

Bryden teen haven dedicated

By Whitney Helm whelm@beloitdailynews.com | Posted: Wednesday, October 29, 2014 4:00 pm

Roger Bryden, a man who dedicated much time to the E.J. Dalton Boys and Girls Club in Beloit, now has a room bearing his name at the club.

Bryden was on the board of the club for the last 25 years. He was the president of Bryden Motors in downtown Beloit and was an active member of the community. He also served on the board for Blackhawk Bank and was a sponsor of the Rockton Boat Club, Ducks Unlimited and the South Beloit Businessman's Club as well as a host of other organizations. He was instrumental in all the Stateline Boys and Girls Clubs, including in South Beloit and the now-defunct Turtle Creek Boys and Girls Club.

"The Boys and Girls Club was important to him," said Scott Bryden, Roger's son.

Bryden died in June after a fishing trip in Canada. His son, Scott, told the Daily News at the time, that fishing and hunting were a stress reliever for Roger. In his later years, he opted to shoot photos instead of animals.

The family made a \$4,000 donation to the club and the room will house a television, games and tables to become a safe haven for teenagers.

"We want kids of that age to have a place that's safe and secure," Scott Bryden said.

Current Board President Al Bach said he learned a lot from Roger. He spoke of Roger often standing up at board meetings and disagreeing with other members of the board.

"His love for the kids... he wanted to make sure that they got what they needed," said Bach. "He didn't just rubberstamp things."

In September, members from the Stateline Family YMCA, Stateline Community Foundation, Beloit 2020, Beloit College, School District of Beloit and City Manager Larry Arft met to discuss opening a teen center in Beloit.



Roger Bryden room

(From left): Scott Bryden, Vicki Bryden and Christine Bryden Lawver stand in front of the Bryden Motors logo with Chief Professional Officer Fred Buggs (second from right) and Beloit Boys and Girls Club President Al Bach (far right) in the newly dedicated Roger Bryden room.

Since then, there has been a 20-member taskforce formed with members from various community groups, like NAACP President Birdia McAlister.

“The city has a lot of programs, but not like this,” Arft said. “There isn’t an open, drop-in place.”

Arft said that the taskforce will take a trip in November to visit a Milwaukee teen center. The taskforce hasn’t estimated cost and hopes to have a budget developed before the end of the year said Arft.

The Bryden Family said that whether the city center comes through or not, Roger would have wanted the room for teens.

“He was all about the kids,” Scott Bryden said.