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Climbing wall to be named for former area Scoutmaster

By Adam Tobias of the Daily Times staff

Glenn Steffen, a former Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 11 of the Watertown Rotary Club, will be honored at Camp Long Lake in Saint Cloud on Wednesday with a bouldering wall dedicated in his name.

Many of the Scouts whose lives were touched by Steffen's service to the community have donated the Steffen Bouldering Wall in his honor and will be at the dedication ceremony, which will start after a dinner.

A bouldering wall is a type of rock climbing wall designed specifically for the practice of bouldering. Much like a conventional climbing wall, a bouldering wall is constructed with a sturdy wooden backing and is designed to accommodate climbing holds of various shapes and sizes.

According to Amy Adelsen, director of marketing for the Boy Scouts of America, the horizontal climbing wall will be part of the Camp Long Lake programming and be used by thousands of Scouts every year.

Some of the former Scouts who are expected to attend Wednesday's ceremony include Dr. Rob Wills, vice president of Johnson & Johnson; Steve Wallman, president of Wallman Investments; Patrick Lawton, the managing director of Robert W. Baird & Co. and chairman of the WaterStone Savings Bank Board; and Jeff Wallman, a professor at the University of Oklahoma Price College of Business.

Jeff Wallman, who was leaving Oklahoma for Wisconsin on Monday, said he wouldn't miss the ceremony for the world and that he attributes most of his success in life to Steffen.

"What I got from Glenn was leadership by example," Jeff Wallman said. "He set a very good example in everything he did and the way he acted. The key principle is that leaders lead from the front and he was out there and he was always extremely sharp.

"We went camping more than all the other troops," he added. "He dedicated so much time to us it was beyond belief. Most Scoutmasters weren't that close to their Scouts. Glenn was."

Jeff Wallman added that Steffen also taught him the importance of giving back to the community and helping others.

"The man was giving back all along and I don't think many people do that," Jeff Wallman said. "He was a young man, just out of the Army a couple years, and he took a huge portion of his vacation time to spend with a bunch of kids. I think we should all take a lesson from that."

Jeff Wallman's brother, Steve Wallman, also noted that Steffen would often give up his free time and vacation hours just so he could take the Scouts on camping trips and help them out.

"He's this selfless guy who's in his 20s, giving up his one night a week and then his vacation time to lead this rag-tag bunch of wise guys on Boy Scout activities," Steve Wallman said. "Imagine you are in your 20s and you've given up three or four years of all your free time and half your vacations to hang out with a



Glenn Steffen peruses a scrapbook of memorabilia collected from his time as a Boy Scout Scoutmaster in advance of Wednesday's dedication of a climbing wall in his honor at Camp Long Lake in Saint Cloud. (JOHN HART/Daily Times)

bunch of Boy Scouts, asking nothing from them and they're just wise guys."

"This guy took his time to help a bunch of kids and it wasn't the cooking per se or the camping per se, but we had magical experiences when we hit the road in his yellow Chevy Impala and everybody would agree with me there," Jeff Wallman added. "It was very special."

Although Steffen had a huge impact on the lives of many, Steve Wallman said it took a while for him to realize the effect his former Scoutmaster had on him.

"We were a bunch of wise guys largely from St. Bernard's and at the time you are so self absorbed you have no idea that he's even having an effect," Steve Wallman said. "All he's doing is helping kids to have a good time, learn something and find out who they really are. It's only in hindsight that you look at your success and think, 'Wow, Scouting really made a huge difference in my life.' It truly did.

"What you had was just this incredible role model and it was all so subtle that you didn't even know he was being a role model or that he was helping you discover who you were," Steve Wallman added. "It is just an amazing thing."

Steve Wallman said that he and his fellow Scouts of Troop 11 decided to dedicate the climbing wall because they wanted Steffen to know how much of an impact he's had on their lives.

"The point of the gift is to show him that he really did make a difference," Steve Wallman said. "When we cobbled together money we said we'll give any amount, it didn't matter. We don't care what it is.

"I've made more money than I ever knew existed and why I don't know. I've been very, very lucky," he added. "But I know that Scouts played a huge role in this for me."

Steffen, a Watertown resident, served as Scoutmaster of Troop 11 from 1962 until he took a job with the Wisconsin State Patrol in 1968.

Steffen said he really enjoyed working with kids and that he's honored to have the climbing wall at Camp Long Lake dedicated in his name.

"I feel very proud that I succeeded in helping somebody out," Steffen said. "It's an honor to me and it lets me know that I meant something to them because otherwise they wouldn't have done this for me. That's the way I look at it."