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Special guest Executive Councilor Joe Kenney of Wakefield (center) had the honor of cutting the 100th Anniversary cake honoring Kiwanis International at a special reception held Wednesday night at the Belknap Mill in Laconia. The Laconia Kiwanis Club, 88 years old itself, served as the host for the event. Here, Hillary Seeger acting president for the Meredith Kiwanis Club receives a slice of cake from Kenney. Looking on are New England Kiwanis District Governor Frank Dennett of Kittery, Maine and John Walker president of Laconia Kiwanis. (Karen Bobotas/for The Laconia Daily Sun)

Local Kiwanians & friends celebrate 100th birthday of organization

By ROGER AMSDEN
FOR THE LACONIA DAILY SUN

LACONIA — The Laconia Kiwanis Club was praised for its long history of community involvement at a gathering held at the Belknap Mill Wednesday

night marking the 100th anniversary of the founding of the parent service organization in Detroit.

The local club was chartered in 1927 and Laconia Mayor Ed Engler traced a link between the club's founding and

the third story meeting room at the mill where the gathering was held, which he said is named the Rose Chertok Gallery in honor of the wife of one of the club's founders, Max Chertok.

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He said that Max and Rose's son, Ed 'Sonny' Chertok, former Laconia Mayor and long-time Belknap County Commissioner, was one of at least five members of the Laconia Kiwanis Club to serve as mayor. That list also included Dr. Clarence Rowe, Tom McIntyre, J. Oliva Huot and Rod Dyer.

The local club had the distinction in 1965 and 1966 of having both a U.S. Senator, McIntyre, and U.S. Congressman, Huot, as members at the same time.

Engler also pointed a long list of Kiwanians who had served the city in a number of capacities such as Dick Breton, former city councilor and water commissioner; attorney Paul Normandin, a city councilor, fire commissioner and member of the Gunstock Area Commission; Carroll Stafford, former president of Laconia Savings Bank; Charlie Smith, a long-time city councilman and Buddy Daigneault, former Laconia police officer and Belknap County commissioner and administrator, as well as other club mem-

bers who had many contributions to the community such as Howard Bacon, Roger Ballantyne, Warren Mitchell, Paul Cotton, Chet Cilley, and Jim Fortier.

He said that those who have made the club such a force in the city weren't necessarily those who were involved politically but "the quiet people who take responsibility and get things done."

First District Executive Councilor Joe Kenney presented the club with a proclamation honoring Kiwanis on its 100th anniversary and said that the club is a great example of what volunteering can contribute to local communities.

Club president John Walker said that club "is not large, but we have a large impact on the community," and introduced representatives of organizations that the Kiwanis Club helps support.

Anne Marie Mercuri of Central NH VNA and Hospice said that the organization provides support to over 500 children and families in the area through its pediatric home care and immunization services

and thanked the club for its support.

Pleasant Street School librarian Liz Rosenfeld and Woodland Heights Elementary School librarian Robbie Neylon said that the club's Kiwanis Kares program which brings club members to schools to read to students and distributes books to them has been in place for 14 years and benefited thousands of students.

The Rev. Paula Gile of the Got Lunch! Program said that the club played a key role in supporting the organization's efforts which got underway in 2011 to provide nutritious meals to students during the summer months and that many of the club's members have served as volunteers for the program.

Kiwanis has sponsored teams in Laconia Little League for more than a half-century and also sponsors the Key Club at Laconia High School which provides leadership opportunities for high school students.