HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

ROBERT OHAUS

Bob Ohaus was widely known as "Mr. Y." The Y movement was for him a complete passion. His first involvement was with the Westfield YMCA (initially as a supporter of its recreation program and later as its board president), followed by leadership roles with the Somerset Hills YMCA (as a long-serving board member and co-chair of a crucial capital campaign), the Sioux Indian YMCA in South Dakota (where support of disadvantaged members of the Lakota Sioux nation became a special mission), and of course, for many years, with Frost Valley, where he served as a quietly forceful, innovative trustee for decades. His connection to Frost Valley had begun with those first efforts in Westfield, a vibrant community Y that was a pipeline for campers, staff, directors, volunteers, and trustees, especially in the early days when Frost Valley was an Association of New Jersey YMCA's, Westfield centrally among them. Through his work in Westfield Bob was a strong proponent of Wawayanda's move to the Forstmann estate in New York. Among Frost Valley's archives are camper lists from the 1960s, abundant with Westfield names; many of these families had found out about the camp through the advocacy of our tireless inductee. "There's wasn't a conversation that took place," Bob Lomauro recalls, "in which Bob wasn't bringing the story of Frost Valley and other Ys into the discussion."

Judy Pasnik herself met "Mr. Y" in an unrelated context, but it wasn't long before he began extolling Frost Valley's values to her as well. Passionately he described the Newark Partnership and emphasized the importance of mainstreaming children typically otherwise kept separate in schools and at camps. "When Bob talked about such things," Judy now recalls, "you just had to listen. He was compelling." And in this case, once more, the typical Ohaus effect ensued: Judy is now indeed a member of both the Frost Valley and Somerset Hills YMCA boards. "Bob became known as 'Mr. Y,'" Judy fondly remembers, "because he not only articulated the Y's values but he lived them." "Bob passionately wanted other people to be involved with what we do for children and families," recalls Bob Lomauro, who worked with Bob OHaus closely at Somerset Hills and then followed him onto the Frost Valley board. "He not only thought in that way, but he acted that way."

Such acts—always based on clear vision and principle—were simply the way Bob Ohaus expressed himself. "Bob had a vision of the Y as an important part of a healthy community," wrote his Somerset Hills trustee colleague Fox Stoddard in a eulogy for his friend, but vision alone for him was not sufficient. If, as Fox eulogized, "he wanted to help build 'mind, body and spirit' wherever there was a need," it entailed traveling to South Dakota to work directly with a people stressed by circumstances, or, with his wife Blair, it involved sponsoring more than 70 foster children over the years, nurturing and supporting them until adoption or permanent placement could be arranged.

For the consistent devotion to mainstreaming, inclusion, and honest board governance that led to his nickname, "Mr. Y"; for his many years' exemplary service as a Frost Valley trustee; for his willingness to stop and talk with anyone, anywhere about how the YMCA helps kids; for his unstinting belief in supporting our most vulnerable children; for the legacy he leaves in which volunteers recruit volunteers generation by generation; for his willingness to go "wherever there was a need"; and for dreaming the dream of the Y as above all a "healthy community"—Bob Ohaus is hereby inducted into the Frost Valley Hall of Fame.