

# The man behind the day Reeb honored as McKownville leader

By Maggie Gordon

GUILDERLAND — Don Reeb has lived in McKownville for 36 years. In that time, he has seen suburban sprawl, development, and the reshaping of a hamlet into a traffic corridor.

houses — the development increased the number of homes by 12.5 percent.

Reeb has always lived in a city-like atmosphere. He grew up in Springfield, Ohio, a town that he describes as "about the same size

a meeting with him, and the concern at the time was a traffic light at Providence Avenue and Western," he recalled. "I got interested in it, and from that I got more and more involved."

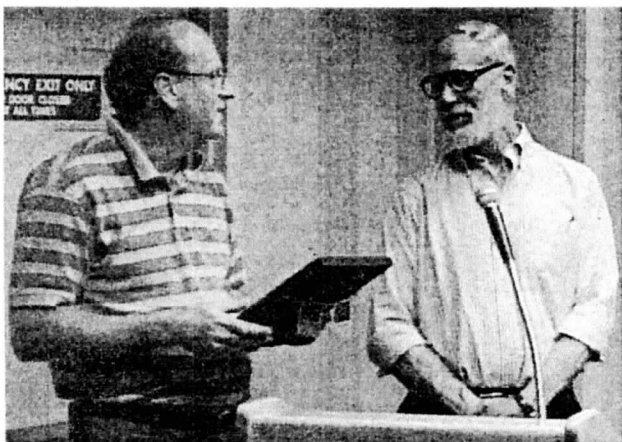
Reeb described the association as a group of people who "try to make the community a little bit better."

The association has asked the town and higher government officials for help in improving their neighborhood. "We've tried to get sidewalks on both sides of Western Avenue," he said. "The town is going to construct those."

The group also asked for sidewalks on McKown Road, which the town will also build, he said. Recently, the association lobbied for bus shelters at several places on Western Avenue and McKown Road. "We went to Assemblyman McEneny and Senator Breslin," he said. "They were able to find some money and CDTA is going to put those up this summer."

Right now, the improvement association is battling with the New York State Thruway Authority, which is making plans to change the way EZ Pass holders access the ramp at Exit 24. "We don't want a flyover on Western," Reeb said. "It would create more noise for several houses on several roads."

On Thursday, June 9, Reeb was honored by the Town of Guilderland for his "leadership and dedication to the McKownville Neighborhood Improvement Association and to the Town of Guilderland," the proclamation reads. "The McKownville Neighborhood Improvement Association have given of their time, energy, and



**Honored activist:** Don Reeb, right, president of the McKownville Improvement Association, receives an award from Supervisor Kenneth Runion for his work in the hamlet. The town also declared June 9, "Don Reeb Day."

His residential neighborhood has felt the impact of two suphighways — the Northway and the Thruway — as well as the development of the Route 20 strip.

Earlier this month, Reeb was recognized by the Town of Guilderland for his leadership role in the McKownville Neighborhood Improvement Association, which the town said has improved the quality of life in the hamlet.

Reeb, a grandfather now himself, has watched McKownville evolve.

"When we moved here, we were the youngest couple," said Reeb, who is 71. "Needless to say, we're not the youngest any more."

The community was made mostly of couples in their 50's when the Reeb's moved into town. "There were just a few people starting to move into McKownville with kids," he said.

While there have been many changes in the hamlet since Reeb moved in, in the early 1970's, "McKownville has been all built out for a long time," he said. "The only big development that has occurred has been Woodscape... and, of course, Crossgates Mall was not opened yet, so there was less traffic on Western Avenue."

Woodscape, he explained, is a development on McKown Road with about 100 houses. When the development was built, the entire village was made up of 800

as Troy." He then went to college at Syracuse University, where he received his doctorate degree in economics from the Maxwell School of Citizenship.

After he earned his degree, Reeb moved to Washington, D.C., where he worked for the federal government. After his time in the nation's capital, he moved to his home in McKownville, and began teaching economics at the University at

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**'I got more and more involved.'**

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Albany, where he taught for 34 years, before retiring recently.

In his retired life, Reeb has taken up woodworking. "I make furniture and little tables and so forth, and I have been volunteering at the senior citizens' center," he said. "Then, of course, there is the neighborhood association."

The association Reeb is referring to is the McKownville Improvement Association, an 81-year-old organization of which he is president.

"I've been involved with the organization for a long time. I was president in the 70's and again in the 80's and again now," he said. "I have been involved in it for about 30 years, since '75 or '76."

"A neighbor asked me to go to

expertise to improve the quality of life in the Hamlet of McKownville and the Town of Guilderland."

"The neighborhood is very supportive of the association," Reeb said. "It was very nice of the town to do that for me."

Reeb has been married to his wife for 42 years. In that time, they have raised two daughters who both live locally. One of their daughters lives in Niskayuna and is a lawyer and the other lives in McKownville and is a psychologist at family court.

"I have a 17-month-old granddaughter, and I'm expecting another grandchild — a boy — in just a couple of days," he said.