

Wayne C. Kennedy-2009

Wayne Kennedy's thought was that the best way to serve the public was to provide the greatest possible range of opportunities. Wayne earned his master's degree from St. Louis University and taught math, history and physical education for the Mehlville School District. There he became involved in recreation opportunities for young people and was instrumental in a community effort to create a community center. During the various stages of the construction of the facility, Wayne devoted tremendous time and energy to the efforts until 1962 when the building and 6 acre tract became part of the St. Louis County Park system. His experience with the community center led Wayne to leave teaching and become recreation supervisor for the St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation. In recognition of his St. Louis efforts, he received the first place award for the promotion of recreation in the United States from the National Recreation Association, and was named as Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation for St. Louis County in 1962. Created in 1950 as a provision of the county charter, by 1962 the system consisted of 28 parks, (mostly small neighborhood playgrounds) totaling just over 1600 acres. Wayne began an aggressive campaign to expand the park system's acreage, geographical location, and range of services. At the time of his retirement 29 years later, the system had nearly 13,000 acres in about 70 parks. In addition, nearly 20 other parks had been created by the county and turned over to local municipalities, and 2 areas were turned over to the Missouri Department of Conservation. Because of his influence, the St. Louis County park system reflects his vision of diversity. Resources include recreation programs, conservation, historic preservation, nature, animals, and an outdoor display of contemporary sculpture - all represented within one system. This was uniquely possible because of Wayne Kennedy's skill of creating partnerships with private entities, local, state, and federal government to provide unique park opportunities for all citizens.