



Lake Villa Historical Society's Vintage Views

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President's Letter

Dear Members:

It is with great sadness to announce that our founding member, former Mayor, Frank Loffredo has passed. Frank had a vision to preserve Lake Villa History and assembled a board of directors that formed the Lake Villa Historical Society. We are dedicating this issue of Vintage Views to tell more about Mayor Loffredo.

I had the pleasure of working with Frank for many years. He was a great Boss, Leader, Mentor, and Dear Friend. He was calm, caring, smart and witty. He had the best sense of humor. He greeted everyone with a smile.

One of Frank's favorite things was to attend community events and see local families enjoying the festivities. He loved events so much that during the Village's Centennial Year of 2001, he thought it would be a great idea to have an event every month of the year. He rounded up a committee of volunteers to make that happen.

One of my favorite memories was listening to Frank during the annual visits of 3rd graders that would tour the Village Hall and Police Department while learning about their community. He would appoint some of the students to be the Village Board and Mayor. Then he would explain to the class that they needed to vote on a flavor of ice cream to be the

Village flavor. He would have the students vote and then the student "board members" would go through the motions of approving a mock ordinance to declare the flavor of the year. I'm sure this left a lasting impression on many of those students.

He truly succeeded in his motto of growing the Village while keeping the small hometown feel that is a great place to raise a family.

I was so blessed to have worked with and have him as a friend for so many years.

My deepest sympathy to the Loffredo family. He will be forever missed.

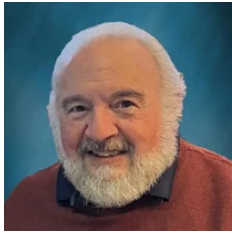
Sincerely,

Lori Heitman
President



Lake Villa Historical Society Board circa 2003. Front: Elaine Teltz, Frank, Alyce Brownlee Middle: Betty Burns, Lori Heitman, Deb Hudson, Joyce Dever, Jim McDonald, Back: Barb Venturi, Robert Frank, and Sue Cribb

Our Sympathy



To the family of Frank M. Loffredo, 78 years old passed away Wednesday, October 18, 2023 in Gladstone, MI. He was born January 15, 1945 in Milwaukee, WI, the son of the late Michael J. and

Cel R. (nee Marinello) Loffredo. On March 16, 1968 Frank married Carole Jean Ham at St. Martin Catholic church in Washington Park, IL. He graduated from Waukegan High School and proceeded to Southern Illinois University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree. He continued his education at Governor's State University and graduated with a Master of Business degree. He then worked on a Doctoral of Education degree at Vanderbilt University and was completing a dissertation which included a dental technology manual for the deaf and hard of hearing.

Frank grew up in Waukegan and eventually moved to Lake Villa with his wife Carole in 1970. He worked as a professor and department chair teaching dental technology and prosthetics at Triton College. He finally retired from education after 35 years with Triton College.

Frank also wanted to serve his community. He started his career in public service with the Village of Lake Villa as a Plan Commissioner in 1978. He was then elected as a Village Trustee in 1985, and finally he became Mayor in 1993. Frank served as the Mayor of Lake Villa for 24 years until he retired in 2017.

During Frank's tenure as Mayor, he oversaw multiple community projects which included the Metra Station, the purchase and restoration of Lehmann Mansion, development of a community baseball complex, and he received the Businessman of the Year award in recognition for the ongoing community development and commercial projects. Frank was most appreciative of the Village's

recognition of his service by honoring him in the naming of Frank M. Loffredo Park.

Frank is survived by his wife, Carole, of 55 years. Their sons, James Loffredo and Joseph (Megann) Loffredo, and their grandchildren, Maxwell and Jesse Loffredo. He was preceded in death by his parents, Michael and Cel Loffredo, his mother- and father-in-law, Norma and James Ham, and his brother-in-law, Edward Ham.



Frank and Carole Loffredo at Lake Villa Historical Society's Civil War Ball held at Lehmann Mansion



Frank and his Mother Cel Loffredo and Ted Nielsen



Frank M. Loffredo

As a young boy growing up in Waukegan, Frank Loffredo became acquainted with Lake Villa by summer day trips to Sherwood Park. He came to love the small-town charm and the friendliness of the people. It was the pursuit of these same hometown ideals that would bring Frank and his new wife, Carole, to Lake Villa in 1970, where they would settle into the old Williamson home on Oak Lane. There, they would raise their two sons, James and Joseph.

Having earned a Bachelor's degree from SIU in Education, and then a Master's degree in Institutional Management, Frank became a professor and department chairman at Triton College teaching dental prosthetics. But he wanted to give back to the community he loved, so in 1978 he was appointed to the Lake Villa Planning Commission. At that time, Lake Villa had fewer than 1,100 people. Frank was Secretary and Chairman of the Planning Commission from 1978-1985. He then was elected Village Trustee, serving from 1985-1993. He was elected Mayor in 1993 and won six consecutive terms. Others ran against him, but the contests were never close.

If thirty-nine years of continuous service to the Village wasn't enough, consider the other roles Frank Loffredo filled: Secretary of School District 41 Facilities Planning Committee; Board member Lake Villa District Library; Advisor to

the Lindenhurst/Lake Villa Chamber of Commerce; Economic Development Committee member; Director of the Lake Michigan Water Advisory Committee; Director of the Police Commission; Founder and Charter President of the Lake Villa Historical Society; Founding President of the Police Pension Board; Celebration of Summer Committee member; Eagle Scout project committee member. Frank couldn't say 'No' to anyone.

The Loffredo legacy is one of *involvement* and *inclusion*. Frank brought everyone together. He kept his staff engaged and informed. Above all, Frank loved seeing all the people turn out for an event. His civic pride would overflow as he made the rounds in his golf cart greeting the families and guests. He loved when school groups would tour the Village Hall. He'd assemble them in the Board Room and hold a mock meeting, giving the children roles to act out and "ordinances" to vote on. Frank also couldn't say 'No' when asked to be Santa Claus at Christmas time. He'd hang on to the platform of a fire engine and be driven all over the Village, from street to street, waving and 'Ho-Ho-Ho-ing' to all the excited children. When he thawed out from that, he'd spend many cold hours inside the Chamber of Commerce's 'Santa House' parked at Pleviak School. There was no heat in this trailer, but Frank couldn't say 'No'.

Frank was the right man, the right Mayor, at just the right time. His vision took Lake Villa to a height it may not have reached had he not been at the helm. He could make anything happen. Staff that worked daily with Frank remember how he turned every situation positive, how no idea or undertaking was too big. He was patient, calm and a champion negotiator. Those that had the privilege to work with him felt heard, trusted, and truly part of a dream team. Consider just a few of the projects accomplished because of Frank's leadership: the purchase of the historic Lehmann mansion, saving it from development or demolition and its complete renovation; rebuilding the iconic train station

and reestablishing Lake Villa as a stop on the Metra North Central line; the acquisition, funding and development of the Lake Villa Baseball Complex; creating the Economic Development Plan to revitalize downtown; the creation of the Lake Villa Historical Society; the Civil War Reenactment at Lehmann Mansion; the St. Patrick's Day Parade & corned beef lunch; Celebration of Summer; Art in the Park and the "Holidays in the Mansion" craft fair.

Wait....there's more! Lakes High School was built during his tenure. Office staff joked that it should've been his face painted on their water tower. Lake Michigan water was brought to town after over 10 years of negotiating, budgeting and planning. The incredible Centennial celebration of 2001 happened because of Frank's love and enthusiasm for Lake Villa. The Crosstown Classic baseball tournament brought villages and organizations together and was a highlight of many summers. Frank successfully guided Lake Villa through the financial challenges of a major recession in 2008. He prioritized improving the Village's infrastructure, water main, road projects, sidewalk and trail connections. Frank's team navigated the OSLAD grant process and developed the Village's newest 60-acre park, aptly named the Frank M. Loffredo Park. His vision, while forward-thinking and creative, was always tempered by his desire to retain the small-town charm he had first loved as a boy.

How do you sum up the life of someone who has meant so much, to so many, for so long? Someone whose very presence made everything just a little better. Frank was a lifelong teacher, but the greatest lessons he taught were in kindness, patience, generosity and gentleness. He lived an impactful life, a life worthy of emulation. He was a true leader with an unmatched character. He was the calm in the storm, he was a father-figure, a mentor and a friend. Frank, you will live on in our hearts, and your legacy will live deep within the heart of Lake Villa forever.

We have asked some of Frank's family and friends to send a few words that are shared below.



Loffredo family at dedication of Frank Loffredo Park

From Joseph Loffredo

My dad has always cherished having a strong work ethic, supporting friendships, and unconditional love for family. What truly made him happy was when he could find ways to blend those areas he cherished so much. When he retired from teaching he was able to commit "all in" for everything he was passionate about regarding the Village of Lake Villa. Our family understood what he enjoyed so much about serving the community because he was always surrounded by hard working employees, volunteers, and people who cared about him and what he believed in. My dad was always thrilled whenever he could convince us family to also be a part of the Village duties. He loved when we would drive in parades, attend events, help with campaigns, and even just listen to all the stories about public works, the police department, and new businesses. I realize how important he was to this community and how much he will be missed, but I am just going to miss my dad and all of the amazing things that he was about at home. Those of us who were able to see him behind the scenes and not necessarily in the public view were truly the lucky ones.



Mayor Loffredo turning gavel over to newly elected Mayor Jim McDonald May 10, 2017

From Jim McDonald

Frank Loffredo was not only a beloved member of the community. He was always also a grandpa, father, husband, and a dear friend to me. Frank was a remarkable person in so many ways. His kindness, generosity, and unwavering support meant a lot to me. We shared countless memories and experiences that I will cherish forever. He had a way of making everyone around him, feel valued, and loved, and his warm smile could brighten even the darkest days.

I will always remember the laughter we shared, and advice he gave, and the countless moments of friendship we enjoyed together. Frank was not just a friend, he was like family to me, and his absence leaves a void that can never be filled.



Glenn McCollum, Frank Loffredo, Lori Heitman, Jim McDonald on evening of Frank's last meeting as Mayor May 10, 2017.



Alyce Brownlee, Easter Bunny, Frank and Lake Villa Queens

From Alyce Brownlee

Frank Loffredo... What do you say about someone who has been in your life, one way or the other, for over 70 years? Friend, neighbor, co-worker, idea supporter and I could go on. The impact he had on all the Lake Villa pageant queens cannot be explained. The day he passed away, all I could hear were their little voices calling "Mayor Frank, Mayor Frank!" He truly added so much to their reigns. He would chauffeur them in parades, always with his wit and humor intact.

I was never uncomfortable approaching Frank with anything. He was always welcoming and nonjudgmental, no matter the subject. I guess you are very fortunate to have a friend in your life that makes it difficult to describe them with enough words of praise for an accurate picture of who they really were. Frank was one of a kind.



Frank prepping for Historical Society Dinner Raffle Event, Alyce Brownlee, Robert Frank, and Kim McCollum



Frank, Glenn McCollum and Rich Coles at Baseball Park

From Rich Coles

It is always hard to say Goodbye to someone that has had such an impact in one's life. My Deepest Sympathies to Frank's Family and dear friends. By holding on to those great memories and good times we had with Frank, it will help us to find comfort in this difficult time.

A legacy covering over 30 years in the Village of Lake Villa, it is natural to always think of Frank when we review all the successes of our village. A faithful, committed, and endless steward of this Village, his accomplishments along with others he worked with and provided guidance and leadership are endless.

His dedication, always powered by endless loyalty is demonstrated in a few notable projects within our Village. The Lake Villa Baseball Park is a glaring tribute to his ability to help us always find the way. Frank had a unique ability to reach out at the perfect time as we encountered multiple obstacles time and time again, always providing solutions to get us back on track. His quick wit, humor and negotiating ability was impressive. Frank had a refreshing and professional approach to always achieving a successful outcome for all involved.

Frank had an enormous impact on my life personally, I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to have worked with him. Not only did he impact our Parks Projects he also brought his common sense and tireless efforts with our Police Commission.

We can all only hope that more Frank Loffredo heroes come into our lives.

I will miss you my friend.



Frank and Glenn St. Patrick's Day Event

From Glenn McCollum

"Sir, I have an idea!" This is how many of my conversations began with Frank Loffredo, aka *Air Force One*. I had the privilege of working with Frank for 38 years. He was my boss and my friend. Everything I have is because of that man. Frank would listen to every one of my crazy ideas, and then he'd trust me to get it done. He was always on board and always "all-in." One particularly hair-brained idea involved installing the wrong kind of bricks in the train station memorial walkway. Frank and I laid each brick by hand, then after a few days, went back to admire our work. The vibration from the trains had chipped away and crumbled all our hard work. Frank didn't get angry, he just knelt down and helped me pull each one out and reinstall the right ones. Another memorable moment was Frank's purchase of a motorized weed-cutter to help control the algae in Cedar Lake. He sent me out there, then watched from the pier as I repeatedly got stuck, dumped the machine, and swam back to shore. We had many laughs over that one. Always like a little boy when it came to his toys, Frank loved new pieces of equipment. He'd be the first to climb up on every new truck, bobcat or plow and let me take his picture.

Lunches with Frank were legendary. He loved a good Chinese buffet. This was usually followed by a trip to the Dollar Store where Frank had to examine every item in every aisle. I'd grow tired of that and wait outside, or sometimes empty his cart when he wasn't looking. He was

a “gadget-man”, and never passed up a good info-mercial. He had drawers and shelves full of unopened devices or gadgets he just had to have. So many memories were made up north at his vacation house along the Escanaba River. He and Carole welcomed everybody to their home. He and former Police Chief, Roger Visconti, built a hunting shack deep in the woods where they would sit and smoke cigars. Then they’d wonder why they didn’t see any deer. He loved puttering through the woods on his 4-wheelers or Rangers and cooking for his family. His spaghetti and meatballs were delicious!

Frank changed my life. He supported me 100%, both professionally and personally, in everything I did. He never preached, he just listened, and then he led by example. I loved him so much, and I wasn’t ready for him to go. All I can say is that I got so lucky knowing him. We all did.



Walgreens Ribbon Cutting



Frank was presented with a gavel plaque in recognition of his years of service.



From Left: Lori Heitman, Deb Hudson, Joyce Dever, Jim McDonald, Sue Cribb, JR Halek, Elaine Teltz, Alyce Brownlee, Julie Stanley, Betty Burns, and Frank at Lake Villa Historical Society Ribbon cutting

From Sue Cribb

I will never forget Frank Loffredo driving into our driveway on his motorcycle in 2002. He was bringing an invitation for me to join the committee creating the Lake Villa Historical Society.



Frank visiting Santa at the Breakfast with Santa

Breakfast with Santa

Breakfast with Santa at Lehmann Mansion will be held December 3rd this year. Tickets will be available to purchase online beginning November 1st. There will be links to the tickets on facebook and the website www.lakevillahistory.org. More details will be posted on the website and facebook soon. Be sure to get yours early as the event generally sells out. Please contact us at lvhs@lake-villa.org or leave a message at 847-265-8266 if you would like to volunteer at the event.

Calendar of Events:

Programs will be held on the 3rd Tuesday of February, April, June, August, and October. Programs for 2024 to be determined. Further information will soon be available on Facebook and the website.

Museum Hours

Lake Villa Historical Society is open every **Thursday afternoon from 1:30 – 4:30pm.** Volunteers are present to help with answering questions, doing research, accepting donations, and showing artifacts and files from our collection. Stop by to spend time in the museum or just to chat about Lake Villa's history. Are you unable to come during those hours? Contact us and we will gladly open at other times!

Contact Us

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Check the website to read this newsletter in full color!

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