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## Morrison inducted into senior hall of fame



### **Charlie Morrison**

***Charlie Morrison is pictured here at the Ashville Small Town Museum, where he can be found most days. Morrison was inducted into the Central Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame on Wednesday.***

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ASHVILLE - In recognition of his contributions and leadership in his community, Charles Morrison was inducted into the Central Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame on Wednesday.

The lifelong Ashville resident is best known for his work at Ohio's Small-Town Museum, located at 34 Long St.

Morrison, 80, was one of 13 people over the age of 60 recognized this year by the Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging.

"I said, 'not me,'" joked Morrison about being told he was chosen for the honor. "I probably hadn't slept since I found out."

Thinking about an acceptance speech, he said, kept him up at night.

Once he arrived to the ceremony in Columbus, he said the organizers told him to keep his speech short, and that's what he did.

With the encouragement of his presenter, Ula Jean Metzler, county commissioner, Morrison performed a few tricks for the audience, like

he does for students who visit the museum, as part of his acceptance speech.

Morrison was chosen for the honor having spent the majority of his life encouraging residents in the northern part of the county to be proud of their rural heritage.

A 1950 graduate of Ashville-Harrison High School, Morrison has been married to his wife, Mona, for more than 60 years.

Together, they have a daughter, a son, five grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren and a dog, Maggie.

After his father passed away, Morrison took over management of the family's grocery store, Morrison's Market. As neighbors discovered his interest in local history, they brought old photos and memorabilia to him.

In his free time, he would listen to the stories of elderly residents and copy their old photographs with an Instamatic camera.

It wasn't long before he had the start of a small museum in the store.

After a significant portion of Ashville's history was demolished in the 1960s and 1970s, Morrison recognized the need for a group to help prevent any other destruction. He spearheaded the formation of the Ashville Area Heritage Society, and began to organize residents to rescue the last of the Scioto Valley Railroad stations, which were to be torched for firefighting practice.

A letter-writing campaign by the "Save Our Station" committee resulted in the restoration of the depot and the discovery of flags, lanterns, posters, waybills, old shoes and tickets - plenty of items to create a museum. The depot's transformation was considered a watershed moment in reviving Ashville's heritage.

After that success, he encouraged residents to save the Dreamland, an old silent-movie theater, to use as the museum. It worked, and Ohio's Small-Town Museum opened in 1979. Since then, Morrison has volunteered there nearly everyday. One of his favorite things to do, he said, is talk to students and give them tours of the museum.

Aside from his work with the museum, Morrison served as a village council member for more than 37 years. He was the village's mayor from 1963 to 1967.

He is a charter member of the Ashville Kiwanis Club; past president of the Ashville Community Men's Club; and a founding member and past president of the Ashville Area Heritage Society. He attends South Bloomfield United Methodist Church.

As a board member of Louise Terrace Senior Citizens Housing, he helped provide suitable housing for seniors to remain in the community. He is also a trustee of Pickaway County Travel and Tourism and a 50-plus-year member of the Knights of Pythias.

An advocate for preserving small towns, Morrison has traveled across the state to educate other communities on how to save their past using their own resources and by not relying on state and federal funding or grants. His efforts have garnered numerous local, state and national development awards. The program he presented on Ashville was selected to represent America at the International Rural Development Exposition in India.

As part of being inducted into the Central Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame, Morrison received recognition from Governor John Kasich, U.S. Rep. Steve Austria, State Sen. Bob Peterson, President of the Ohio Senate Tom Niehaus, State Rep. Gary Scherer, Ohio House Speaker William Batchelder, and Pickaway County commissioners Glenn Reeser, Jay Wippel and Ula Jean Metzler.

Morrison said the induction ceremony was "a really nice experience," and he enjoyed the day.