

Trustee known for loyalty, support

BY WILLIAM LEHN
The Jambar

Youngstown State University Trustee F.W. "Bill" Knecht of Boardman died Wednesday after a battle with cancer; he was 66.

Knecht, originally from Warren, was a 1960 YSU graduate and YSU Trustee. His term was set to expire in 2008.



Knecht later became CEO of Wendell August Forge.

KNECHT

Knecht is remembered by friends as one of YSU's most ardent supporters.

University President David Sweet said the trustee was always prepared and seeking ways to improve the university.

"His loyalty, wisdom, generosity of spirit and incomparable enthusiasm will be greatly missed," Sweet said.

Fellow trustee John Pogue knew Knecht all his life. Also from Warren, Pogue remembered Knecht's "salesman zeal."

"The same salesman zeal

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is what Knecht used to promote YSU in any way possible," Pogue said. "He was one fine, fine person, and it's a real loss for everyone."

Knecht was a member of the Penn Northwest Development Corp., Mahoning Valley Historical Society, The Youngstown Club, Four Square Club and the Mercer County Convention and Visitors Bureau. He also served as president of the Boardman Board of Education, the Boardman Civic Association and the YSU Penguin Club.

Fellow Penguin Club member Clarence Smith knew Knecht from grammar school and said the loss to the valley is tremendous.

"He helped Youngstown and the valley in any way he could," said Smith.

Boardman architect Bob Mastriana designed the Wendell August Forge building in Holmes County and said he felt "honored" to be

Knecht's friend. Mastriana said Knecht strongly valued friendship, and his impact extended "beyond the borders of Western Pa. and the Mahoning Valley."

"He would do anything for anyone for their benefit and not for himself," Mastriana said. "He helped more people in this valley than any other man. More than the DeBartolos or the Cafaros, and he didn't ask for anything in return."

Mastriana said the former trustee was diagnosed with cancer in 1999. During his final three years, Knecht gave inspiration to other cancer victims.

"During his remission, his focus was to help other victims battle the disease and instill hope for them," Mastriana said.

Dean Hoover, a lifelong friend and fellow Four Square Club member said, "He battled to the end with such grace, poise, and determination; he will be missed by all."

Knecht was honored by YSU with the university's highest honor, the Distinguished Citizen Award, in 2001, the same year a scholarship was established in his honor. In 2003, he was named Penguin of the Year and inducted into The Penguin Club Hall of Fame.

He also was a member of the Dover Club, Duquesne Hunting and Fishing Club and Tippecanoe Country Club. He attended Zion Lutheran Church.

Knecht is survived by his wife Connie; son, Will; daughter, Deborah Fetter; and five grandchildren.

If you would care to make a memorial gift to the F.W. "Bill" Knecht III Scholarship, you can contact the YSU Development Office at (330) 941-3119. Checks may be made payable to Youngstown State University.

Call William Lehn at (330) 941-1913.