

Ted and Pat Jones-2011

There may have been others who had the idea that Missouri needed a “rails to trails conversion,” but it was the effort of the late Ted Jones, along with his wife Pat, that the dream was put into motion. Ted went on a 3-day bike tour on a converted abandoned railroad in Wisconsin and thought ‘why not do the same thing at home?’ Ted and Pat, avid hikers and bikers, made countless presentations to every kind of group from churches to service clubs to chambers of commerce. They spent time around kitchen tables all across Missouri sharing their vision with others. Their efforts were pivotal in encouraging citizens who then urged state legislators to do such a thing with the abandoned KATY railroad in Missouri. Their initial gift was \$200,000 to acquire right-of-way for the trail. Later, they donated \$2,000,000 to begin building the trail. The first segments of the trail opened in 1990. In 1993, a flood put a major snag in the plan with damage to 75 miles of the trail. Ted’s company, Edward D. Jones, came to the rescue with a \$300,000 donation to repair the damage. They also provided a toll-free number where people could be updated on the trail’s progress. After the trail was completed from Sedalia to Clinton, Pat gave funds for the opening ceremony and financed the printing of the trail’s fullcolor brochures. To recognize the contributions of Ted and Pat Jones, a new park was named in their honor -- the Edward “Ted” and Pat Jones-Confluence Point State Park, which was dedicated in 2004 at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. The park will serve as a link in a regional effort to provide trail access all the way from the eventual end of Katy Trail State Park in Machens to the Illinois border. The Missouri State Park system is rated one of the best state park systems in the United States. The 225 mile long KATY is the “crown jewel” in the system. It is the longest continuous “rails to trails” conversion in the world. Not only have millions of Missourians hiked or biked on this trail, but people from every state in the nation and many countries have come to Missouri to use the trail for their recreation. The impact of this trail on the prestige of our state and our economy is remarkable. Members of the Missouri Bike Federation and many others had long sought a safer way for trail users to get from the KATY on the north side of the Missouri River to Jefferson City on the south side. Much of the cost of construction for a dedicated bike/pedestrian lane was covered by private donations. The largest donation came from Pat Jones. That connector is now named for her. The work to create, build, maintain and improve the KATY Trail is justification enough to honor Pat and Ted as members of MRP’s Hall of Fame. But, their generosity extends to many other contributions that support our efforts. Their home and farm were given to the Missouri Department of Conservation as the 820-acre Prairie Fork Conservation area. This area is dedicated at Pat Jones’ request for research and education. Her purpose is to nurture in young people an interest in conservation and the outdoors. The University of Missouri School of Natural Resources, MDC, and many school and youth groups use Prairie Fork regularly. Recently, 250 acres adjacent to the Prairie Fork Conservation Area became available and Mrs. Jones donated the funds to “save this prairie land.” In fact, People Magazine has named her, “Godmother of the Prairie.” Pat donated her parents’ farm in eastern Missouri to MDC as the Young Conservation Area. She recently

donated an additional \$600,000 to the Conservation Foundation Trust for KATY Trail right-of-way. Pat is active with Operation Stream Team, including wading in with other team members to clean up. She has, with MDC, created the Conservation Leadership Corps. This is an effort to train and educate future naturalists. She has been working hard for the Missouri River release. And, she has served as President of the Missouri Parks Association. Pat and Ted Jones are truly deserving of being honored as members of the Missouri Recreation and Parks Hall of Fame.