

# SOUTHSIDE BOOMERS

Winter 2016

## ON THE COVER



### Hall of Famers

Successful coaches Sam Alford and Steve Witty have extensive Johnson County ties.

Photo by Mark Freeland

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# BOOMERS



### Take a look

Area museums feature art, history, more.

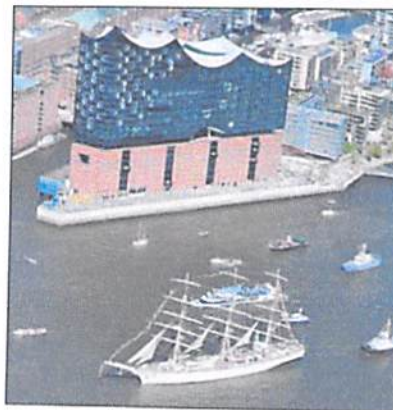
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### Giving back

Willis and Pat Good of Franklin are spending their retirement years volunteering.

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# GOOD SERVANTS

Franklin couple  
spend retirement  
years making  
a difference

STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY AMY MAY



**W**illis Good knew he wanted to be a teacher when he was growing up in Rock Island, Illinois.

"When I was a little kid, I had a blackboard. I'd set my stuffed animals up as students and I taught school," said Good, 78, who now lives in Franklin. "Then I'd turn a panda bear upside down and paddle its little butt," he added with a laugh.

He would later learn more effective motivational techniques. And after 38 years as a fifth- and sixth-grade science teacher, Good is still using motivational and teaching techniques in retirement.

He and his wife, Pat, took on several community activities when they moved to Franklin following retirement. Willis gravitated toward education and worked as a substitute teacher at Franklin Community Middle School, Custer Baker Intermediate School and Needham and Webb elementary schools. He has now been in education for 50 years.



**Above:** Willis Good, with the certificate he received for being named Franklin Education Connection's volunteer of the year last school year. **Opposite page:** Willis and his wife, Pat, are volunteers at The Historic Aircraft Theatre in Franklin and at other nonprofits.

Throughout his career, he believed that no child was unteachable, so it was natural for him to sign up with Franklin Education Connection as a study buddy. He is one of the program's charter volunteers, joining in 2005.

This year, his efforts with the organization were recognized with the Col. Harry Wescott Volunteer of the Year award for his work at Needham and Creekside elementary schools. The award is named for a local resident whom Willis knew from the Franklin Kiwanis Club and the study buddy program, where Wescott volunteered until his death last November.

Good said he was surprised to be honored with the newly created award. His co-workers had to plot to get him to attend the banquet to accept it.

"Someone tipped me off in April," Pat said. "They asked 'Are you going to the Study Connection banquet?' 'No, I don't usually go.' 'Will you go this year?'"

"I had no inkling; it was a big surprise," Willis said.

Franklin Education Connection supports innovative, creative and proven ways to help students learn. The Education Foundation provides grants for programs to enhance academic achievement, while Study Connection joins dedicated adult study buddies with students need-

**"If a student wants to talk about something at home, we are listeners."**

Willis Good, on one of his roles as a study buddy with Franklin Education Connection



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ing extra guidance to succeed.

Willis is an advocate for the program, which he's been a part of for 11 years. The program, which is in all the schools in Franklin, pairs volunteers with students for a one-hour session once a week after school to study "and maybe play a game if we have time," Good said.

A study buddy student is referred by his or her teacher, usually for extra help with a specific subject. A study buddy is more than a tutor, though. Many of the students are behind academically because of multiple challenges in their lives.

"If a student wants to talk about something at home, we are listeners," Good said.

He can give advice or, if the student has a more serious problem, refer him to the school counselor.

### Revels in kids' success

He loves seeing his kids succeed. Last year, he had a third-grader who wanted to do a science experiment. After discussing the idea with the teacher, who agreed to the project if the student improved in other academic areas, Good was able to use his educational specialty - science - to help the student set up and conduct the experiment.

"He did a great job," Good said.

He also fondly remembers his days as a substitute.

"When I was subbing, I walked around the room the whole time. I knew what they were doing and I would catch them," he said with a laugh.

Nowadays, the kids are caught texting. When Good started his career, it might have been passing notes or sleeping.

"The ones I'm meeting (now) are more challenged, but there are an awful lot of good students out there," he noted. "They're no different than anyplace else.

"... I love working with all kids. It's just part of me."

He especially enjoys meeting former students and seeing how their lives turned out.

He remembers an incident in Rock Island, right before moving to Franklin, where he ran into a former student at a grocery store. The student, he said, had been a rowdy kid who was often in trouble at school.

"He looked at me and said 'I apologize for doing that. I



now have children, and they better not think about doing what I did.' I think that was a nice thing to say," Good said.

Good has framed thank you letters from several of his students in his study at home. The letters thank him not only for his help with the subject matter, but for being a friend and making the after-school tutoring a fun experience. The letters are crowded in among other important markers of his life, such as the volunteer award and photos of himself with his prize-winning 4-H sheep.

The Goods also volunteer at The Historic Artcraft Theatre in Franklin as ushers and Willis is serving his second term on the board of Franklin Heritage Inc., which owns the theater.

The board, he said, covers a variety of issues, from budgeting and paying the utilities at the theater to running the re-use center Madison Street Salvage and working to preserve historic homes in the city.

"It's a very interesting board. I really enjoy it," he said.

### Volunteering at church

They joined Grace United Methodist Church and have undertaken a variety of tasks there, including taking the Sunday morning attendance, which is more complicated than it sounds, Pat said. It requires computer skills and is quite time-consuming.

"We got too busy, so we let that one go. Now, we just kind of volunteer on demand at our church," Pat said.

After the 2008 flood, they helped the church deliver food to people in need, which led to regular shifts at the Interchurch Food Pantry. Pat conducts the client intake.

Willis serves on the charity's board.

Willis also enjoys working with the Johnson County 4-H sheep program. He helps the 4-H'ers with the specifics of showing sheep, as well as mentoring them on their care and being on hand to answer questions and hand out ribbons. He also helps out at the Kiwanis booth during the fair, helping to keep the area clean. He got involved after someone found out he raised sheep as a boy and is a lifetime 4-H member in Illinois.

Although he lived in the city as a boy, his family owned an acre of ground outside of town. Willis visited the neighbors and got signatures to get an OK to raise Cheviot sheep. One of them won grand champion in 1955.

### High school sweethearts

Willis and Pat met playing checkers in their high school lunchroom. Willis attended Western Illinois University, where he majored in agricultural science and decided he wanted to be a science teacher. While he taught school, Pat worked in the administration office of a Catholic school.

They moved to Franklin 10 years after their son, Dana, had moved there.

"He told us it was a neat little town to live in," Pat said. "It was a good move, but we knew no one but our family and our daughter-in-law's family, who had also moved here from the same town. We just decided to go and start volunteering."

Volunteering also took the Goods across the country to the McCurdy School, a K-12 private school in Española, New Mexico, associated with a local United Methodist church. Pat did office work and Willis substitute taught.

Volunteering has become a full time job for the Goods. They enjoy the people they meet and the ones they get to help.

"It was a way for us to get acquainted, and it evolved into other things," Pat said. "Part of it is just a mission in life. Someone once told me, 'If you're retired and you're bored, you're not busy enough. All the years we worked prepared us for volunteerism."

"It wasn't easy for us to move here, but we're so glad we did." ❧

**"It (volunteering) was a way for us to get acquainted, and it evolved into other things. Part of it is just a mission in life."**

Pat Good