

# POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

## Still giving to the community

Few people in our community have given more of themselves for the betterment of others than the late Dr. Richard Whittaker.

Now, two years after his death from cancer, his wife is continuing his legacy of giving, with substantial donations to the Schuylkill River Greenways, the Tri County Active Adult Center, and the Colebrookdale Railroad.



**PEGGY WHITTAKER**

of those years as chairman.

He was president of the Pennsylvania Medical Society. He taught weekly at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, where he received his medical degree in 1966. While studying at Penn, he met his wife, Peggy, who was earning her graduate degree in biology. They married in 1964.

After his residency in Philadelphia, Dr. Whittaker, a major in the U.S. Army Reserve, was called to active duty as staff orthopedic surgeon from 1971-1974 at the Gorgas Hospital in the Panama Canal Zone. Twenty years later, he returned to active duty for Operation Desert Storm, serving as orthopedic surgeon in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The Whittakers and their four children moved to Pottstown in 1974, where he was active in the Rotary Club and spearheaded projects such as the Rotary Pavilion in Riverfront Park.

Dr. Whittaker also served six years on the Pottsgrove School Board.

But Dr. Whittaker had a broader view of people in need than just Pottstown.

Starting from his Army years in Panama, until shortly before his

retirement in 2013, Dr. Whittaker journeyed to third world countries to provide medical training and treatment. He traveled to Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Haiti, Thailand, Uganda and India.



Commentary by  
**Tom Hylton**

Peggy accompanied him on many of those trips, including two weeks in Uganda training doctors in a hospital with no running water, no phones, and only intermittent electricity.

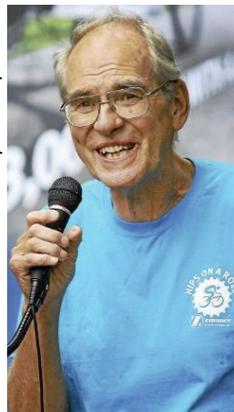
In 2005, when a tsunami hit Thailand, Dr. Whittaker spent two weeks treating victims and then raised money when he returned home to help rebuild the village he had visited. He flew back with Peggy a year later to monitor recovery efforts. Five years later he did the same thing when an earthquake devastated Haiti.

The Whittakers also advocated healthy lifestyles, especially bicycling. They took bike trips every summer and celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary by taking a 50-kilometer bike ride with 50 friends.

Now Peggy, whose typical ride is 15 miles, is helping pay for a \$1 million bike bridge over Route 724 in Union Township as part of the Schuylkill River trail from Pottstown to Reading. The bridge will be named after Dr. Whittaker.

Mrs. Whittaker has donated tens of thousands of dollars for the Dr. Richard P. Whittaker building housing the active adult center on Moser Road.

Although few people have the energy and drive of the Whittakers, there are plenty of people, especially retirees, with ample resources who could derive great satisfaction from donating to worthy local projects and see them blossom, as the Whittakers have.



**RICHARD  
WHITTAKER  
M.D.**