

Rehabilitation group celebrates 75 years

HAGERSTOWN

By TARA REILLY

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It wasn't until two years after his heart attack that Lewis Duffey Jr. found out he actually had one, but by then, his life already had changed.

Duffey and his doctors first thought he was suffering from debilitating depression, until tests two years later revealed scar tissue on his heart.

The depression, he said, had been a symptom of what a

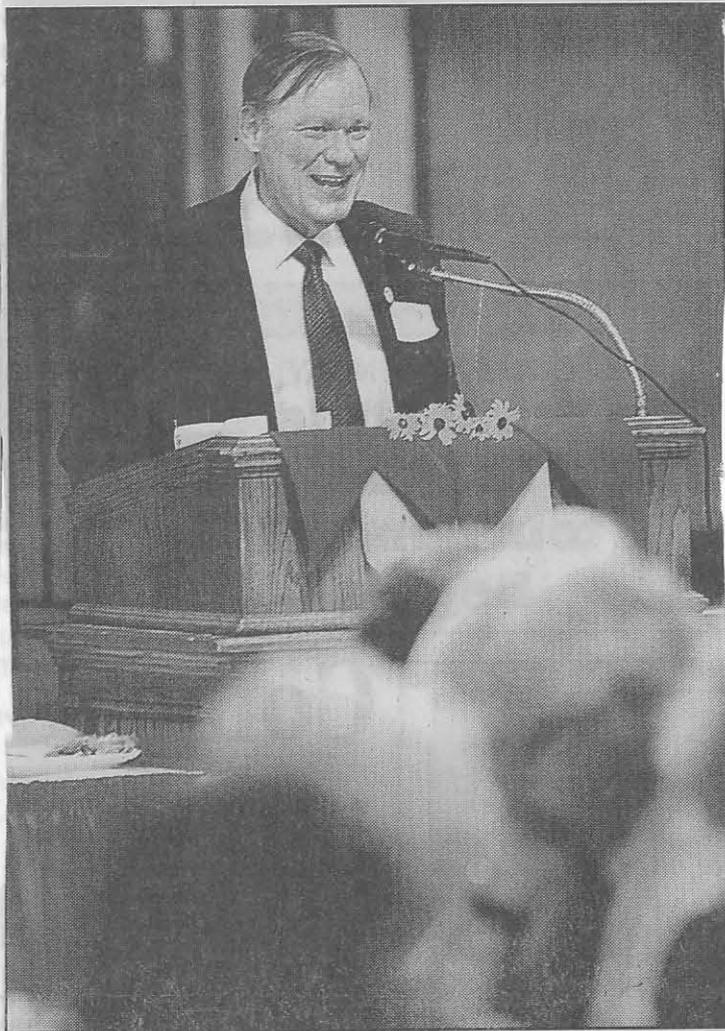
doctor had called a "silent heart attack" when he was 40 years old.

Duffey, who previously worked in radio for 15 years, had to leave his job as an insurance salesman — a position he had taken to support his family.

"That kind of ended everything for me," said Duffey, 58, of Hagerstown.

But with the help of the Division of Rehabilitation Services, Duffey was able to work again.

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By Joe Crocetta/Staff Photographer

Lewis Duffey Jr. of Hagerstown shares his story Friday during the Division of Rehabilitation Services luncheon at Elks Lodge No. 378 on Robinwood Drive.

DORS: Agency has helped many find jobs

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With insistence from the division that the new job be one with little stress, he started his own business transferring photographs and old home movies from 8 mm tapes and camcorder films to videotapes or DVDs.

Duffey also creates logos for personal and business letterheads and other stationery through his business, Videos & Graphics Galore!

The Division of Rehabilitation Services helps those with disabilities find jobs, become self-sufficient and lead independent lives. The division also provides guidance, counseling, skills training, job placement assistance and other medical and support services.

Last year, 3,095 people statewide found jobs after going through the programs, according to the agency's Web site.

"I needed someone to help me

at a time when I really needed it," Duffey said Friday during a luncheon celebrating the agency's 75th anniversary.

The event was at the Elks Lodge No. 378 on Robinwood Drive.

Duffey said the Division of Rehabilitation Services helped him start his business by giving him a grant to buy a computer capable of running the software needed for his work.

The job boosted his spirits, he said.

"I can be a part of something, and I can feel good about myself," Duffey said.

Duffey said he participated in the division for six months to a year before starting his business.

He said his job, which the division first had to approve, is challenging, but not stressful.

"I love it," Duffey said. "It's a passion. Once I got their blessing, I felt like I was walking on water."