



Thomas L. Wimberly

Rotarian of the Year

Thomas L. Wimberly, recipient of the Rotary Club of Marion “Rotarian of the Year” award is truly a Renaissance man. He attended 2nd and 3rd grade in a one-room schoolhouse in Jefferson County, Illinois, became a Civil Air Patrol Commander, has a private pilot’s license, a real estate Broker’s license, is an expert in computer programming, web design, CAD and in GIS. He was either directly responsible for the location or was involved in technical assistance which led to the location of industrial and commercial projects which brought almost 14,000 jobs and \$475 million in capital investment in the State of Illinois since 1970.

Wimberly was born on January 17, 1939, in Texico, Illinois to Elizabeth R. Compton and John T. Wimberly, the only son in a family with 3 daughters. He graduated from Marion High School in 1957, and continued his education at the University of Illinois from 1957-1959 where he completed General Engineering courses, finishing his degree at Southern Illinois University with a B.S. in University Studies in 1994. He also completed many courses in Economic and Industrial Development between 1979 and 1984.

Wimberly has served on numerous councils and task forces. Among these are the Illinois Food Processing Task Force, Illinois Coal Development Board, the Illinois Council on Forestry Development, the Poultry Market Development Task force, served as President of the Illinois Development Council in 1981-1982 and as a Board Member of the Bi-State Airport Authority in 1982-1984.

Since April 1970, Wimberly has been involved in Industrial and Community Development in various capacities in Illinois. For 9 years he worked for the Illinois Department of Business and Economic Development, serving as a personal representative of the Governor of Illinois in promoting and encouraging new industrial enterprises to locate in Illinois. He worked for the Illinois Department of Commerce

and Community Affairs for over 21 years, and was responsible for division policy as well as for implementing industrial and community development program policies in the south 27 counties of Illinois.

In 1992, Wimberly started Wimberly and Associates, which prepared feasibility and market studies for selected clients, as well as providing industrial facility location services for Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri.

In July 1999, Wimberly became the Executive Director of the Regional Economic Development Corporation (REDCO) in Marion. In this capacity, he organized and developed a county-wide local development corporation that grew into a \$3 million net worth in four years. He located seven major industrial facilities, including Aisin Illinois Mfg., LLC, relocated Diagraph Corp., Circuit City Distribution Center, relocated Wisconsin Physician Services, Inc., and Blue Cross/Blue Shield in new buildings. He retired from this endeavor in June 2003.

Wimberly is the father of two sons, Shannon Lee Wimberly of Marion and Steven Michael Wimberly of Kansas City, KS. He has been a member of the Rotary Club of Marion since July 1999, where he has served as Assistant Treasurer, Treasurer, and Assistant Secretary and Secretary. He has also served as the editor of the weekly Rotoscope for four years. He has used his considerable talents to construct our club directory, to compose various programs and publications for the club and to assist behind the scenes in more ways than most people will probably ever know.

Wimberly is an avid family genealogist and has collected over 20,000 surnames of Wimberly’s and other family surnames that have married into the Wimberly family since 1455. He has traced his family tree back to England and has visited his family roots personally in Lincolnshire County, England. He has published a book of his surname and has a very active genealogy web page on the internet.

Wimberly is a tireless and focused worker when given a task to accomplish. He is a valuable resource to this club and to this community and region, and we are proud to recognize his outstanding contributions by naming him “ROTARIAN OF THE YEAR” for 2007.
