

Town of Lewiston Councilman Bill Geiben officially retires

Public service career spans 57 years

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TERRY DUFFY
Editor-in-Chief

Dec. 28 marked the end of an era for Lewiston Councilman Bill Geiben.

A familiar face in the northern Niagara community for more than five decades, Geiben announced plans to retire last March, effective Dec. 31. Thursday was the final board meeting for Geiben, who turned 80 years old that same week.

Geiben's career in public service spanned 57 years. It began in the Lewiston-Porter School District in January 1966, when he worked as a full-time history instructor. Geiben retired from Lew-Port in June 1999. During this time and beyond, he also served in various capacities with both the Town (2015-22) and Village of Lewiston (1999-2010) – including a stint as village mayor.

Decades of Service

"I've been serving the people of Lewiston for decades," Geiben said at his retirement announcement to the Town Board. "Back in the 1980s, I was appointed to the Lewiston Recreation Commission. This gave me the desire and motivation to pursue an elected position as council member. I served six years, from 1989 to 1994, as councilman and deputy supervisor.

"After not seeking reelection, I was appointed to the Zoning Board of Appeals and served as chairman in the early 2000s. I had the opportunity to be a Lewiston village trustee and, for a short time, mayor. In late 2016, I was encouraged to get involved again and ran for town office. That was the beginning of this last stint of public service to Lewiston."

He explained, "I have served with some truly caring and dedicated people. I'm very thankful for having the opportunity to serve with Mayor Richard Soluri and Supervisor Steve Broderick, and many others. It's been a pleasure working with my fellow board members. After 20 years, it's time. I've enjoyed being a councilman."

Town Board Praise

Thursday's Town Board session included words of appreciation and praise from Geiben's many colleagues and friends. The accolades continued at a well-attended celebration later that night inside Lower Niagara Moose Lodge 584.

"When I was first running for supervisor, one of the things (I learned) was Bill Geiben was running for Town Board. That was eight years ago," Steve Broderick said. "Bill came on board; I came on board; and it's been a pleasure serving with Bill."

Broderick said Geiben made his first impact "as a teacher at



Town Supervisor Steve Broderick, left, with retired Councilman Bill Geiben. • Bill Geiben and his wife, Rita.

Lew-Port; he taught participation in government, which you kind of walk the walk and talk the talk."

Following an unsuccessful bid as Village of Lewiston trustee back in 1974, Geiben maintained an interest in public service, first with the Recreation Commission, then with the Village of Lewiston and Lewiston Town Board.

"You stuck with it," Broderick said.

'Wealth of Knowledge'

The supervisor added, "You have been a wealth of knowledge to this board. ... I am glad all our workers showed up to acknowledge your last day on the Town Board. I really appreciate it."

"I want to congratulate you. I want to call it your semi-retirement, because you've been retired already – this has been like a little side-hustle you've had. I wish you nothing but the best. You can still be a phone call away; you can come here to complain. But we'll enjoy seeing you."

Town Board members John Jacoby, Rob Morreale and Jason Myers expressed appreciation for their association with Geiben.

"From the Democratic side, Bill's been wonderful to me," Jacoby said. "As the lone Democrat, I could have been shuffled off into a corner and ignored. But Bill was always there with advice and help. (He) made the job and the transition into public service very easy for me. I appreciate it."

Morreale said, "I also came on in 2015 with Steve and Bill. I didn't know either one of them. But we ended forming a bond and we worked well together. We accomplished a lot in eight years. It's



been a pleasure having him on my right side over here. And I'm going to miss him. But congratulations."

Myers said, "Bill, thank you for your service to our town and village. Campaigning (with you) was a pleasure the first time around. He's an exemplary guy. I appreciate the opportunity (to work with you)."

Commenting on the experience, Geiben said, "It's been my privilege serving Lewiston residents, both appointed and elected to positions over the past years. I thank my family, especially my wife, Rita; friends; and the voters for giving me that opportunity. A shout-out to my daughters for their moral support."

"Many years of public service have given me the opportunity to work with many hard-working, dedicated people," Geiben continued. "Their accomplishments are evident with the work they do and the accomplishments that they have provided."

"With the quality of life in Lewiston we have a great community and a great place to live."

Lewiston Kiwanis to hold community skate at NU's Dwyer Arena

The Kiwanis Club of Lewiston will sponsor a community skating event open, to the public, this evening at the Dwyer Ice Arena on the Niagara University campus.

The open skate, offered in partnership with the Town of Lewiston, will run from 7-8:30 p.m.

"This year, our club is once

again able to sponsor a community ice skating night through the Town of Lewiston at Niagara University," Kiwanis President Chuck Barber said. "This means the club has made it possible for community members to come and skate for free, and also free pizza. The only charge would be

for a skate rental, if you do not have your own."

Barber said Kiwanis members and Peach Queen Kirsten Ferree will be on hand at a welcome table outside the ice to welcome visitors and promote the club to the community.

LEWISTON-PORTER CHURCH DIRECTORY



SHARE YOUR MESSAGE CALL US AT 716-773-7676

Lutheran Church of the Messiah

Pastor Timothy Anas

915 Oneida Street, Lewiston • 716-754-4944

www.messiahlewiston.org

Live Streaming



Come worship with us at 8:15am and 10:00am
Coffee and Sunday School Hour at 9:00am



535 Division St. Twin City Highway
North Tonawanda • 716-693-2802

OPEN DAILY **MON - SAT: 7AM - 8:30PM**
SUN: 7AM - 7PM

VISIT US ON THE WEB FOR
OUR WEEKLY SPECIALS
themarketinthesquare.com

LOCAL FAMILY OWNED & INDEPENDENTLY OPERATED

Where do you go to find the
BEST WINGS, BEST PIZZA and
BEST PLACE TO WATCH THE GAME?

TELL US & WIN!

GO TO WNPAPERS.COM TO ENTER

ATTENTION TOWN & VILLAGE OF LEWISTON PROPERTY OWNERS

For the STAR (New York State School Tax Relief Program)
and other Real Property Tax Exemptions

The School Tax Relief (STAR) program provides eligible homeowners in New York State with relief on their property taxes. If you're a STAR recipient, you receive the benefit in one of two ways:

- the STAR **credit** program (open to any eligible homeowner whose income is \$500,000 or less)—you receive a check in the mail from the Tax Department to apply to your school taxes. **If you are new to the STAR program, you must register online at www.tax.ny.gov/star or by calling the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance at (518) 457-2036.**
- the STAR **Exemption** Program (now closed to new applicants)—you receive a direct reduction on your school tax bill in the form of a property tax exemption.

If you currently receive the STAR **exemption**, you can choose to change to the STAR **credit** to receive a check instead; you may receive a greater benefit, and your savings will never be less than the STAR exemption benefit. Due to recent changes in the law, beginning in 2019, the value of the STAR credit savings may increase by as much as 2% each year, but the value of the STAR exemption savings cannot increase. PLEASE NOTE: should you choose to change to the STAR Credit program, you must call New York State Department of Taxation and Finance with any issues that might arise regarding your receipt of the check.

If you were enrolled in the STAR Exemption Program for your current residence prior to March 1, 2015 and wish to remain on the Exemption Program renewal is automatic except for the following reasons in which case you must reapply at the assessor's office:

- You are receiving the Basic STAR Exemption and wish to apply for the Enhanced STAR Exemption. To qualify for the Enhanced STAR, you must be turning at least 65 years of age in 2024 and the 2022 combined adjusted gross income (minus taxable IRA distributions) of all owners and any owners' spouses residing on the premises cannot exceed \$98,700.
- You are seeking to restore a STAR Exemption that was discontinued due to failure to meet the income standard.
- You continue to own property but have filed a new deed due to divorce, surrender of interest by a co-owner, survivorship, trusts or if you added another owner.

Due to recent changes to the STAR Exemption Program, the income limit for the Basic STAR exemption is now \$250,000. However, **if your income is greater than \$250,000 and less than or equal to \$500,000 you can register for the STAR Credit and receive a check from the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance by going to www.tax.ny.gov/star or by calling 518-457-2036.**

Low-Income Exemption for Senior Citizens: Must be at least 65 years of age and all 2022 income is \$28,499.99 or less for Lew-Port & \$25,524.99 or less Wheatfield school district. This exemption **MUST** be filed annually! For those already receiving this discount, renewal applications will be mailed by January 1, 2024.

Disability and Limited Income Exemption: Income cannot exceed \$25,900. Applicants must have Social Security Disability award letter and proof of 2022 income. Renewal applications **MUST** be filed annually.

Veteran's Exemptions: Available to qualifying Veterans and un-remarried widows of qualifying Veterans. Applications are available at the Assessor's office or via email by request. You must provide a copy of your DD-214 along with your application.

PLEASE NOTE: All applications must be filed no later than March 1, 2024

The Town of Lewiston Assessor's Office is accepting applications by mail at P.O. Box 330, Lewiston, NY 14092 with a signed application and copies of the required income statements and tax forms or in person at the Town Hall, 1375 Ridge Road **Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

For further information, contact Jamie O'Shea at the Town of Lewiston Assessor's Office: 754-8213, ext. 232.