

Charlie Morrison has spent much of his life encouraging the people of northern Pickaway County to be proud of their rural heritage. He believes that a shared sense of community is imperative if people are going to make change work for them. Instead of being victims of change, people can mold change to make a better community.

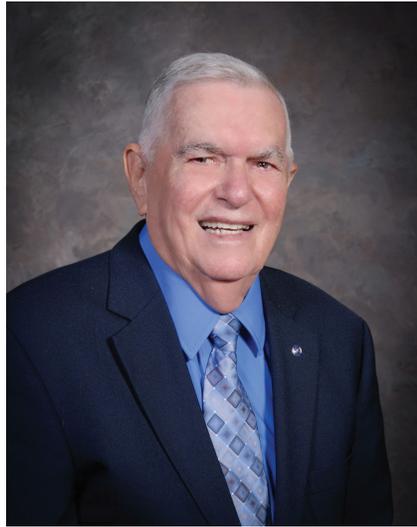
His hometown is Ashville. When he was in elementary school, he and a friend met the trains and helped to deliver mail to the post office and supplies around town with their wagon. His father owned a grocery store, Morrison's Market, where neighborhood children congregated to enjoy his dad's jokes and tricks.

A 1950 graduate of Ashville-Harrison High School, Charlie has been married to Mona for more than 60 years. Their family includes a daughter, a son, five grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren and Maggie the dog. He attends South Bloomfield United Methodist Church.

Charlie assumed the management of the market after his father's passing. As neighbors discovered his interest in local history, they brought old photos and other memorabilia to him. In his free time, he called on elderly residents to listen to their stories and copy their old photographs with an Instamatic camera. Soon he had the start of a small museum displayed in the store.

A significant portion of Ashville's history was demolished in the 1960s and 1970s. When Ashville could not muster the interest to save an important historic landmark, Charlie recognized the need for community pride to prevent such tragedies in the future. After he helped to spearhead the formation of the Ashville Area Heritage Society, he began to organize local citizens to rescue the last of the Scioto Valley Railroad stations, which was slated to be torched for firefighting practice.

A letter-writing campaign by the "Save Our Station" committee won the railroad's permission to



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move the depot. A painstaking restoration began with volunteers using hand tools. Stowed in the station's attic were flags, lanterns, posters, waybills, old shoes and tickets – enough to make a museum. The depot's transformation was a watershed moment in reviving Ashville's heritage.

Next he pushed the community into saving an old silent-movie theater (the historic Dreamland) for use as a local museum. Grant proposals to the Ohio Arts Council, Ohio Historical Society and National Trust were rejected but he persevered. The museum he co-founded is the nationally recognized Ohio's Small Town Museum. Charlie has been a fixture at the museum since it opened in 1979.

A village council member for over 37 years, Charlie served as Mayor of Ashville 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. On the board of Louise Terrace Senior Citizens Housing, he helped to 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.

As a vigilant promoter for preserving small towns, he has traveled across the state encouraging other communities to use their own resources to save their past, and not depend on grants or federal or state funding. His efforts garnered him 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.

His positive attitude is contagious. Volunteering at the museum nearly every day, he plants the seeds of community pride in school children as he mesmerizes them with stories and magic tricks. He believes it is important not to dream little dreams. Many future generations will benefit from his efforts.

