

Norbert (Norb) F. Wapelhorst-2009

Norbert (Norb) Wapelhorst began his parks and recreation career in 1936 as the foreman in charge of constructing a swimming pool (a WPA project) in St. Charles Missouri's Blanchette Park. After the facility was completed in 1937, he was hired to manage the pool, and the following year was named Park Supervisor by the St. Charles Park Board. When Norb began his career in St. Charles, the community had a population of 11,000 and one park. When he retired in 1979, there were 13 parks, and facilities included two pools, 13 tennis courts, 19 baseball/softball fields, seven soccer fields, formal flower gardens, numerous playgrounds, picnic areas, and a historic railroad depot. A member of the Missouri Park Association starting in 1950, Norb was one of the attendees at a meeting in Potosi, Missouri, in November, 1959. This was a historic occasion, resulting in the merger of the Missouri Park Association and the Missouri Recreation Association - the new Missouri Park and Recreation Association. As a charter member, Norb served the association on various committees, including budget and finance, citation and awards, ways and means, nomination and certification. He served as editor of the "Explorer" magazine, and as the MPRA President in 1965. In 1973, he received the MPRA Distinguished Fellow Award, and in 1993 the MPRA Retirement Service Award. Norb was also an active member of the National Recreation and Park Association, and was one of the organizing members of the National Symposium Program. Following his retirement after 42 years of service, Norb has continued to support local parks through his involvement in various park issue/election campaigns, including a 1983 Park Tax Increase, 1984 G.O. Bond Issue, 1988 Capital Improvements Sales Tax, 1991 No Tax G.O. Bond Issue, 1995 No Tax G.O. Bond Issue, and a 2001 charter amendment affirming the management of the park system by a resident administrative board. He has also been involved as a leader in many organizations within the St. Charles community. Mr. Wapelhorst was one of the founders of the Saint Charles Park and Recreation Foundation, and served in various positions including president. He has earned Emeritus Status with voting privileges for life. Active in parks and recreation for more than 70 years, Norb Wapelhorst has created a legacy of service to his community and to his profession.