

ELMHURST CHAMBER INDUCTS PECHANIO INTO CIVIC HALL OF FAME

ELMHURST, Ill., December 17, 2015—Long-time Elmhurst businessman, civic leader and community volunteer Ralph O. Pechanio will be honored as the 2015 inductee into the exclusive Elmhurst Chamber of Commerce & Industry Civic Hall of Fame.

Pechanio, who enjoyed a successful career in community banking before “retiring,” will become the Hall of Fame’s 24th member during the Chamber’s 97th Annual Awards Gala and Talent Showcase held at the Clarion Inn’s Waterford Banquet & Conference & Center on Friday, January 29, from 6 to 9:30 p.m.

“Ralph Pechanio is a touchstone through which multiple generations of businesspeople, civic leaders and community volunteers have connected dating back to the 1970s,” said John R. Quigley, ECCI President and CEO since 1999, and active in the Elmhurst Chamber for 25 years.

An active Chamber member for some 45 years, Pechanio has served three Board terms as an elected Director (1980-82, 1987-89 and 1990-92), including tenures as 1992 Chair (then President) and as Treasurer in 1981 and 1990. He has been appointed to a third term as Treasurer for 2016.

A green-coated Chamber Ambassador since 1992, Pechanio is a two-time recipient of the Ambassador of the Year award (2011 and 1993).

Pechanio has served the business and civic communities since his “retirement” from banking in 1993, including chairing the Elmhurst Veterans Memorial Commission since its inception prior to the Elmhurst Veterans Memorial dedication on May 31, 1993, and co-chairing the Elmhurst Memorial Day Parade Committee since 1997.

“Ralph is the epitome of what it means to be a selfless volunteer,” stated Quigley, who serves as Pechanio’s Memorial Day Parade Committee Co-Chair.

A veteran of the United States Army (1965-67), Pechanio played an integral role as Fundraising Chairman in the building of the Veterans Memorial in Wilder Park during his tenure as ECCI Board Chair.

His local affiliations include the Kiwanis Club of Elmhurst and Elmhurst American Legion THB Post 187.

Pechanio received the Elmhurst Jaycees’ Distinguished Service Award recipient in 2001, ECCI’s Good Works Award in 2009 and Elmhurst College Bluejay Backers’ Community Service Award in 2014.

His community banking career included 23 years at the former Elmhurst Federal Savings Bank (1970-93) as a Controller, Vice President and Treasurer, and then Chief Financial Officer. Prior to Elmhurst Federal, he served as a Savings and Loan Examiner at the State of Illinois’ Department of Financial Institutions (1964 and 1967-70).

Pechanio graduated from DePaul University in 1964 with a Bachelor of Science of Commerce with a major in accounting and then served in the U.S. Army (1965-67).

Pechanio and his wife, Georgette, have resided in Elmhurst since their marriage in 1969. They are the parents of Matthew and Polly, and grandparents of Dustin, Polena and Ralph Williams.

The Civic Hall of Fame, which was established in 1992 as one of Pechanio’s initiatives during his term as Board President, recognizes women and men who make major contributions to the Elmhurst community. Up through 2008, inductions were

conducted during the Opening Ceremonies of Elmfest. The 2009 inductee was honored at the Chamber's Spring Luncheon in April of 2010.

Joe Newton, legendary boys' cross country coach at York Community High School, was the inaugural Hall of Fame inductee.

Preceding Pechanio as Hall of Fame inductees were: Eleanor King Hookam (1993), Elmhurst Art Museum; Dr. Ivan E. Frick (1994), Elmhurst College; Joseph Wagner (1995), York Furrier; Jean Haselhorst (1996), Elmhurst Park District; Robert M. Magnuson (1997), Elmhurst Memorial Hospital; Virginia J. Harmon (1998), Unique Travel Services; Illinois House of Representative Lee A. Daniel (R-46th District) (1999); A.J. "Toche" Terrones (2000), Elmhurst Chamber of Commerce & Industry; William C. "Bill" Gooch Jr. (2001), Community Bank of Elmhurst; Willis Johnson (2002), York Theatre; Fred Messerschmidt (2003), Elmhurst Federal Savings & Loan; Jim Van Ewyk (2004), Pfund and Clint Florists; Jacquelyn Haddad (2005), Elmhurst Junior Women's Club; Thomas O. Myers Jr. (2006), Thomas O. Myers Real Estate; Abner Ganet (2007), Leonard's Men's Store and Mayor of Elmhurst; Jan Pauli (2008), Pauli's Marathon; Bob Schiller (2009), Schiller Real Estate; Thomas D. Marcucci, four-term Mayor of Elmhurst (2010); Rich Grodsky, Elmhurst Park District (2011); Pete Cruger, Elmhurst Independent (2012); Doug Beach, Elmhurst College Jazz Band Director (2013); and Betsy Hanisch, Elmhurst businesswomen, civic leader and community volunteer (2014).

Established in 1918, the Elmhurst Chamber of Commerce & Industry is a voluntary organization of business and professional men and women who have joined together to promote the civic and commercial progress of the community.

The Chamber's mission is to promote an environment that creates success for local businesses and our community.

The Chamber also serves the needs of its members through services, programs and events that provide opportunities for networking and referral, business education, development and promotion, governmental representation and community involvement.