

## Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame Inductee

When it comes to our 2016 Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame inductee for the category of Community Service, **Julius W. Hegeler II**, affectionately known as the “Patron Saint of Danville,”



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is a man defined by his unbounded generosity and dedication to making his home town a better place. A lifelong resident of Danville, Mr. Hegeler has donated millions of his own fortune to causes aimed at leaving a lasting benefit and legacy to the community, including historic preservation, the arts, education, health care, job training and helping those with disabilities, among others.

Hegeler’s grandfather moved to Danville in 1905 and established the Hegeler Zinc Co., a smelting operation that most agree put Danville on the map. Julius Hegeler II attended the University of Illinois and Millikin University for Business Administration. In 1952 during the Korean War, Mr. Hegeler enlisted in the Air Force and became an F-86 jet fighter pilot, flying 70 missions, and earning the Distinguished Flying Cross and an Air Medal with an Oak Leaf Cluster.

After the war, Mr. Hegeler returned to Danville. An entrepreneur by nature like his grandfather, he, his lawyer brother and Continental Filling president Harry Peterson founded the Peterson Filling and Packaging Co., later known as Peterson/Puritan, which became the world’s largest contract packager of chemical specialty products. At one time, the company had over 1,000 employees and ran three shifts, filling “aerosol cans with bug spray, hair spray, deodorant, car wax, you name it,” as Mr. Hegeler said. He retired in 1978, and in 1992, he established the Julius W. Hegeler II Foundation. “Danville was always good to me,” and, as he put it, “It was payback time.” And paying it back to the community, Julius Hegeler has indeed.

Among his many humanitarian contributions:

- \$2,270,000 to Danville Public Schools
- Over \$5,000,000 to Danville Community College, establishing an Advanced Technology Center
- \$3,000,000 to Presence United Samaritan’s Medical Center, to establish a cancer care and women’s health center in his wife, Bobette’s name
- \$3,000,000 to build a vocational education center for Worksource Enterprises, providing career training for those with moderate to profound disabilities
- Untold sums to help establish the Vermilion County War Museum
- Danville Symphony Orchestra
- “Balloons Over Vermilion” Festival
- Millikin University – three major gifts
- Danville YMCA
- United Way of Vermilion County
- Many others



Mr. Hegeler (left) presents a donation to Bob Richards, board member of Danville District 118 Schools Foundation.

At age 87, Mr. Hegeler continues living in Danville and his Foundation continues giving back.