.

Presented April 18, 2000

Radisson Hotel Middleburg Heights, Ohio