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FROST VALLEY YMCA

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A Purpose Fulfilled: The Life & Legacy of D. Halbe Brown
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FROST VALLEY YMCA
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Psalm 116:15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Halbe Brown. For 35 years, from 1966 to 2001, Halbe guided the mission and fostered the vision that became Frost Valley.

With nearly a half century's experience working for the YMCA, beginning as a swim instructor at the Youngstown, Ohio Y while in college, and as a camper, CIT, then director of Camp Fitch in Pennsylvania, before coming to Frost Valley, Halbe was a leader of the camping industry. He was revered by many across the world and, most especially here, at Frost Valley, a place he made his home for 35 years with his wife, Jane, and their five children. During that time, Halbe championed Frost Valley's transformation from a small, seasonal camp on 2,200 acres to what we are today. Under his direction, Frost Valley grew to encompass thousands of acres within the Catskill Mountains and became a pre-eminent year-round camp offering the wonders of nature to children and families.

But Halbe Brown's legacy belongs to the generations. The generations of campers, school children, families, volunteers, and staff who he helped shape. He imagined a place where all could enjoy the wonders of the natural world. Halbe's vision has touched the lives of tens of thousands of people. The place that Halbe Brown stewarded for nearly four decades stands as a testament to the character of a man who dedicated his life so that others would have a place to discover the best within themselves.

Halbe had an innate sense of possibility, the creative vision to imagine it, and the drive to see it to fruition. As Jerry Huncosky, CEO of Frost Valley and Halbe's successor, says, "In the camping industry we say, 'We stand on the shoulders of giants.' Halbe was a giant, for sure."

Over the years, so many people have come to think of Frost Valley as home, from the families who've been visiting for decades, to the children who've grown up here summer after summer, to the school groups who've learned more here in a week than they'd ever imagined they could. And, of course, there are the staff, board members, volunteers, and donors, as well as the wider community, who have come to know and love Frost Valley, and in so doing, they've come to know and love Halbe Brown.

The first pediatric dialysis center in an overnight camp setting, where children with chronic kidney disease can come to camp; Mainstreaming at Camp (MAC), a program where children with developmental disabilities attend summer camp alongside the entire camp community; a unique global collaboration with the YMCA in Tokyo, that is instrumental in providing a home base at Frost Valley for Japanese families to take respite from the stresses of life in a foreign country: these are pillars on which Halbe Brown's legacy stands firm.

While Halbe Brown's passing is a time for mourning the loss of a friend, a mentor, a leader, a visionary, and a great man, let it also be a time of rejoicing. Rejoicing in the wonderful legacy of a lifetime of achievement, a lifetime of dedication, a lifetime of memories, a lifetime of lives touched and changed for the better. When we reflect on the life's work of D. Halbe Brown, let us rejoice in a purpose fulfilled.

ABOUT FROST VALLEY YMCA:

Frost Valley YMCA is a 5,000 acre camp in the heart of the forever wild Catskill Mountains. We are, at heart, a summer camp all year long. But, we serve people through Camp, School Programs, Family & Group Retreats and East Valley Ranch. Please contact us for story ideas on these or any of our other many programs.