

## **“Richard Poole Walk of Trees” Unveiled - Supervisor helps to dedicate the 'Richard Poole Walk of Trees' in McLean Central Park**

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Don Morton first met Richard Poole in 1975, when Morton started taking his newspapers to the recycling bins at Cooper Middle School.

"I would always see Dick in the containers at the school and I would call him 'Mr. Dumpster,'" said Morton.

Poole finally asked Morton not to call him "Mr. Dumpster," and Morton took to calling him "Mr. Container," a name that was much more amenable to Poole.

"Then I started to see him all around McLean, in all seasons, in all weather, by himself, always tending to the trees," said Morton.

Morton was one of several people to recall fond memories of Dick Poole — former chair of the McLean Trees Foundation — at a dedication of the "Richard Poole Walk of Trees" in McLean Central Park on Thursday, Oct. 26. The McLean Trees committee installed three matching sugar maples along with a special plaque commemorating Poole and his civic contributions. Dranesville District Supervisor Joan DuBois assisted Poole's wife Jillian Poole in the official unveiling of the plaque. Don Morton said he was pleased that the plaque and "Richard Poole Walk of Trees" is located across from McLean Central Park's tot lot.

"I hope that kids will come over and say 'who was Dick Poole,' and then be inspired to become environmentalists themselves," said Morton. "I know Dick would be very pleased by that."

Poole passed away last February at the age of 86, but those who knew him will never forget his commitment to planting and nurturing trees throughout the McLean community. Poole served the McLean community for over four decades, and was chairman of the McLean Trees Foundation for the last 30 years. In that role, he oversaw the planting of hundreds of trees in McLean. Poole was also well known for his creation and maintenance of the newspaper and magazine recycling program at Cooper Middle School. DuBois recalled helping Poole when he was out of the country on a Foreign Service work assignment.

"My husband and I did newspaper duty together, and walked around McLean picking up papers," said DuBois. "I remember working on all kinds of projects with Dick."

RESIDENT Vicki Herrmann attended the dedication ceremony and said that she also had fond memories of working with Poole at the Cooper recycling bins.

"When I retired I told Dick 'I've always wanted to do this,' and he said 'fine,'" said Herrmann. "For five years I worked the second shift on Saturday morning, and if it was below 40 degrees I brought hot cocoa."

Bob Hampton moved to McLean 40 years ago and like Poole, he loved planting trees in the community. Hampton moved into a house near McLean High School , which at that time, sat on grounds that were completely barren.

"It looked like a prison," said Hampton, who also attended the dedication ceremony in McLean Central Park. "So that inspired me to start planting trees around the school, and 10 years later I learned about Dick's activity with the McLean Trees committee."

From that point on, Hampton worked closely with Poole, both of them making sure that trees were planted all around McLean.

"I've just been pleased to be able to do something to beautify what I consider to be one of the best communities I've ever lived in," said Hampton . "But it's hard to believe anyone could have done more in the 40 years that I've been here to improve the ambiance of this community than Dick Poole."

Long-time resident Herb Becker described Poole as "the finest example of civic activism that I have ever seen."

"He was always here for McLean, he loved his work, he was tenacious — he was a true leader in a quiet kind of way," said Becker.

At the dedication, Jillian Poole thanked everyone for coming to honor her late husband's civic contributions.

"Although he's not here in body ... I know he is here in spirit," she said. "You all were his friends, and he relied on all of you and loved all of you. He was never doing this alone — it was his life, but he loved it."