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CHARLIE SHOEMAKER BIO

Charlie Shoemaker, who has lived in the Dayton area for the past 46 years, began his park-related career working for the City of Kettering in 1975, even though the fresh Ohio State University graduate had a degree in business, majoring in real estate. "I never worked a day in real estate, but the education served me well in the type of agency involvements I have had," Shoemaker reflected.

Shoemaker was hired into what eventually became Five Rivers MetroParks in 1977 as an administrative assistant. "I was hired by then-executive director Don Schmidt and assisted with many functions, including business and finance and land acquisition. The agency was just 14 years old when I started, so I have seen it grow and mature." During his 33 years with the agency, he has seen the agency land protection grow from approximately 6,000 acres to the present 15,000-plus acres—nearly 4,000 of which was acquired in the past 10 years alone. "This agency was formed for the purpose of protecting and assuring the long-term health of the natural areas in Montgomery County, so it has been particularly gratifying to see this being accomplished for the benefit of our region and residents, present and future," he said.

From his role as administrative assistant, Shoemaker moved on to become the agency's business manager, then deputy director and chief operations director before succeeding Marvin Olinsky as the agency's fourth executive director in June 2001. "When I walked into the main office on Siebenthaler back in 1977, I never envisioned that I would stay with the agency for 33 years—over half my life!" Shoemaker laughed. "But now that I am heading into a new phase of my life, it is difficult to imagine myself ever working anywhere else. I can without hesitation say I have been honored to have the best career I could have possibly hoped for."

Shoemaker said he has many positive experiences with his agency over the years, but some of his favorite memories involved the simple enjoyment of park patrons when they spend time with nature in their favorite spots. "I have met many people over the years who have served as mentors and friends, some co-workers, some community or business contacts and many residents and park enthusiasts," Shoemaker said. "Those relationships will stay with me forever, and the community support for MetroParks has been extraordinary, so to the community as a whole, I must extend a sincere 'thank you' for your support and trust over these many years, making my time an experience I will never forget."

Shoemaker said he is looking forward to spending more time with his family, which includes his wife, Diane, their daughter, Shannon, and their 6-year-old grandson Max. "I'm sure you'll find me in a MetroPark," Shoemaker laughed. "I may be retiring, but I'll never stop being a fan of these wonderful parks."

