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# *Giving Back to the Community is a Family Affair*

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**F**uneral director Bob Weigel's selection as 2010 Citizen of the Year by the chamber of commerce in Hamilton, Ohio, is more than a prestigious award. The recognition reflects his history of generous community service to the city he calls home. Now his son Rob is following his example.

Bob is a third-generation funeral director and owner of Weigel Funeral Home in Hamilton, a business started by his grandfather. Today, he works side-by-side with Rob, a recent fourth-generation graduate of Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science. Despite the consuming 24/7 profession, Bob has always made the time to be involved in important community causes. It's a passion Rob picked up from watching his dad. Now both of them embrace a "roll up your sleeves" commitment to their community.

"Giving back has always been a prevailing principle in our family," says Rob. "I grew up thinking that's what everybody did." He recalls that one of his first memories was of his father's campaign for county commissioner. And why does Bob do all that he does? "I guess it's for the satisfaction," observes Bob. "I've made a nice living in the community and this is my way of giving back."

Bob's influence on his community started when, at age 26, he was elected to the Hamilton City Council where he served five two-year terms. While his first term was as a councilman, the remaining four were in leadership positions: two as vice mayor, followed by two terms as mayor. Just a few of his other activities are the Hamilton Rotary Club, including a term as its president; and the Board of Trustees of the Westover Retirement Community, also in Hamilton.

But Bob's most challenging commitment came during his time on the Board of Fort Hamilton Hospital, on which he continues to serve. As board chair he played a successful role in the four-year struggle to keep the hospital in the city. It was this accomplishment that earned him the 2010 Citizen of the Year award, recognizing someone who "left a special mark on the city in 2010, beyond just their normal job." As the largest non-government employer – with nearly 1,100 employees – and the only hospital in the city, Fort

Hamilton is a cornerstone of the community. "From my days on city council, I clearly understood the financial benefits of keeping those jobs in Hamilton," he remarks. "And I stood firm on my belief that as the 12th-largest city in Ohio, Hamilton should have a hospital to serve its residents."

With his father as his mentor, son Rob shares Bob's commitment. While a student at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, he became involved in philanthropic efforts, primarily through his fraternity and the Greek system. At Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science

– where his father, grandfather and great-grandfather also graduated – the faculty selected Rob to receive the Ohio Funeral Directors Association award, honoring him for the student leadership he demonstrated. Today at 25, he is strengthening his good-neighbor skills by serving on the boards of two organizations important to his Butler County community: Partners in Prime (providing Meals on Wheels and activities for seniors) and the Fitton Family YMCA.



"I know I'm going to be here in Hamilton a long time, so I want things to be the best they can be," says Rob. "People need to make that happen by giving of themselves, stepping up to the plate." As a kid, he thought everyone did that. "Now I realize how great it would be if everyone actually did that."

"I have enjoyed working with others equally driven to give back to the community," says dad Bob. "I tell Rob that it's important not to pre-judge the motive behind someone's involvement. In my experience, it's usually for the right reasons."

The faculty and staff of the Weigels' alma mater, Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science, view Bob and Rob as ideal examples for its students. "Bob and Rob Weigel absolutely represent the mission of CCMS," notes Karen Giles, president of the college. "We believe it is important not only to educate our students as funeral service providers but also to shape them to become leaders in the industry and in their community."