

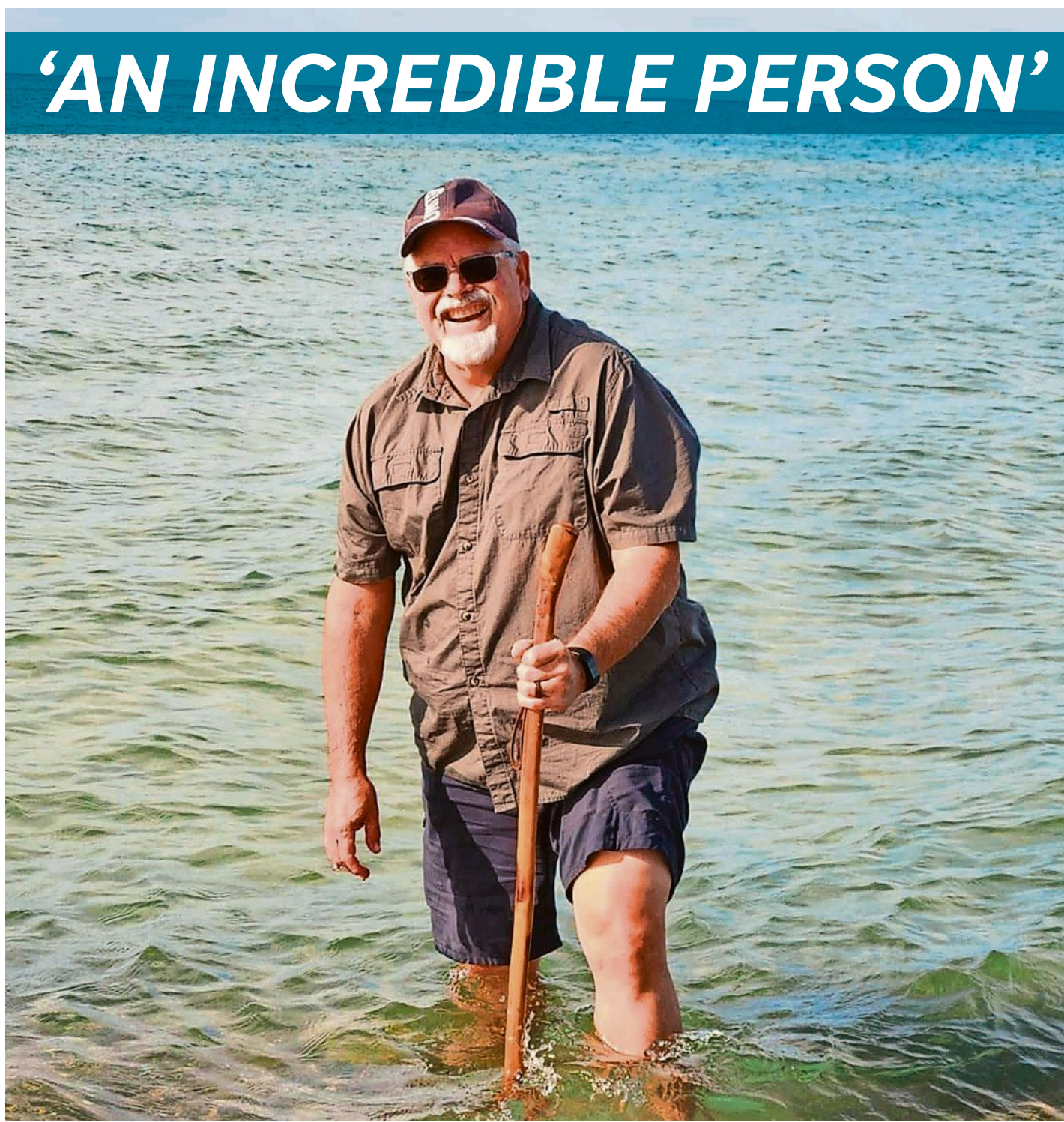


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South Bend Tribune WEEKEND

SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 2026 | SOUTHBENDTRIBUNE.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK



Dean Heisey retired as co-pastor of Southside Christian Church in South Bend last year. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY ESRA HEISEY

'AN INCREDIBLE PERSON'

Family remembers life of South Bend pastor after fatal bike crash

Rayleigh Deaton
 South Bend Tribune | USA TODAY NETWORK

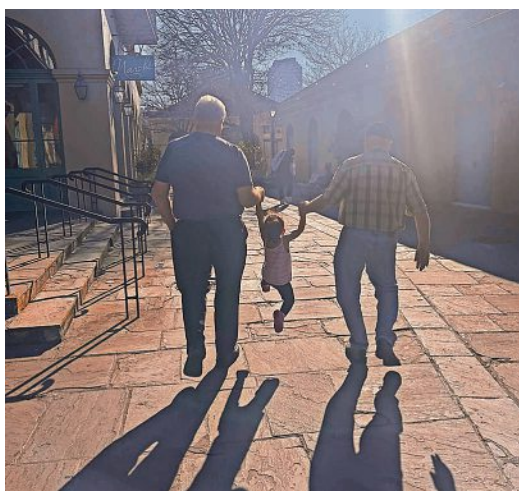
MISHAWAKA — Esra Heisey said one thing he remembers about his father is his larger-than-life presence.

"I think of his voice, and his laughter," Heisey said, "and the amount of space that he took up in a room, and the way that he channeled that into the people around him."

He said his father, Dean Heisey, lived a life marked by dedication to serving others, from his decades of pastoral and chaplaincy work to extensive volunteering and support for community groups. And Dean Heisey's partner of 15 years, John Sommers, agreed.

"Just an incredible person," Sommers said. "And you don't realize it sometimes until after they're gone. Isn't that weird? You just take it for granted — 'Oh, he's off here, he's going to this, he's doing this.'"

See **HEISEY**, Page 5A



Dean Heisey, left, with his partner, John Sommers, right, and their granddaughter, Evelyn Sommers.

'Why me?' Honoree surprised by award

Taylor wins The African American Legacy Award

Katherine Hill
 South Bend Tribune
 USA TODAY NETWORK

SOUTH BEND — "Why me?"

That was the question that plagued Marguerite Taylor's mind when she got the call from The History Museum to inform her that she was chosen as the 2026 recipient of The African American Legacy Award.

Taylor was one of nine people nominated to receive the award and was the "resounding winner" among those nominees, as described by Brian Harding, the executive director of The History Museum.

Taylor will be honored with the 2026 African American Legacy Award at The History Museum's annual Juneteenth reception on Tuesday, June 9.

But if you ask Taylor, she is still in shock that she was even nominated — let alone chosen as the sole award recipient.

"I wondered, 'Why me?' Because I do what I like. I do what makes me feel good about me, not what makes other people feel good about me," Taylor said. "My mother always taught [her children] to be true to yourself and do what makes you happy."

Her late mother, Renelda Robinson, is the namesake for the University of Notre Dame's Robinson Community Learning Center (RCLC), which Taylor played an "instrumental" role in establishing, according to the center's website.

But that's just the tip of the iceberg.

See **TAYLOR**, Page 2A



Marguerite Taylor in her home May 29 in South Bend.

MICHAEL CLUBB/SOUTH BEND TRIBUNE



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