

LIVING FOR OTHERS

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A hero is a person who changes their community for the better. My "Michigan hero" is someone who changed the Northern Michigan area significantly. Although George A. McManus Jr. died this past summer, the impact of his deeds are not any less felt by the entire community and state.

Romans 12:13 says, "Contribute to the needs of God's people..." As an avid Catholic, George truly took this to heart. George studied at Michigan State University and later served as their Grand Traverse County Extension Director. He also was appointed to the Michigan Agricultural Commission for his work with cherries. He served as a trustee and board member of many organizations, one being our community college.

George continued to serve the community's needs by representing Northern Michigan as a state senator for 12 years. Regarding him becoming a senator, his wife, Clara, remarked, "George, they need you down there." A fair leader, George was always open to others' opinions before deciding his vote. Additionally, he served as the first president of my school. He worked tirelessly to make our community a better place.

Because George grew up dirt-poor, he had to work hard for everything he possessed. Although he had a lot of success in his careers, he never forgot his simple roots. He donated his money to many organizations in town. One amazing display of his philanthropy is the fact that over numerous years, he donated thousands of pounds of food from his garden to The Father Fred Foundation. He also donated funds to local schools and the local college, Northwestern Michigan College. George was generous with everything he had.

George's local cherry farm was an abode of gathering and joy in the community. He had nine children, 23 grandchildren, 48 great grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild. Card games and stories were regular occurrences. The farm provided many important jobs in the community. The farm welcomed exchange

students from countries all over the globe. They were educated in the farming industry of Northern Michigan. He always treated these students as family. George's love for family and friends was contagious.

George has encouraged many people to pursue their ambitions. One way that he has done this is by offering several scholarships to students. His parting words to young students were often, "Study hard." He once encouraged me saying, "Don't be afraid to write a book." Being told this helps me understand that if you are afraid of failing, you will never know if you would have succeeded.

The Michigan State Shield is inscribed with, "Si Quaeris Peninsulam Amoenam Circumspice." This translates to "If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you." Senator George A. McManus Jr. not only encountered our pleasant peninsula, but he made it a better place to live. The way he lived his life inspires me not to live for myself, but for others. This is why I am proud to call George A. McManus Jr. my Michigan hero and my great grandpa.

