



RUTH M. TIECHE FRIEND OF PHILANTHROPY AWARD

John C. Johnston III



Whether you knew him by John, J.C., Cliff, or Tex (as his high school friends called him), one thing is for sure – to know J.C. was to know a true friend and a champion for Wayne County.

Born and raised in Wooster, Ohio, J.C. Johnston returned to his hometown in 1975 after completing law school at Northwestern University. He joined Critchfield, Critchfield, and Johnston – working alongside his father. Shortly after joining the firm, J.C. was tasked with creating the Articles of Incorporation required to establish a new, little start-up called The Greater Wayne County Foundation, known today as Wayne County Community Foundation.

J.C. remained deeply committed to the vision and mission of the Foundation over the next 45 years. Beginning in 1997, and continuing for the next 25 years, he was a member of the Foundation's Board of Trustees. He served as President of the Board from 2005 to 2014, then as the Chair of the Investment Committee until stepping down in 2022.

During his tenure as a WCCF Trustee, J.C. was instrumental in recruiting new board members and new donors, as well as overseeing the growth of the Foundation's assets. The spectacular rise of the Foundation over the past 45 years – from beginning with a single \$1,000 donation to managing over \$121.5 million in assets today – is due in no small part to J.C.'s steady, guiding hand.





His commitment to Wayne County did not start and end with the Foundation. J.C. maintained a strong belief in the intrinsic value of community service. He was actively involved in many organizations, serving as a Trustee for the Wayne Legal Aid Society, Wayne Center for the Arts, Junior Achievement of Wayne County, and the Wooster YMCA. He also served nine years as a Trustee for The College of Wooster.

J.C. and Gennie, his high school sweetheart and wife of over fifty years, moved to Colorado in 2022 to be closer to their children and grandchildren. Even when halfway across the country, J.C. remained actively involved in the community, always just a phone call away – continuing to provide guidance to many of our nonprofit leaders. But his time with his family was cut short when J.C. passed away, peacefully at his home and surrounded by his loved ones, on February 21, 2023.

J.C.'s generosity was truly a gift to so many today and for many generations to come. By awarding the **Ruth M. Tieche Friend of Philanthropy Award** each year, the Foundation seeks to recognize the difference that individuals can make through personal commitment and leadership, acknowledge the impact such individuals have on our community, and celebrate the role their creativity and advocacy play in a project's success. J.C. exemplified the very best qualities of a Friend of Philanthropy, and repeatedly shared them with the members of this community. He will forever be admired for his dedication to making Wayne County a better place through selfless acts of personal and corporate philanthropy.

Previous Award Recipients

Stanley C. & Flo K Gault, 2013

The J.M. Smucker Family, 2014

The Donald & Alice Noble Family, 2015

Greg & Kathy Long, 2016

Barry Romich, 2017

Stephen & Cheryl Shapiro, 2018

Mike & Stephanie Reardon, 2019

Richard & Judy Seaman, 2022

**No recipients in 2020 or 2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic*

The Friend of Philanthropy Award was created to honor those who make a difference in our communities with their philanthropic activities – the giving of treasure, time, and talent – for the betterment of the Wayne County area. It is presented at Wayne County Community Foundation's Annual Dinner. For more details on the award and nomination process, please visit us online at www.wccfoh.org or call **330.262.3877**.

RUTH M. TIECHE



The Friend of Philanthropy Award has been named in honor of Ruth M. Tieche. Ruth worked at Freedlander's Department Store in Wooster for nearly 60 years, retiring in 1975 as personnel director. She passed away in March 1989, at the age of 90, leaving no survivors. Through a bequest, Ruth left \$384,000 to the Foundation as an unrestricted gift.

Ruth's generosity brought the total assets under the care of the Foundation to more than \$1 million – a major milestone for the young organization. With careful stewardship, her initial gift has continued to grow while also awarding funds back into the community through the Foundation's competitive grant process. Unrestricted gifts, like the one provided by Ruth, allow the Foundation to meet the everchanging needs of our community for years to come.

