

2019 Sachem Award – Dr. George F. Rapp
Governor Eric J. Holcomb
August 27, 2019

Remarks as prepared for delivery

Thank you Cathy and good morning! I'm thrilled to be at the Indiana State Museum this morning to recognize a man who's contributed so much to Indiana.

This museum that celebrates over two centuries worth of Indiana history is the perfect backdrop to honor a man who's contributed chapter after chapter to that history.

And what better place to bestow our state's highest honor – to make a little more Indiana history – than right here?

As Cathy mentioned, the Sachem is awarded – at most – once a year.

It's reserved for those rare Hoosiers who've made our state better through a lifetime of accomplishment and virtue:

Hoosiers like 2017's Sachem recipient, the late Eva Mozes Kor. A Holocaust survivor, Eva dedicated her life to promoting forgiveness and civility. She was a dear friend, who proved there are no bounds on human decency.

And last year's recipient, a true American hero; a man who earned the Medal of Honor and dedicated the rest of his life – serving as a tireless advocate for our nation's veterans – Sergeant Sammy Lee Davis.

This morning we add a new name to this illustrious list of Hoosiers: Dr. George Rapp.

There are few Hoosiers, dating back to our founding who've had such a wide range of impact in a number of different areas as Dr. Rapp.

From education, to historic preservation, to the support of the arts, to expanding access to medicine, to building medical facilities, George Rapp has spent his life in service of others.

Saving lives, improving his communities and giving back to a state he clearly loves so much.

His work in any one of these areas warrants special recognition and when you take the sum total of his life's endeavors, his contributions to our state certainly make him one of Indiana's greatest Hoosiers.

Dr. Rapp lives by a motto: *“Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, for all the people you can, for as long as you can.”*

“Do all the good you can.”

With George, where do even you start?

This is a man who continues to do *a lot of good*. I think he's done all the good – not just that he can do – but that scores of Hoosiers can do!

It all started at New Harmony High School, where he had another motto: *“Someone has to do it!”*

And, with only 16 classmates, that someone was often George: editor of the paper, Eagle Scout, basketball team, baseball team, band, 4-H.

I think it's obvious just where his passion for getting involved in his community started.

That “someone has to do it” mindset led to a lifetime of *doing good*: as a private practice doctor for 35 years; as an inventor, business owner, volunteer for dozens of community-minded organizations, and a mentor for many dozens more.

Doing good is Dr. Rapp's life's purpose and passion, and he's done it in every field he's chosen.

“In all the ways you can.”

Dr. Rapp has done so much good in so many ways.

He's served in the military, he's generously donated to countless causes, and he's volunteered with many charitable causes, he's founded scholarship funds, and on and on.

As you can see, he's certainly not a passive philanthropist. He rolls up his sleeves and truly invests his whole self in service.

He's done so in a dizzying array of fields. His success in the medical field is enormous.

As the chief of orthopedic residency at St. Vincent for 18 years, Dr. Rapp trained many first-year residents. He developed ground-breaking inventions for the way we treat hip and spinal ailments.

He's treated a countless number of kids with spinal scoliosis at Riley Children's Hospital.

And he created ways to "do good," outside of Indiana, too. Outside of this country, in fact.

Dr. Rapp established and helped fund the building of four Operation Suites at Moi University in Kenya and was active in the Indiana University Kenya program.

Not only did this save lives in Kenya, it also continues to positively impact the doctors who apply their trade in Kenya and come back home with better skills and a greater appreciation for humanity.

Dr. Brett McCullough has participated in the IU-Kenya program for several years, and through this program he says he *"learned a ton of physical diagnosis skills in Kenya, but the lessons I learned in humanity and the art of medicine in Kenya have had the greatest impact on my life and career."*

I know Dr. McCullough speaks for many of his colleagues when he says that his experiences in Kenya shaped what kind of doctor he's become and expanded what he can offer to his patients in Indiana.

That broadening education experience is possible because of George Rapp.

And closer to home, he's played a tremendous role in the preservation of historic New Harmony, Indiana and started the New Harmony Hoosier Salon Art Gallery as well as helping to restore the Ravine Garden at Newfields here in Indianapolis.

A medical pioneer, a champion of education and a supporter of the arts, Dr. Rapp has done a lot of good in a lot of ways.

"For all the people you can."

The list of people Dr. Rapp has helped is a country mile long: patients, students, fellow doctors, the thousands of people whose life has improved because of the use of his medical device inventions, the people of Kenya, high school scholarship recipients, the weekend road-tripper and art lover who gets to enjoy all New Harmony has to offer.

And it was people who got him involved in many of these projects in the first place.

Dr. Rapp said he got engrossed in so many different areas because he got to know the people who were involved.

There's no doubt, George has helped a lot of people over his life.

But I think he'll be the first to admit he had some help along the way, too.

And he had no greater help and no better supporter than the woman who is sitting next to him today, his wife of over 60 years, Peggy Rapp.

You rarely read about or hear about George without also hearing and reading about Peggy. They've accomplished so much, together. His causes are her causes, and vice versa.

For all the many things George and Peggy have done, I know they'll both admit they're greatest achievement is the wonderful family they've raised, which now includes three great-grandchildren!

So, thank you Peggy and the entire extended Rapp family for lending us George for all these causes and to help all those people over the decades.

"For as long as you can."

What started in New Harmony in 1932 carries on to today, and tomorrow and the day after, because I know George Rapp isn't finished doing good.

But we can let him take a small break here – today – so Indiana can say “thank you.”

Thank you, George, for all the good you've done to make your hometown, our state and the world a much better place through your devotion to the arts, education and medicine.

In all those ways.

For all those people.

For all this time.

It's my honor to present the 2019 Sachem Award to a Hoosier great, Dr. George F. Rapp.

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