



The Piqua Area Chamber of Commerce

326 North Main Street • P.O. Box 1142 • Piqua, Ohio 45356
Voice (937) 773-2765 • Fax (937) 773-8553 • Website: www.piquaareachamber.com

Contact: R. Scott Miller

Telephone: 937-773-2765

E-mail: smiller@piquaareachamber.com

PRESS RELEASE

Piqua Civic Hall of Fame Inductees Recognized

May 1, 2017 – The Piqua Area Chamber of Commerce Civic Hall of Fame committee recognized three (3) outstanding Piqua citizens who significantly contributed to the Piqua community on Sunday, April 30, 2017. Several family members, community supporters and members of the Hall of Fame committee attended the 22nd annual induction service held at the Fort Piqua Plaza. The ceremony was led by local historian and Piqua Library Director, Jim Oda.

William Murray Harris (1920-1944)

He was born and raised in Piqua, the son of Rev. D.E. Harris of the Cyrene A.M.E. Church. He graduated from Piqua High School in 1938. He enlisted in 1942 in the Army Air Corps and attended the Tuskegee Air Force School. He was stationed in Italy with the 302nd Fighter Squadron in December of 1943 as a line mechanic. Master Sergeant Harris died in a plane crash in Italy in June of 1944. The first African-American Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post in Piqua was named the Stout-Harris Post. Bill Harris, nephew of William Murray Harris, accepted the award.

John Bernard Hemsteger (1827-1878)

He was born in Germany and immigrated with his family to the United States in 1851. He completed his seminary studies in Cincinnati in 1854. He came to Piqua in 1855 as the first assistant pastor to the English mission church (St. Mary's) before founding the German congregation (St. Boniface) in 1855 and promoting the construction of the first church on Adam Street. Father Hemsteger moved to Columbus in 1859 and became the pastor of Holy Cross Church where he remained until his death. In 1868 he became the first Vicar General of the Columbus diocese. Deacon Michael Knight, St. Boniface Church accepted the award.

Joseph Martin Kastner (1889-1959)

A Russian immigrant, Kastner came to Piqua in 1913 from Dayton. He established the city's largest scrap metal yard at the west end of Water Street. He served on the Piqua City Commission from 1957 to 1959. He was instrumental in starting the Piqua Fireman's Pension Board to ensure decent retirements for local firefighters. He served on the Salvation Army Community Board and on the Board of Directors of the Miami Valley Boy Scouts for twenty-five years. Marlene 'Mitzi' Seman, daughter of Joseph Martin Kastner accepted the award.

The mission of the Piqua Area Chamber of Commerce is to unite the Piqua business community, to enhance the quality of life for our citizens and promote economic vitality and development. Contact the Piqua Area Chamber for information about programs, services, events and membership opportunities or visit www.piquaareachamber.com.

“Your Business is Our Business”

Accepting the award for William Murray Harris is his nephew, Bill Harris.

Accepting the award for John Bernard Hemsteger is Deacon Michael Knight.

Accepting the award for Joseph Martin Kastner is daughter Marlene “Mitzi” Seaman.