



## Ken Geddes remembered

Ken Geddes, who died this week, is remembered for his stewardship of the Balke Trust, which provided critical medical and dental care for Victor families and children. Courtesy photo

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**Ken Geddes remembered** By Pat Hill | 0 comments

With the death of Ken Geddes this week, the city of Victor has lost one of its lions, a man considered by many to be the cornerstone of the community.

President of the Balke Trust, Geddes saw to it that dozens of families and children received critical medical and dental services. Steward of the trust named for the rancher Rudy Balke, who died in 1964, Geddes carried out the wishes of his friend for the next 44 years.

"My association with Ken goes back to the 1970s; he was really the first person I ever submitted a grant to," said Mary Bielz, Victor resident and director of Community of Caring, who is known for her dogged drive to secure grants to help others over the past four decades. "Ken started me on this road of understanding relationships and partnering with organizations to bring about good."

In a place known for free-spirited people who lend local color to the community, Geddes stood out as a favorite son of Victor. "Ken was one of the characters of the community, always wanting to know how everyone was, the scuttlebutt, the ins and outs of what was going on," Bielz said.

In her respect and reverence for his dedication to the mission of the trust, Bielz successfully nominated Geddes in 2007 for the Teller County Cares Centennial Award. In her nomination letter, Bielz wrote, in part: "His efforts are a claim to glory and immortality. The trust has mitigated the suffering and pain of many, lifting the burdens of great hardships. Ken has built the trust into a legacy of hope and a continuum of service."

In perfect character, Geddes failed to show up for the ceremony in Cripple Creek, preferring to stay out of the limelight. Nonetheless, Bielz, along with friends and trustees, presented him with the award at a board meeting of the Balke Trust.

While Geddes practiced law in Colorado Springs and went to his office until February of this year, he continued to maintain a home on 7th Street in Victor, where he spent most of his weekends.

"His back porch looked over all of Victor," Bielz said. "I always likened him to Michael the Archangel, the guardian surveying and caring for his town. He loved the physical setting the beauty, the history and the people."

As the Victor city attorney during the 1950s, Geddes imposed a fee on the town fathers. "It's written in the Gold Rush newspaper that he charged \$1 a year," Bielz said. "He had a heart of gold and was always approachable, didn't matter who you were."

Jeff Williams, a friend over the years, made sure that Geddes could return to Victor after he became unable to drive.

Williams also fills in some of the gap in Geddes' life story. Born on Jan. 5, 1923 in Boone, Iowa, Geddes was raised in Victor. "Ken's father was superintendent of schools in Cripple Creek and mayor of Victor at one time," Williams said.

After graduating from the Victor High School, Geddes served in WWII, later earning a degree from Colorado College and a law degree from the University of Colorado. He practiced probate and real-estate law.

He married his high-school sweetheart, Helen Hatcher Geddes, who preceded him in death in the late 1990s. "Helen's mother, Cora, ran a grocery store, the KC Market, in Victor," Williams said. "Prior to that she had a grocery store in Goldfield."

Geddes loved the outdoors, loved to hike and was a faithful member of the Ad-A-Man Club whose members hike up Pikes Peak each New Year's Eve. "Ken got me into the club," Williams said.

Today, Williams has taken over the role of president of the Balke Trust. "Because of Ken's management and stewardship of the funds, the Balke Trust lives on today," he said.

Geddes is survived by his children, Ann Geddes Taylor and Bill Geddes.

Geddes memorial service is at 11 a.m. Sept. 17 at Grace Episcopal Church in Colorado Springs.