

# Press Release

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## Chamber's Lifetime Achievement Award For 2022 Honors Mark Kleist

**Grand Haven, MI** – Members of the Chamber of Commerce Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Ferrysburg celebrated and honored the lifetime achievements of Mark Kleist. The award was presented at the Annual Chamber Celebration at Spring Lake County Club by Bari Johnson. The Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes and honors business men and women who strive toward the highest level of professional accomplishments, who excel in their chosen profession and have devoted considerable time and energy to improve the community's quality of life.

Mark grew up in Grand Haven understanding the world of work, with a father that was in the trades and started his own business, Quality Pattern & Manufacturing in 1958 providing Mark an opportunity to experience first-hand the benefits and challenges of owning a manufacturing business. He graduated from Grand Haven High School, graduated from Western Michigan University, and went on to attend Wayne State University to receive a JD Degree. Mark returned to Grand Haven to open a private law practice. Although a young attorney, just starting out in practice, he recognized how important giving back to the community was and provided pro bono work. He joined the Scholten Fant Law Practice in 1986 and practiced in all forms of business law until his retirement. He taught business law at GVSU and was Co-Editor: Michigan Business Formbook, Institute for Continuing Legal Education.

A family man first, coaching his daughter Erin's youth soccer team, and son Dean's Odyssey of the Mind team, participating in Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts activities, and even made serving as the 2005 Jingle Bell Parade as Grand Marshall with Dean in the front seat a family affair. Mark has been a longtime Rotarian and lived the moto: "Service above Self" serving as president and as a strong advocate for the Rotary Exchange Student program resulting in his family hosting an exchange student. He served on the Coast Guard Festival Committee and spent time as Chair. Along with his wife Betsy, they co-chaired the 91/92 Annual United Way campaign as well as serving on the United Way Board of Directors. He served on the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation Board of Directors and as its Chair. He was recipient of the Jaycee Man of the Year and received the Night of a Hundred Stars Award.

In 2002 Mark joined the Chamber Board of Directors, serving as its Chair from 2004-2006. He had been involved in the creation of the Grand Haven Economic Development Corporation (now the Northwest Ottawa Chamber Foundation) in the mid 90's that was designed to spur the development of industrial property in Northwest Ottawa County. The vision of forming the private not for profit entity provided a way to spur the redevelopment of brownfields in both Grand Haven and Spring Lake where public private partnerships were critical. He is a fierce advocate for business entrepreneurs and always recognizing and celebrating that manufacturing is the driving force in Northwest Ottawa County's economic prosperity. Under Mark's tenure at the Chamber, Leadership Connect as we know it today was born, and he encouraged all new attorneys to participate. He urged the Chamber Board to consider becoming involved in growing its voice regarding public policy issues at a local, regional, and state level and served as Chair of the Public Policy Committee until his retirement.

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