

Donna Rodden-Past Village Mayor served as mayor from 1973 to 1984.

Mayor of Albion at a time when there were only 13 women holding such a position in the United States. At Syracuse University, she studied speech and communication, got her doctorate in library science and a degree in radio and journalism. She was in the process of studying for the ministry when she died of cancer in June 1985 at the age of 59. Donna had the distinction of being the first woman to produce a television show in New York City, but because she met opposition in getting a job as a woman, much of her work was accomplished under the pen name of Robert Quigley. Donna worked as a teacher at the correctional facility for women and tutored adults for their GED or high school diploma. She also operated a gift shop, The Hole in the Wall, which she sold when she accepted the position at Albion High School. During Donna's terms in office, she accomplished many of the things she set out to do. Of course, getting Courthouse Square placed on the National Register was a big credit to her. When Mount Albion Cemetery was placed on the National Register, it was only the second cemetery in the nation to be so honored. Donna had a cover placed on the village's water tower, which had been open since 1932, a situation she felt was a health hazard due. She was responsible for bringing about the construction of a new industrial sewage plant. She got rid of parking meters, which she felt were a penalty to downtown merchants. She changed the Albion Police Department to a Public Safety Office and was hopeful in the future that more departments would place more emphasis on public safety and less on police work. Her motto and aim in life was to "Preserve and protect the past, take care of the people today and prepare for the future." She made many friends among dignitaries in foreign lands through a program she learned about called "Experiment in International Living," where foreign students, young adults or public figures visited America and lived in private homes while working, going to school or learning the English language. Under the Experiment in International Living, Donna was responsible for 168 people visiting Albion, representing many religious faiths, 40 countries and every continent. In spite of all her honors, Donna's biggest concern was not for her own individual achievements, but for world understanding, which she believed was the basis for world peace. Lattin gave the eulogy at Donna's funeral, referring to a play she did at Albion Middle School, titled "To Albion with Love." "That was the whole essence of what Donna was," he said. "Donna was all about Albion."

~ Excerpt from Notable Neighbors by Ginny Kropf, Orleans Hub, May 7, 2020