

Russel Crites Award:

The Russell Crites Award was created by Lucy Crites in honor of her husband. Russ & Lucy were long time business owners in the City of Ottawa. Lucy set forth the following guidelines for the award.

- 1. Must live or work in Franklin County*
- 2. Must have made significant contributions to community growth and/or the quality of life here during the most recent one or two years*

THE WINNER WILL DEMONSTRATE THE FOLLOWING QUALITIES:

- A vision & commitment to Ottawa*
- Strive for excellence*
- Achieved success through effort and determination*
- A devotion to a better quality of life*
- Be unselfish with time to effect change*
- A desire to build for the future*
- Dream BIG and seek ways to achieve those dreams*
- A positive attitude*
- Have a commitment to business expansion*
- Personal persistence*

This year's recipient moved to Ottawa in 1969 after graduating from Emporia State University and Jim immediately joined the Chamber of Commerce through work in 1969. (*That's 54 years*) That would make him a fifty-four-year chamber member. In those early years, his mentors instilled in him a commitment to Ottawa and a passion to get involved in the community. He has consistently been involved with the Jaycees (his early years), the Ottawa Elks Lodge, the Chamber, and the Franklin County Development Council (former board member). He has worked many jobs that include Anchor Savings, Ottawa Insurance, and Federated Insurance, to name a few.

He has been heavily involved in the community, giving back to such organizations as Ottawa Elks Lodge, the Ottawa Library, Ottawa University, and COF. Our recipient loves the city of Ottawa and enjoys having conversations with friends at the Post Office, local banks and title companies, coffee shops and walking the streets downtown. His business closed its doors after many years on January 1st, 2024.

Our recipient continues to mentor others to love, give back, and appreciate the people in this community and strives to make this community better every day. He has made a difference in Ottawa and as he moves into retirement, we would like to tell him job well done! This year's recipient of *The Russell Crites Award* is **Jim Hepner**

