

Remembering 'Spence' for all he did

By REBECCA BRIA
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A man well-known for his many accomplishments in the Back Mountain has died.

Raymond Spencer Martin, 79, of Carverton Road, Trucksville, died April 1, 2008 at home after a battle with cancer.

Known as Spence, Martin was the chairman and founder of the Dallas Area Municipal Authority (DAMA).

Paul Rodda, of Dallas, met Martin on the professional level in the early 1950s. Rodda is an architect and Martin was a mechanical engineer. The two got to know each other and became friends. They were also both members of the Dallas Rotary Club, of which Martin was a past president and a member for just shy of 50 years.

"We got to know each other very well over a 50-year period," Rodda said. "He was one of the people I could trust with anything."

Rodda says he and his wife, Jean, were best friends with Martin and his wife, Joan. The couples often met up and attended functions together such as the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic.

Though Rodda has many memories of his friendship with Martin, he prefers to keep them private.

Arthur and Sandy Peoples, of Dallas, were first introduced to Martin eight years ago when they joined the Dallas Rotary Club. The Peoples quickly learned that if anything ever broke, Martin always had what it took to fix it in his truck.

"He always said, 'I'll be right back,'" Sandy said.

Arthur remembers what made Martin special to so many others.

"He was a compliment gentleman," Arthur said. "He had unconditional love for his family, toward his friends and commitment to the community. I have never seen him not handle himself as a gentleman. He always treated people he met as his

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friend."

Sandy nominated Martin for his second Paul Harris Fellow pin because of his devotion to the club and community. It is a "service above self" award and Martin was the only member of the Dallas Rotary Club to receive it twice.

Martin was presented with the award in March and, just one month later, Sandy delivered a eulogy at his funeral on behalf of the Rotary.

"Rotary meets every week,"

Sandy said in the eulogy. "That means that Spence attended more than 2,450 Rotary meetings. He worked more than 45 county fairs, which he helped to found by the way, 50 library auctions, five Dallas Festivals and more than 20 golf tournaments. He was tireless at helping us raise funds for our Rotary charities, most of which support programs for youth such as our children's Christmas shopping spree, the li-

brary, food pantry, Salvation Army, book scholarships for deserving college-bound seniors, youth exchange students, the dictionary project for third-graders and much more."

At the annual Dallas Rotary Club Charter Night on April 3, Martin's life was commemorated. Over 60 people attended the meeting.

"It was not a grief thing or a mourning thing," Sandy said. "It was a celebration of all the things he had done and what he meant to everybody."

Aside from the Rotary Club, Martin was also a Habitat for Humanity of Wyoming Valley board member, a volunteer and a driver for Meals on Wheels of Wyoming



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Spencer Martin, second from right in the second row, represents the Dallas Rotary Club in 2006 at an awards ceremony.

Valley and one of the founders of the Dallas Area Fall Fair, now known as the Luzerne County Fair, where he was chairman of the grounds for over 20 years.

Spencer was the organist and choirmaster at St. John's Lutheran Church on River Street for over 30 years.

He was also nominated in March as a candidate for The Times Leader Jefferson Award for Outstanding Community Service.

"Spence is one of those guys who is going to be missed because he always had that sparkle to him," Arthur said.



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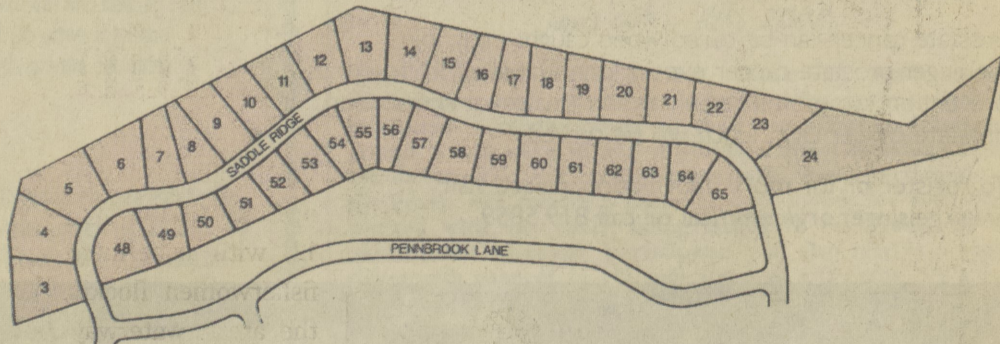
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