

Mitch: This is the best that I can remember, to many years gone by.

I was elected as a Director in the old East District in December of 1976. I was asked by Joe Landwerlen to run because no one at that time wanted to be a director (times have not changed much) during my time with the IBF I have been President twice-vice president- youth director-conservation director -helped the invitational tournament director - environmental director.

Helped build and finish up the Sundance Lake project in the Hoosier National Forest. Hosted a day of fishing with a cook-out for the S.H.A.R.E.S. people. This organization provides service and support for people with disabilities to enhance their successful inclusion in the community. Shelby, Hancock and Rush counties.

Started and ran the Boy Scout Benefit Bass Tournament for 10 years raising \$100,000.00 for boys that could not afford to go to summer camp. This was only possible with the help and support of my wife Eloise and many good people and sponsors. Ft. Vallonia Bassmasters took over this event for a club project.

Started and ran the Indiana Children's Wish Fund Benefit Bass Tournament for 12 years raising \$125,000.00 again this could not have happened without the help of my wife and support of many great people and sponsors.

Helped start and write the by-laws for the Indiana University/Purdue University Bass Clubs and initiated the start of the "Ole Minnow Bucket Tournament"

Then 3 years later contacted Mr. Al Linder of In-Fishermen informing him of my intention of starting a "Big Ten Bass Tournament" Mr. Linder sent me a beautiful trophy Cup to use and it is still in existence today.

Held a benefit tournament for Mr. Mike James of Ranger Midwest whom had suddenly passed away.

Held a benefit tournament for Larry McWilliams family. Larry had also passed away at a very young age.

Ran district top-6's and top-8's also 2 state finals, Ohio River and Lake Wawasee

In the beginning of 1989 the IBCF Invitational Tournament trail was in real financial trouble being over \$10,000.00 in the red to start the new season. Larry Watson accepted the tournament directors job and myself with my wife, Vern and Ada Robbins volunteered to help as the tournament crew at no expense to the IBCF. We all paid our own way for everything and at the end of the tournament year Larry Watson reported that the Invitational Trail was in the black.

Proposed to the IBCF board of directors that the federation get involved with the Indiana DNR Conservation officers youth camp. The proposal was passed and the federation started furnishing boats for the event as well as purchased a cooking stove for their camp at Camp Bear Creek.

Was very much involved in the White River fish kill and brought to the board a proposal of donating some funds to help with the restocking of the river when everything was safe from the I.D.N.R. fish biologist, that was accepted and a donation of \$8,000.00 was given for a restocking program.

Was fortunate and honored to be able to travel with 9 state teams to northern divisional. Also as president traveled to national championships and bassmasters classic's.

Hosted a day of fishing on Lake Monroe for Special Olympics had over 80 boaters to help and lunch was provided by "GATOR GRIP" Mr. Joe Landwerlen

I feel very fortunate to have made friends all over Indiana as well as other state federations across our great county.

One person always comes to my mind, after all these years whenever I was involved in anything to do with the federation or a charity event all I had to do was turn around and the same person was always there to lend a helping hand "Thanks Larry Watson" you are a real friend and the federation is very fortunate and lucky to still have you on the board.

There has been many great leaders of the Indiana Federation and most in their own way has aided in the success of our organization as well as the 100's of volunteers that are needed to make it all happen, these volunteers are the true backbone of the federation.

Presidents I served under: (Not in exact order of time served)

Al Cramer – Ed Danforth – Joe Landwerlen – Linus Haller – Larry Muse- Frank Wolka Jr.- Brian Wolka- Larry Watson- Dan Pardue- Don Jenkins – Paul Hollibaugh-Doug Bradley

Note: Some of these presidents served more than one term.

the years of industrial dumping into the rivers across the county. This river once produced small-mouth bass in the 4 to 5 pound range, with excellent catfish, bluegill and crappie fishing which for now will be just a memory of the past.

On January 11, 2000 President of the I.B.C.F. Eldon Crabtree along with other conservation groups attended a public meeting in Hamilton County. In this emotionally charged meeting, citizens did not get satisfactory answers to their questions concerning the spill and the future of the river. "In my opinion IDEM skated a lot of the questions and talked in circles on others," said Crabtree. Could this have been prevented? Many environmental groups are studying this question and will have some answers before it is all said and done. At the present time an environmental attorney has been hired and was given two years to prepare the case for trial.

In addition to the investigation, the TIP program is offering a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of whoever is responsible for the contamination. Questions still to be answered are regarding whether officials from the Anderson Treatment Plant, IDEM and the DNR reacted quickly enough.

"WE ARE ENCOURAGING
OUR MEMBERSHIP TO CALL
LEGISLATURES"

—Eldon Crabtree,
I.B.C.F. President

On the 13th of December the Anderson treatment plant began experiencing problems, but didn't notify officials at that time. On the 20th of that month the IDEM finally began field surveys based on the DNR dead fish observations. Many questions have to be answered before the whole story

will unfold, but the fact still remains that this section of the White River is an environmental disaster which will take years to recover from.

Many conservation minded groups are raising concerns over the events that have happened and are encouraging their members to voice their opinions. I spoke with Eldon Crabtree, President of the Indiana BASS Federation who said, "We are encouraging our membership to call legislatures and the Governor's office to assure this clean up is done in a timely matter. The Bass Federation does not use this body of water for tournaments, but many of the members took advantage of the great smallmouth fishing."

"This is not a body of water that we use, but what if it was Monroe or Patoka Lake," Crabtree said.

I.B.C.F. Donates \$8,000 To White River RESCUE 2000

At the Indianapolis Boat, Sport and Travel Show the Indiana Bass Chapter Federation gave the White River Rescue 2000 a boost with a check for \$8,000. Organizers of the White River Rescue John Bundy and Steve Schwartz were very pleased with the thoughtfulness of the Federation.

This disaster requires immediate attention and the availability of the money could not have come at a better time. At the present time the White River Rescue 2000 group has raised in excess of \$50,000, with much more on the way. This project is one that will require the cooperation of many of Indiana's conservation groups stepping forward to show their support.



JOHN BUNDY OF RESCUE 2000, ELDON CRABTREE PRESIDENT OF THE I.B.C.F., STEVE SCHWARTZ OF RESCUE 2000 AND PAUL HOLLABAUGH VICE-PRESIDENT OF I.B.C.F.

I.B.C.F. ICON RETIRES

Eldon Crabtree Retires After 22 Years

For the past 22 years Eldon Crabtree has spent countless hours serving the Indiana Bass Federation. Eldon's wife, Eloise, and 2 sons, Alan and Brian have shared him with the Federation during this time. Grandpa Eldon now wants to spend more time with them and his grandson, Austin. Let's take a look at the past 22 years.

In December of 1978 Eldon was elected as an East Director and served in that position until 1989. He then was elected Vice-President for 1990 and 1991. Eldon was President in 1991-1992. He then took over as Youth Director from 1993 thru 1996. He was again elected as Vice-President for 1997 and 1998. The last 2 years (1999&2000) he has been President.

In 1980 Eldon organized the first major team bass tournament for a charitable organization, Boy Scouts of America. During the 10 years he was



1991 brought about the Indiana Children's Wish Tournament for terminally ill children of Indiana. Eldon has been director of this tournament for 9 years and will continue to do so. During the 9 years he has been able to raise \$102,000.00. He is hoping to get to the \$200,000 mark.

Also in 1991 as Director for a Special Olympics fun day at Lake Monroe he organized 100 boats and drivers to take Olympians and coaches fishing for a day. The Federation furnished shore lunch and Zebco rods and reels for all.

Eldon then in 1992 organized the first ever Intercollegiate Bass Tournament between Indiana University and Purdue University. He wrote the format for the tournament and by-laws for each university. The tournament was named "Ole Minnow Bucket Tournament" He also secured scholarship money for competing students. This was the springboard for the 1st Big Ten Championship in 1996. This event took place at Lake Monroe at Bloomington, In. Five Big Ten Schools attended. In 1999 Indiana

hosted the event again at Lake Monroe, where 7 universities competed. Indiana Bass Federation furnished boats and drivers for this event.

From 1987 to 1993 He was involved, both organizing and working many hours on a project to build a 6 1/2 acre lake in the Hoosier National Forest, in Brown Co. Two fishing piers were built out into Sandance Lake for the handicapped, also restroom facilities, and asphalt walkways from the parking lot to the piers. The project was in cooperation with the Hoosier National Forest, Indiana Department of Natural

Resources and the Corps of Engineers, with the Indiana Bass Federation furnishing funds of \$32,000 and many hours of manpower to clear the area and build piers and restrooms.



Starting in 1997 He has worked with the Indiana Conservation Officers Youth Camp to supply boats and drivers to take 120 youth out fishing and give them tips on boating safety. This is a one day event, which is just part of their one week camp.

On December 24, 1999 the news media broke a story of a massive fish kill on the White River, from Anderson, In. to Indianapolis, In. This



tournament director they were able to raise \$80,000 to help kids that were other wise unable to afford a summer camp. He then was able to get a bass club to run the tournament that is now approaching its 21st year.

**AL SMITH
NATIONAL FEDERATION DIRECTOR**

I am writing this letter in regards to Eldon's retirement. I would like to pass on my sincerest gratitude for the work he has done with the Indiana Federation. Eldon's honest and sincere leadership has truly benefited your state as well as helped shape many issues on a national scale. I could always count on Eldon to offer his opinion on issues that faced the Federation, and truly hope to continue to call on his wisdom in the future even though he is retiring from service with the Indiana Federation.

I firmly believe that folks like Eldon who live and firmly believe in the institution of the Federation never really retire. They move aside to allow others with new ideas and more energy to come into the spotlight, but they are always there waiting and willing to help when needed, for the good of the Federation.

I am sorry to see Eldon leave as his leadership will surely be missed, but I know Indiana does an excellent job in ensuring they produce top leadership. I am sorry I could not be there to personally pass on this message. I want Eldon to know that he has been appreciated, enjoyed and we all will miss him!

Al Smith
National Federation Director





fish kill covered some 50 miles of river. Eldon used our web site and the IBF Hotline to help launch a major Call-the-Governor campaign, to take immediate action. After one week of calls the Governor called in the FBI and the National E.P.A. He attended many meetings voicing the concern of the Indiana Bass Federation. Eldon has assured all state agencies and everyone concerned that the Federation will not let this be forgotten. He was in constant contact with Bruce Shupp at B.A.S.S. and later received a hand written letter from Helen Seyler, CEO of B.A.S.S. for the Federation's involvement with the massive fish kill. Eldon was also instrumental in getting the Indiana Bass Chapter Federation's Board of Directors to donate \$8000.00 to the White River Rescue Fund.

So you can see along with all of the regular things directors and officers have to do, he has been a very busy man. Eldon will definitely be missed. **WE ALL OWE HIM A VERY BIG, BIG THANK YOU!**



**ELDON,
THANK YOU AND GOOD LUCK!
God Bless you and your Family**