

# Detroit Country Day patron is honored with his own special day

By Julie Brown  
staff writer

Clifford Higgins has done a lot for Detroit Country Day School over the years. On Thursday, students and faculty honored him for his contributions.

An all-school assembly Thursday morning at the Birmingham school honored Higgins, a Farmington Hills resident. Students from Country Day's individual schools — upper, middle, lower and prekindergarten — presented gifts to Higgins.

"It certainly is wonderful of you to be here, and I'll never forget this occasion," Higgins told the students, facul-

ty, administrators and trustees at the assembly.

The Farmington Hills resident is a longtime member and former chairman of the Country Day Board of Trustees. His two sons graduated from the school — Clifford Jr. in 1959 and Larry in 1971.

What is it like to have a day — as in "Clifford Higgins Sr. Appreciation Day" — named in your honor?

"It's hard to describe," Higgins said after the assembly. "I was flabbergasted to see so many people. Very kind words were said."

"MY WIFE played such a part, too,

in all of this," the honoree said of his wife, Frieda. "I was glad she was mentioned."

Higgins, who is chairman of the board of H. & H. Tube and Manufacturing Co. in Southfield, was responsible for the school receiving a large gift from the William R. Angell Foundation last year.

The gift of \$733,916 was the largest single gift in the school's history. It resulted from the sale of North Manitou Island in Lake Michigan by the Angell Foundation to the National Park Service.

Angell "formed this foundation, which consisted of some of his valuable

assets, as well as ownership in North Manitou Island, which became part of his trust," Higgins said. "I was fortunate to serve as a trustee."

The National Park Service condemned the island in the mid-1970s and offered \$3,000,000 to the Foundation.

"We didn't feel it was sufficient, and we went into litigation for five years. It was worth the time and effort and money spent for litigation." A federal judge ruled in 1984 that the island was worth \$12,200,000.

The Higgins family has long supported Country Day.

"I SAW what a wonderful job they did for my two boys," Higgins said. He has seen a number of changes in the school, which was founded in 1914 by P. Alden Shaw.

The school has changed "an awful lot. But it always had a quality faculty and curriculum, right from the word 'go'."

"Mr. Shaw started this with a small group in a home in the inner city of Detroit. It grew from there." When Clifford Higgins Jr. graduated in 1959, he had 13 in his class. Subsequent graduating classes have grown in number.

"Now there are girls graduating also." The school's grades five through 12 became coeducational in 1972.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Clifford Higgins Sr. is responsible for Detroit Country Day School receiving the largest monetary gift in its history.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

"It certainly is wonderful of you to be here," Clifford Higgins Sr. told students, faculty and parents of the Detroit Country Day School in Birmingham.

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