

## **Irvin Morse**

Local & Family History Services at the St. Joseph County Public Library nominates Irvin Morse for community recognition as an outstanding volunteer. He is one of our most dedicated volunteers, and has helped thousands of people with historical research in his time at the Library.

In addition to volunteering for the county archives and the local genealogical society, Irv spends many hours every day in Local & Family History. He draws on his long experience as a family history researcher to help answer the hundreds of research questions that the department receives each year.

Local & Family History Services receives requests from nearly 500 patrons every year for roughly 5,000 obituaries, birth and wedding announcements, and similar family history items. Irv handles nearly half of these requests for the department. He carries out research using our online Obituary Index; our printed indexes to vital statistics in the local newspapers; our printed indexes to births, marriages, deaths, wills, and cemeteries; our online databases that provide access to the federal census; and more. He also uses our microfilm machines to find the actual obituaries and other vital statistics announcements in the local newspapers. Irv has helped adopted children and birth families find each other; has located information that has reunited long-lost family members and friends; and has tracked down relatives of soldiers killed in action during World War II, on behalf of an organization that cares for American military graves in the Philippines. Sometimes this research can be quite complicated, but Irv is an experienced “professional” who knows our collection and the techniques of genealogical research inside and out. Irv is also an excellent resource person for the staff, since he has so much local knowledge, and we often come to him for help with in-library patrons.

In addition, Irv spends many hours of his time every year creating indexes to St. Joseph County historical resources. Last year, for instance, he created indexes to many volumes of local school records; this year, he indexed a huge volume of naturalization records. He always donates his indexes to the Library, in both printed and digital form, so that all the people in the community can benefit from his work. His printed books are among the most popular resources in our collection, and his digital indexes will be added to our website next year, at which point they will be available to researchers around the world.

By providing these services, Irv produces hundreds of satisfied Library customers every year, both in the county and around the United States and even the world. Without his help, the Library could not provide its crucial research service to family historians, and many local historical resources would not be accessible to local researchers.

Irv Morse is an extremely dedicated volunteer who has made helping others his mission. Local & Family History Services depends on him as a critical member of our team!

Nominated by Libby Feil