

# Giving her all

## Germantown's Carmel Eckenfels is selected as the citizen of year

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Special Writer

For 62-year-old Carmel Eckenfels of Highland Avenue, volunteering in her Germantown neighborhood is a way of life — a labor of love she has performed about 35 years.

Last month, her years of duty and giving earned her the German-Paristown Neighborhood Association's Citizen of the Year Award, much to her surprise.

"I really had no idea I was going to win, because there are so many people who do so much more than I do," she said. "I do a lot of volunteer work, but there are a lot of others who do, too."

Judy Magre, president of the association, said the honor goes to someone who has lived in and been active in the neighborhood all of his or her life.

"Carmel is definitely active. . . . We look for someone who is willing to give her time, and she certainly does.

"She has an effervescent personality, always willing to help. She's always working and is a pleasant person who is willing to do her share."

Eckenfels started donating her time to the community shortly after her only child, William Eckenfels Jr., was born in 1957. She had worked outside the home until then.

"I became a homemaker when my son was born, and that's when I started really doing a lot of volunteer work outside the home."

She now divides her time between the German-Paristown Neighborhood Center, 1094 E. Kentucky St., and nearby St. Therese Catholic Church, two places she "enjoys and loves." She also is treasurer of the neighborhood association.

"I just believe in giving back to the community. Really, when you volunteer, you get back more than you give. It makes you feel really good."

Eckenfels and her husband, William Eckenfels Sr., live in the same house in which she was born; and she said she has a close bond to her community.

"I think I know 80 percent of the people around here. It's nice to stay in touch with your roots, and volunteering my time is a way I can do that."