

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Forest Preserve mourns the passing of Richard “Dick” Young

GENEVA, IL — The Forest Preserve District of Kane County mourns the passing of environmentalist Richard “Dick” Young, who passed away on Sunday, March 13.

Mr. Young served as Kane County’s environmental director for 17 years and he was a long-time consultant and volunteer for the Forest Preserve District. While he retired in 1987, he remained active in his profession and was a frequent visitor to various forest preserves, including the one named for him in Batavia.

Mr. Young also researched and created the popular field guide, *Kane County Wild Plants & Natural Areas*, in 1986. The third edition of the guide was published in November 2007. In the acknowledgments for the third edition, Mr. Young said the book “represents over 40 years of poking about the odd corners and niches of Kane County, making notes of what grew where and why.” During a book signing event for the release of the third edition, fans and friends from Kane County and beyond lined-up and kept Mr. Young busy autographing books for two hours.



At a January 2008 book signing at Forest Preserve headquarters in Geneva, Dick Young autographed a copy of *Kane County Wild Plants & Natural Areas* for Forest Preserve Executive Director Monica Meyers.

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Forest Preserve Commission President John J. Hoscheit said Mr. Young would long be remembered. "Dick was dedicated to preserving the environment. His major contributions to the Forest Preserve District will live on through his reference books on the flora and fauna of Kane County."

The Forest Preserve District's natural resources department worked most frequently with Mr. Young. Drew Ullberg, director of natural resources, said that he last of the region's 'Conservation Pioneers' has died.

"Along with Ray Schulenberg, Floyd Swink, and Dr. Bob Betz, Dick Young was instrumental in the 1960s and '70s in making people aware of the importance of our last vestiges of true native Illinois. In his ramblings along railroads, in old woodlots and through prairie relics, he became the first modern conservationist to catalog the plant life at dozens of now publicly owned and preserved natural areas in Kane County. He tirelessly worked to have critical natural areas preserved, and then often worked alone to improve preserved areas. Just a few short years ago, I found him planting oak trees at a preserve in Batavia that would eventually bear his name — Dick Young Forest Preserve.

"Dick Young was a humble man and not comfortable when praise was heaped upon him. He received two Purple Heart medals for heroic action at Iwo Jima, but never revealed this secret to anyone until about 1990. He became a living legend here, due to his tireless devotion to natural areas conservation. His legend was further reinforced — and who knew he was a poet for the local flora — when his first book came out in 1986. Dick was a man of many talents from many long years of life. He will be missed," said Ullberg.

Visitation for Mr. Young is planned on Wednesday, March 16, from 4-8 p.m. at McKeown-Dunn Funeral Home, 1801 S. Douglas Rd., Oswego. The funeral is scheduled for 10 a.m. Thursday, March 17, at Church of the Good Shepherd, 5 W. Washington St., Oswego.

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