

Ernestine (Ernie) Luise was the first female President of the Derby-Shelton Rotary Club in 1971-1972 and also served as District Governor. She has been very active with Rotary on the International level as well. She and her husband Nick have been involved with Rotary International Peace Centers program that educates scholars in conflict prevention and resolution. They have traveled to Mexico to participate in the literacy initiative Project Amigo whose goal is to keep kids in school. Keeping with the education theme, they have also supported the construction of a 3-room school in a rural village in Nicaragua and furnished a computer lab.

While serving as District Governor Ernie helped Rotary International's efforts to institute a clean water project in the Kolar region of India. The bio-sand filter program that Nick and Ernie helped spread with their extensive fund raising efforts assisted over 400 government schools and several villages to develop clean drinking water as part of the South Asia Pure Water Initiative. Their fundraising efforts for Gift of Life have helped "fix hearts" of over 1,000 children in the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

She also has numerous commendations through her Rotary service at the local, regional and international level. She has been the Derby-Shelton Rotarian of the Year and winner of the Donald A. Adams Award from Rotary District 7980. The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International honored her with the Citation for Meritorious Service and the Board of Directors of Rotary International presented her with the Service Above Self Award.

Ernie also served on the Birmingham Group Health Services Foundation Board for 18 years including time as and was Vice Chair. She co-chaired the very successful Bowl-a-thon for many years. She is also the past Board Chair and 13 year member at TEAM, Inc. and a former Board member at Valley United Way. She has also been heavily involved with the Boys & Girls Club, the Women Making a Difference Committee and Julia Day Nursery. The City of Shelton has benefitted from her service on the Municipal Parking Authority.

Ernie's background was in education, and she held various teaching positions in New Jersey, Missouri, Massachusetts and Connecticut. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Education from Montclair State College, with certification in History and Biology.

When she retired from education, Ernie spent ten years as Administrative Assistant to the Shelton Economic Development Corporation during a vibrant period of growth for the City.

Ernie is a past recipient of Valley United Way's Volunteer Center Sharon Bryce Holly Community Hero Award, Parent Child Resource Center's Joseph Pagliaro, Sr. Award and the Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce's Gold Seal Award. In 2013, she and Nick were named as the recipients of the Valley's oldest and most prestigious award for community service, Valley United Way's Charles H. Flynn Humanitarian Award.