

In Memory of Dan Slagle

(1951-2023)

Daniel Slagle Jr., 72, who served as executive director of Boardman Park for 40 years, died Wednesday, June 28, following complications from surgery. He retired as the park's executive director in 2022.

Mr. Slagle devoted his entire adult life to Boardman Park, a tenure that spanned some 50 years. He made his home in the historic Diehm House, the former residence of legendary Boardman Court Judge Edgar J. Diehm.

A 1969 graduate of Boardman High School, Mr. Slagle's tenure with the park began in 1972 when he was hired as a groundskeeper. While working at the park, he earned an associate's degree in natural science from Youngstown State University, then continued at YSU, earning a bachelor of science degree in Combined Science.

Mr. Slagle was promoted to assistant superintendent of Boardman Park in 1988 and four years later the Boardman of Park Commissioners named him to the post of superintendent/clerk, a position he held until his retirement.

Mr. Slagle was a recipient of the Boardman Civic Association's Community Service Award, a member of the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association and the National Recreation and Park Association. His civic involvement included--Past President of the Boardman Civic Association, member of the Boardman Rotary Club, past president of the Kiwanis Club of Uptown Youngstown; a member of the Boardman Township Bicentennial Committee; past vestry member and chairman of the properties committee at St. John's Episcopal Church; past president and life member Men's Garden Club of Youngstown; Mahoning Valley Landscaping and Nursery Association.

In 2014, Slagle was honored by The Ohio Parks & Recreation Association's with its Harvey Woods Lifetime Achievement Award.

On July 25, 1987, appropriately, he married his wife, the former Marilou Bonte, during ceremonies held in Olde St. James Meeting House in the park. They have two sons, Daniel, III (Dewey), and Tom.

"Most importantly, Boardman Park is about our community," Mr. Slagle said upon his retirement as executive director of Boardman Park, adding "I love Boardman Park."

All of the improvements during his lengthy tenure were the result of community involvement and gives the park a unique niche, where volunteerism and donations have played a key role in the development of Boardman Park.

Mr. Slagle had a unique ability to acquire and maintain community support; and weave through local politics to maintain his position.

He leaves to cherish his memory, his wife of 35 years, Marilou Bonte Slagle; two sons, Daniel N. Slagle III and Thomas J. Slagle; a brother, Dave (Cindy) Slagle; a niece, Mandy Glace and three nephews, David (Connie) Slagle, Jr., Chris Slagle and Joe Slagle; a brother-in-law, William K. Bonte III; Matthew (Ashley) Bonte and Gwen (Murray) Thames.

A sister, Ann Slagle Smotrilla and a brother, Richard Slagle, preceded Dan in death. Dan was born February 25, 1951, the son of the late Daniel N. Slagle Sr. and Margaret Hayworth Slagle.



Upon becoming the park's superintendent, Mr. Slagle developed a master plan, and during his service some 20, major capital improvement projects were completed. They included:

- Kids' Town Creative Playground, Robert Leathers Community Built Concept constructed by more than 3000 volunteers.
- Tot's Town Playground, community built, initiated by local Realtor, John Burgan.
- Maag Outdoor Arts Theatre.
- Elton Beard Family Cabin, funded by an ODNR Nature Works Grant. Major contributor, Elton and Christina Beard.
- Kenneth Hofmaster Pavilion, community built concept.
- Hike & Bike Trail.
- Main Septic system that eliminated an antiquated on-site Leech Bed system and the connection to a public sanitary system at the Shops at Boardman Park. Major contributors, David Handel and Chuck Bishara.
- West Quadrant Improvements Project that included the Thomas C. Masters Pavilion w/restrooms, a 300-car lighted parking lot, and landscaping funded by a LWCF grant.
- Two sand volleyball courts.
- Practice tennis wall.
- Acquisition of 35 acres of greenspace that increased the size of Boardman Park to 227 acres, with 40 acres of Open Space property located in seven areas of Boardman Township.
- Renovation of Kids' Town Playground with plastic lumber made from recycled materials, funded by a Green Team recycling grant.
- Exterior renovation of St. James Meeting House.
- Veterans Memorial project developed in conjunction with Boardman Trustee Elaine Mancini and noted local philanthropist Clarence R. Smith.
- Historical Village Septic System that eliminated an on-site leech bed/holding tank system and the connection to a public sanitary system at the Shops at Boardman Park.
- West Quadrant Phase II, including the Lariccia Family Bocce Pavilion, ADA accessible playground and the asphalt paving of the 300-car parking lot, funded by an ODNR NatureWorks Grant and ODNR Scrap Tire Grant for Paving of Parking Lot. Major contributor, Anthony Lariccia.
- Exterior renovation of the Oswald Detchon House, a local historic landmark.
- The Lariccia Family Community Center Phase I, the renovation and expansion of the 33-year old Community Center. Major contributors, Anthony Lariccia, Boardman Rotary Club, Kennedy Family Trust/SJK Trust, Helen Stambaugh.
- North Trail project, an 8-foot wide paved ADA accessible walkway that travels parallel to the main drive in the park and connects all park facilities, as well as connecting to existing nature trail system, four miles of trails, funded by an ODNR Recreational Trail Grant
- Renovation and expansion of the Georgeanna Parker Activity Center.
- Marge Hartman's Paws Town at Boardman Park, developed in conjunction with a non-profit committee, Friend of Paws Town, Inc., organized by Boardman Township Administrator Jason Loree and his wife, Abbey, that led to the development of a 3.25-acre dog park, designed for dogs to exercise and play off-leash in a controlled environment under the supervision of their owners
- Departmentalized maintenance operations, delineating daily duties and responsibilities; which resulted in more efficient and effective operations.
- Web site and online reservations.
- Military concerts and fireworks. Upon the completion of the Maag Outdoor Arts Theatre, initiated and established the annual Military Band Concerts and fireworks displays. He encouraged and eventually convinced the U.S. Army Field Band and Soldiers Chorus to perform at the park for the first time in 1996, and nurtured the relationship over the years to where the park is now part of their Summer schedule. Additionally, Slagle developed a relationship with the B.J. Alan Fireworks Co., headed by Boardman native Bruce Zoldan, where they are now one of the park's annual sponsors.
- Haunted Hay Rides and Family Night events.
- Pepsi Vending and Donations. Under Slagle, Boardman Park initiated and implemented the placement of Pepsi vending machines within the park as a new revenue stream. As part of the Vending Machine agreement, Pepsi donated to Capital Projects (Maag Theatre, \$6,000) and Kids' Town awnings (\$3,000) and a \$1,000 annual sponsorship.