

Don Stodghill

Don Stodghill may not have lived in Marion all of his life, but he has made a huge footprint. Stodghill moved to Marion when he was 22 years old in the early 1950s. Hailing from Vincennes, he had graduated from Lincoln High School, and served nearly 4 years in the Marines on the east coast during the Korean War.

Stodghill owned and operated E & K Steel Erectors, based in Marion for about 30 years.

Through a personal interest in rivers and city parks, he met his wife, Shirley, around 1955.

They became involved in the Mississinewa River Boat and Ski Club in the mid-1950s. He and club members including Ken and Mary Pahmeier and others, built the first ski jump and initiated the River Regatta in Marion. "You could come down on weekends and find 1,500-2,000 people watching the club perform," recalled Stodghill.

As his professional work career slowed down, he wanted to get more involved in the community. "They helped me so much when I was younger, so I wanted to give back." He became involved with Community Rehab, helping low-income families obtain housing.

Stodghill was a driving force behind the establishment of the Mississinewa Riverway around 1980, the city-owned Riverwalk which, to this day, is enjoyed by the public, and serves as a connector in Marion.

During the 80s, Stodghill was one of the initiators and organizers of Riverfest, which became a widely known and exciting tradition in Marion. During the Riverfest, they performed ski shows, held community parties, and even started the first Rubber Duckie Race to raise money for the club and the city.

After the years went by, Stodghill started volunteering regularly for the Gardens of Matter Park, and still serves in that capacity. He assists Doug Darga and Julia Glessner with daily tasks, and says he offers his opinion whether they want to hear it or not. "I enjoy designing, planting, and maintaining the Gardens, and I appreciate that such a great park is located here in Marion. I want to give back to what Marion has given me and my family. I invite anyone to come to the Gardens to see how beautiful it is, and I'll give you a tour."

I enjoy living in a smaller town, love people.

I'm a friend, I work and give, help people, at least I'll leave a legacy at the Gardens of Matter Park.

We could certainly use more. We have volunteers including the Crossing, Gas City community members, the Garden Club, and more are getting involved every day.

"Marion has its problems...same as any other community...but there's no reason we can't change that problem which we're doing right now, so just get involved is all I say."