



from your Executive Director

By Bryan E. Smith

TOI Executive Director

WHEN I TOOK THE CALL from Doris Klokenga, Clerk of Boynton Township the first words she spoke to me were “Have you heard about Keith?” I knew at that moment what she was about to tell me. Keith Haning, former Supervisor of Boynton Township, Tazewell County had passed away early in the morning of June 15th.

After I hung up from speaking with Doris, I started to think about my memories of Keith. In my 32 years with the association, I have met many officials but none have made the impression on me that Keith Haning did. There probably wasn't a week or two go by that Keith didn't call me with a question or comment on a current issue. I specifically remember that when we would send legislative alerts, Keith was usually the first to call me after the alert hit his mailbox with his opinion/thoughts. Keith wasn't shy about sharing his opinion and always had something interesting to share when he called. Keith had a very distinctive voice so you definitely couldn't know it wasn't him. Keith had not been supervisor since May of 2013 because he didn't seek re-election in the 2013 election. I remember that a couple of months after he left office that the township, population 275, held a very nice celebration to honor Keith for his over 40 years of service to Boynton Township. The event was held at the new Boynton Township Hall which Keith was very instrumental in seeing built. I remember that when I arrived the place was packed with standing room only of people of all ages. It almost seemed that the entire population of the township had turned out.

The entire program honoring Keith was very nice and everyone who spoke, including myself, had “Keith” moments to share. But there was one story that has stood out in my mind and I don't think I'll ever forget it.

After the “official” program was over and all the accolades had been to Keith, it was asked if anyone else in attendance wished to speak. A young woman stood to speak and said that she, her husband and their two small were there to honor Keith and she told the most amazing story. The young woman explained that after not living in Boynton Township very long, she and her family discovered a dead deer one morning in their



KEITH HANING (right) and Carla Haning (left) from 2013.

back yard. Not knowing really who she should call, she called Township Supervisor Keith Haning, who quickly made his way to her home in his pick-up truck. She explained how Keith took the dead deer and put it in his pick-up to haul away. In doing so, a lot of blood got all over the truck and the woman said she was so sorry to Keith for this mess. He told her not to worry about it because she has two cute daughters that need to be able to play in their yard. What a fantastic story and what a true act of a devoted public official. You don't hear things like this very often anymore!

It was on that day in 2013 that I last saw Keith in person. The picture included with the article shows me with Keith and his wife Carla. While it was the last time I physically saw Keith, he did call me several times after leaving office just to “see how things were going”.

I'm going to miss Keith and his phone calls, but I can be assured that he had a good run and served with distinction. Rest well my friend. I will never forget you.