

Admired by Henderson County students and staff alike, Marvin “Marv” Larson was a loyal citizen and friend for the nearly three decades he served the local community. He was a symbol of achievement and perseverance for generations of young students and his legacy will continue to impact them as they navigate through life.

Larson served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He graduated from the Illinois Institute of Technology with a chemical engineering degree and worked as a chemical engineer until his retirement. Then, after moving to Hendersonville, Larson started the Henderson County Kiwanis Terrific Kids Program in 1987.

Described as “truly wonderful” and “a loyal family man”, Larson dedicated his time to helping his community the best he could. He tutored young math students and helped at the annual Kiwanis Spelling Bee. He was an active member of First United Methodist Church, and volunteered with prison ministries across the county in an effort to bring hope and restoration to inmates and their families. He served as a Sunday School teacher at First United Methodist for 25 years. Larson received the Governor’s Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service in 1997, and was named Volunteer of the Year by the Henderson County Association of Volunteer Administrators in 2012.

Larson had a special affinity for athletics. He coached little league baseball and basketball, and helped out with the Special Needs Baseball League. He helped pitch some games and cheered every young athlete on at almost every match.

“I got to see firsthand the way Marv loved young people and the rapport he had with them,” Rick Wood, one of Larson’s colleagues at the Kiwanis Club and Henderson County School Board member said. “...I have seen the important role that volunteers play in our school system and Marv Larson is one of the many who gave so much of their time to serving the needs of our school children.”

Larson served as the coordinator of the Kiwanis Club’s Terrific Kids program in Henderson County from 1987 to 2013. The program encourages young students to develop their character and become the best version of themselves. Larson had a room in his house dedicated to Terrific Kids supplies and awards. The trunk of his car was always filled with Terrific Kids bumper stickers, pencils, and notebooks as he traveled to elementary schools across the county. Larson got excited for each and every school visit, proudly shaking kids’ hands and recognizing them for their achievements. Marv Larson volunteered for 26 years, and awarded an estimated 25,000 Terrific Kid certificates to Henderson County elementary students. He enthusiastically led the program until 2013.

“Without question, Marv was certain of his purpose - to serve others, especially children,” Barbara Case Blaine, former executive administrative assistant for the HCPS Superintendent and Henderson County Board of Public Education said. “And that service added enormous meaning to his life while blessing all those whose lives he touched.”

Corum Smith, former principal of Balfour School, writes: “While Marv is no longer with us, his legacy of volunteerism in Henderson County will live on for years to come.”