

Paul E. Richard, Jr.
Leadership & Community Service Scholarship Memorial

Paul E. Richard, Jr. was a lifelong Olpe resident who had a deep love for his county and the Olpe community. Having grown up in the Flint Hills west of town, he attended Highland one-room-schoolhouse and after eighth grade, he attended and graduated from Emporia High School. Paul enlisted in the United States Navy for service during World War II. During this time, his ship was torpedoed and he swam through burning oil in the Ocean. After six years of serving his country and upon receiving an honorable discharge, Paul moved back to his home community of Olpe. In 1948, he married, Helen Richard, his wife of 26 years and they raised five children. He was a member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church and led his faith community by serving on the parish council and as trustee. Paul worked for the Santa Fe Railroad in Emporia and served as Mayor of Olpe, Kansas from 1960 to 1975.

Over the course of nearly 15 years, Mayor Richard worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life for Olpe citizens. His leadership included implementing Olpe's sewer system followed by working with the Army Corp of Engineers to build the Olpe Lake and water plant. This provided, for first time in history, households with local water and sewer systems. Under Mayor Richard's leadership, the first volunteer Olpe Fire Department was instituted and expanded by purchasing new fire engines and equipment, offering fire fighter training, and building the new fire house in Olpe. Mayor Richard also worked to transform gravel streets into blacktopped streets. The addition of city street lighting secured through Paul's administration increased safety for drivers and pedestrians within the community. Each December, he coordinated the filling of candy bags which Santa gives to the children and elderly citizens of Olpe; this has become a long time city tradition.

Paul's love for his country and for the citizens of Olpe, Kansas was exemplified in the outstanding **leadership** and **service** to which he was committed by giving generously of his time and talents to bring about progressive changes that enhanced the quality of living in his beloved community.