Frost Valley YMCA

# Hall of Fame

## Walter T. Margetts

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Any real estate professional will tell you it's all about location and certainly Walter Margetts truly understood the importance of this advice. He knew that Julius Forstmann's 2,200 acre estate in the Catskill Mountains would make one of the best summer camp locations in the country. It was Christmas Eve 1956 when Walter Margetts and Henry Hird negotiated the transfer, and best holiday gift anyone could imagine, of this beautiful mountain estate to what was then known as the Central Atlantic Area Council of the YMCA from the Forstmann Family. Through his and Hird's keen negotiating skills they acquired the estate, which included a main house, 12 fully equipped farm buildings and a herd of Holstein cattle for $130,000 from the Forstmann family. This property became what is now known as the Frost Valley YMCA. Frost Valley continues to keep Margetts' vision alive with its preservation of the camp buildings, pristine trout streams and thick forests.

Walter T. Margetts (1905-1983), a native of Passaic, New Jersey, was well known and respected as an influential attorney and civic leader. In 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt named him to the National War Labor Board to arbitrate labor-management dispute cases, preventing work stoppages which might hinder the war effort. The board also administered wage control in national industries such as automobiles, shipping , railways, airlines, telegraph lines, and mining.

He was board chairman and trustee of several companies, as well as president of the Hudson & Manhattan Railroad, one of the earliest subway systems in the world, now known as the Port Authority Trans-Hudson (PATH) railroad.

While he had a head for commerce, Walter Margetts had a big heart for children, so when the mother of a blind child suggested establishing a summer camp for the visually impaired, he helped found the New Jersey Camp for the Blind in Morris County and served as its president for 34 years. The camp was completely free to blind and visually impaired children and teens, as well as special needs campers, who were residents of the state of New Jersey.

Walter Margetts also served as chairman of the Frost Valley Association. He was a long time Wawayanda man and ultimately brought Wawayanda to Frost Valley. We owe Margetts a debt of gratitude for securing this extrordinary location for our camp.

It is with this legacy that we are honored to induct Walter T. Margetts into the Frost Valley YMCA Hall of Fame. His vision and character will live on in the lives of generations to come.