

Pigeon renames streets in honor of community leaders

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Pigeon Village Council President Michael LePage served as the master of ceremonies on Tuesday as two streets in the town were renamed in honor of community members who have made significant contributions to the area's economy and fellow residents. (Mark Birdsall/Huron Daily Tribune)

When John and Pauline Eichler purchased the Pigeon Telephone Company in 1972, little did they know that one day almost every American would carry around their own personal phone in their pocket.

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Eventually, their small, community-based communication business would evolve into Agri-Valley Communications Inc. John and Pauline were farmers, and Pauline also worked as a schoolteacher, but their decision to buy the telephone company would have a profound and lasting impact on their community. Those contributions would include Pigeon Telephone, Thumb Cellular and Agri-Valley Services, Main Street Café and Har-Jo's Ben Franklin.

To honor those contributions, members of the Pigeon Village Council decided to rename a street after the Eichler family and held a special ceremony Tuesday at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Sanford Street — now called Eichler Street — to unveil the new street sign bearing the family name.

Village council President Michael LePage served as master of ceremonies Tuesday, and John and Pauline's sons Ed and Neil were in attendance to unveil the new sign. LePage said it's impossible to overestimate what the extended Eichler family has meant to town's economy and its residents.

"They've just been a real mainstay in our community and are generous and always there to help lend a hand," LePage said.

He added John and Pauline's commitment to Pigeon was passed down to their children, who have carried on the family business and maintained their legacy of giving back to their hometown.

"They are keeping that tradition alive," LePage said. "They're a good, solid family."

From the corner of Michigan and Eichler, the dozens gathered for the ceremony moved across town to a corner near the Pigeon Band Shell. There, the sign that had previously marked the corner of Park and School streets was covered. LePage then introduced longtime Scheurer Hospital Administrator Dwight Gascho, who along with his wife, Teresa, would unveil a sign replacing the one marked "School Street" with one bearing the words, "Dwight Gascho Drive."

LePage said Scheurer Hospital was at a crossroads when Dwight Gascho took over the helm in 1990, and under his stewardship the hospital would grow into a vibrant health system with multiple locations serving residents all over the Thumb.

LePage said Dwight Gascho has been instrumental in overseeing that growth, which has included Scheurer's satellite clinics, doctor recruitment and facilities such as Country Bay Village Senior Living and Country Gardens Assisted Living.

"He's really taken it to the next level," LePage said.

The Pigeon village council made the decision to rename the streets in 2020, but postponed the ceremonies until this week, which is also the week of Pigeon Summerfest, due to the pandemic.