

April 24, 2018

*The Venice Historic Preservation Board and the City of Venice take pleasure
in presenting the*

Venice Legacy Award

to

Ronald Wesley Higel

in recognition of his contribution to the development of Venice.

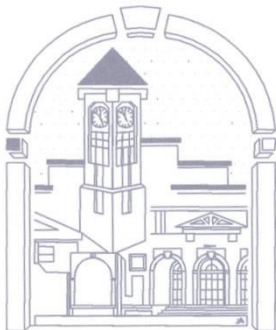
Ronald W. Higel, a retired dentist and local historian whose great-grandfather was one of the first settlers in Venice, passed away on November 5, 2017, at the age of 80. Ron was known as a charismatic gentleman, perfectionist and dental professional of the highest caliber. Ron graduated from Venice-Nokomis High School and went on to the University of Florida and the University of Maryland Dental School and served as Captain in the United State Air Force. While stationed in England, he met his wife Sue with whom he raised a family in Venice.

Ron ran a progressive dental practice for decades and served on many boards, including, Venice Historical Commission, Venice Hospital, Venice Yacht Club, Venice Old Timers and the Venice Area Historical Society. Some of his customers, according to his daughter Kim, called him the “whistling dentist” who sometimes gave history lessons in an open tent set up in the parking lot of his dental practice. He once dressed as Frank Higel for a city-sponsored video and posed as him for a painting that would become the cover of the 1976 Venice-North Port phone directory. According to the city’s website, for the next 30 years, Higel family members were boat builders, grove caretakers and contractors.

Ron was a big part of this community, had a keen interest in family history and was very much in demand to give the basic history of this area. His nephew, Greg Reiter, called his Uncle Ron a perfectionist and someone who always had an eye on the family and at annual gatherings, Ron could be heard retelling family history.

Ron gave lectures on Venice’s history to various organizations, was an articulate writer for historic preservation issues and projects, contributed financially to several historic projects, and volunteered his time and talents to the restoration of the Lord-Higel House.

His daughters Kim and Meredith, fondly remember their dad having a compelling spirit, being involved in the community, and being a consummate teacher in word and deed. A sincere thanks to Ron for perpetuating the Higel name in the community.



Venice Historic Preservation Board

Mayor

Venice Legacy Awards are given to individuals or organizations in recognition of their contributions to historical preservation or significant historical impact in the Venice area.