



Good for a laugh: Bob Deadman, Farmington's retiring city manager, and his wife, Ginny, laugh at something Farmington Hills councilman Ben Marks says at Deadman's retirement party Tuesday at Glen Oaks Country Club.



All ears: That's really Farmington Mayor Bill Hartsock — not Ross Perot — acting out a skit with presidential political overtones during the Bob Deadman affair. About 240 attended the event for the popular city manager.

Bye bye, Bob!

They turn out to fete Farmington's Deadman

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

When it was over, Robert Deadman had enough proclamations and plaques to line the Great Wall of China, six dozen "lost" golf balls recovered from fairways, a Cuban cigar of an indeterminate date . . . and a whole lot of love.

Some 240 well-wishers turned out Tuesday at Glen Oaks Country Club to pay tribute to the outgoing Farmington city manager. He's retiring after 35 years of public service.

Deadman sustained his fair share of jabs from those on the podium, but they were tendered with respect and admiration for a person who helped run Farmington like a on-time train for 20 years.

"Bob has been my confidant, my future, my shoulder to bounce ideas off of; a man to look up to and someone I can always trust and depend on," said Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick, who jokingly gave Deadman the lot of golf balls previously lost in outings together. "It's with mixed feelings I'm happy for Bob and (wife) Ginny as they go on this adventure. I like you, know we're going to miss a good friend."

Such sentiments filled the evening, which included tributes from a host of civic and community leaders — many of whom are also friends.

Some of the most touching ones came from those who've worked closely with Deadman. Michael Flanagan, superintendent of Farmington Public Schools, lauded the city manager for his service to children and being an inspiration to him as an administrator. Wendy Strip-Sittsamer, former director of the Downtown Development Authority, summed up what it was like working with Deadman.

"In the years I worked in Farmington I learned many lessons from Bob," said Strip-Sittsamer, who now works in a similar role in Southfield. "I learned by watching a master at his craft. Bob's style isn't to lecture but teach by example and to offer gentle guidance when asked."

Among those commending Deadman for his service to Farmington were State Rep. Jan Dolan, Farmington Board of Education President R. Jack Inch, Farmington Hills Mayor Nancy Bates, Michigan Municipal League President Ben Marks, and Troy City Manager Frank Gerstenacker.

Bates announced Jan. 10 as "Robert Deadman Day" in Farmington Hills and gave him the key to the city. Farmington city council members responded later by giving Deadman the door to the city he served.

Don Gould, president of the American Federation of State County & Municipal Employees, Local 1456, provided one of many humorous vignettes from the night recalling what it was like to negotiate with Deadman.

"I always thought I'd won, but he kept coming out with a sly

smile on his face," said Gould, who gave Deadman a large Cuban cigar to remember the union by. "He kept getting me elected. That's all that counts."

Councilman Richard Tupper read an interview transcript of questionable origin that Deadman allegedly gave to the Observer & Eccentric. He later helped present a street sign proclaiming Deadman Drive, supposedly to replace the spot of road with Ralph Yoder's name on it. The announcement drew mock anger from the former Farmington mayor, who drove 20 hours to attend the retirement party.

"That's why we put the original sign up with wing nuts," Tupper said. "That way when Deadman's

in town it will be Deadman Drive. When Ralph's in town, it will be . . . Deadman Drive."

Farmington Mayor and master of ceremonies, William Hartsock, got into the act by reading fictitious letters of tribute from George Bush, Dan Quayle and donned large plastic ears to emulate Ross Perot. He even held up a chart, ala Perot, to illustrate a point held by many in attendance.

"And this is all the good ideas that have come from our city council," said Hartsock turning over the bar graph to reflect the number one. "Of course, Bob, that one idea was to hire you as city manager."



Old friends: Bob Deadman greeted many friends and co-workers, including former treasurer Winona Woods, who retired in 1984.

Honored man: Bob Deadman, sporting a fish tie, is all smiles while being honored by his community. He'll have plenty of time for fishing now.



Big crowd: Bob Deadman's party draws Farmington Hills councilman Jon Grant (left) and Fire Chief Richard Marinucci, as well as Farmington Schools Superintendent Michael Flanagan and his wife, Anna.

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