Who was Eugene S. Nowicki?

(1919-1999)

Eugene (Gene) Stanley Nowicki was born in Hamtramck, Michigan on July 5, 1919. After attending Michigan State College, Gene served his country as a First Lieutenant in the Pacific during World War II. Returning to civilian life, he married Virginia Kukawski and began his career with Winter Brothers/National Twist Drill.

In 1959, the Nowicki family moved to Avon Township to be closer to Gene’s workplace. Eugene’s community involvement began with his membership in his neighborhood homeowner’s association. He watched as Avon Township developed from fields and farmland to a growing suburban community. His concern for managed development led him to volunteer and appointed positions in the township’s local government. In 1972, Eugene won an elected position as an Avon Township trustee and served in that position for twelve years. It was during his tenure that Avon Township transitioned to the City of Rochester Hills. Gene was an active member of the commissions that helped to write the new city’s charter.

Elected to the City of Rochester Hills Council in 1984, Gene took seriously his council appointment to the city’s Planning Commission. Rather than depend on developer’s plans and statements before the commission, Gene could frequently be found walking the proposed development sites, eager to protect the balance between development and preservation. Before the phrase became popular, Gene sought to preserve “green spaces” in his growing community. His dedication was recognized with the creation of the Gene Nowicki Environmental Award to recognize individuals or groups for a significant contribution to the improvement or protection of the natural environment. In 1990, he was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award for his environmental protection efforts and in 1997 he was recognized for his 25 years of service to the city.

Gene was an active member of the Planning Commission until his death in March of 1999. His colleagues from the last Avon Township Board and the first Rochester Hills City Council donated the 1999 Arbor Day Tree at Veterans Memorial Pointe to his memory.

In October of 1999, the City of Rochester Hills council adopted a resolution to name a 25-acre parcel of park land on Adams Road “The Eugene S. Nowicki Park” to celebrate the life of a man who served his community with dedication and commitment.

Source: Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm