

## IRWA Philadelphia Chapter 9 Establishes the

# Jack H. Reefer, Jr. Scholarship Fund

BY CAROL MYERS

For those fortunate enough to have known Jack Reefer, it is no surprise that his generosity continues well after his passing on September 18, 2015 at the age of 69. One of his many passions was his membership in IRWA's Chapter 9 Philadelphia and his Associate Membership in Chapter 55 Pittsburgh.

Jack's estate bequeathed a sum of money to both IRWA Headquarters and Chapter 9. The Board members of Chapter 9 thought his wishes for that money would be best used to serve its members. Therefore, Chapter 9 has established the Jack H. Reefer, Jr. Scholarship Fund that will reimburse qualifying members for a certain portion of IRWA course registration fees. It is only fitting to continue his legacy beyond Chapter 9's Jack H. Reefer, Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award, which was established in 2009. The purpose of the Jack H. Reefer, Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award is to recognize a member of Chapter 9 who has served the Chapter over a period of years, participated in Chapter activities and served on various Chapter committees. The award represents Jack's unselfish service to others and the recipient shall have shown the same dedication to the members of Chapter 9.

### A Beloved Individual

I got to know Jack when I began my right of way career with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation in 1988. During my 25-year tenure, Jack and I were colleagues before I became his supervisor in Harrisburg, PA.

As an employee, he strived to improve and streamline processes. He was talented, kind, loyal, generous, funny and the master of puns. It is difficult to list all of Jack's interests and accomplishments; but let me share a few. One night a week he hosted a radio sports talk show on a Harrisburg station. He loved classical music and sang in the Pine Street Presbyterian Church as well as supporting the restoration of the church's organ. He often talked about his father working on the railroad; he would proudly show his father's gold pocket railroad watch that he carried every day. During a break from his university education, Jack was employed as a U.S. Postal Service and had the unique experience of working on the mail train: traveling from Pittsburgh to Chicago, which only encouraged Jack's fascination with trains and trolleys.

### IRWA Leadership

Jack was an active member of the Pennsylvania Chapter 9, serving through the Chapter Office Chairs. He served as President-elect in 1980, President in 1981 and International Director in 1982-1983. He then became Region 4 Vice Chair, Chair and International Membership Committee Chair.



Jack authored an article that appeared in the November/December 2014 edition of the Right of Way Magazine titled, "Your Destiny is Calling, It's a Matter of Professional Pride." He stated that he became a member of IRWA in 1971 and as a state employee, he had to pay his own membership dues, travel expenses to events and take vacation leave to attend. He wanted to become a better right of way professional for his employer and to invest in himself. In the closing of that article, he provided the following advice, "Step up and take control of your own professional destiny. You will only get out of your career what you put into it."

Jack's passing also appeared in the IUP Magazine's January 2016 edition:

*"Employed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation in Harrisburg for 38 years, Jack thought nothing of making 360-mile round-trips to attend IUP football and basketball home games and traveled even farther for playoff games. For years, he boasted perfect attendance at football games and once braved icy roads for seven hours—twice the normal driving time—to attend an IUP holiday basketball tournament. Jack was equally generous in his financial support of IUP causes, giving to the marching band, organ studies, and IUP-TV in addition to athletic programs. He also established a football scholarship in memory of his parents, Jack and Dorothy Reefer. Born in Delaware County and raised in the Beechview section of Pittsburgh, Jack moved back to Indiana after retiring from PennDOT in 2008." ★*



Carol Myers has over 35 years of experience in real estate and teaching, as well as 25 years of service with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. After retiring from state government, her right of way experiences expanded by working for an engineering firm as the Department Head for Real Estate Services. She is a member of IRWA Chapter 9 and is an IRWA CLIMB certified instructor.