

Special Stories of Seniors

Lives of
Courage, Hope and Inspiration

Foreword

Health and Hospital Corporation of Marion County (HHC) has been proud to provide healthcare services for many decades. While we feel a deep connection with all the populations we serve, we are particularly honored to serve seniors with our partner, American Senior Communities (ASC).

Our seniors have allowed all of us to enjoy our freedom and opportunity. I am humbled by their experiences and believe we all can learn from them.

As we get to know our customers, we often sit and listen to them reminisce about their past and share amazing details of their lives. Some of the stories are funny. Some are inspirational. Many are phenomenal.

In the HHC and ASC communities, there are countless war veterans who risked their lives and became heroes. The stories they tell about their lives following their return are just as amazing as the ones they tell about the wars.

Most of our residents can tell stories about surviving the Depression and other challenging historical events, and how through ingenuity and hard work they emerged better people.

The residents in our communities followed their dreams and, through determination, broke barriers, set records, and achieved their goals. They teach us generosity, self sacrifice and what it takes to keep a family together.

These special stories of seniors and their lives of courage, hope and inspiration not only touch those who read them, but provide a written record of the legacies these seniors will one day leave behind.

Selecting only a few stories to include in this book was difficult because every resident has a special story to tell. We hope these stories will entertain and inspire you, give you hope, make you smile, perhaps make you cry, and most importantly, encourage you to live life to the fullest.

Sincerely,

Matthew R. Gutwein
President and CEO
Health and Hospital Corporation
of Marion County



American Senior Communities

Indiana Owned and Operated, American Senior Communities is proud to have served fellow Hoosiers for over a decade.

Our Mission:

To compassionately serve each resident with quality care and excellence through health solutions that foster independence and self-esteem.

Our Services include:

Moving Forward Rehabilitation, Auguste's Cottage Memory Care, Long Term Care, Skilled Nursing Services, Hospice and Respite. Garden Homes, Assisted Living and New Energy Wellness are available at select locations.

For more information about American Senior Communities, visit ASCSeniorCare.com or call 888-788-2501.

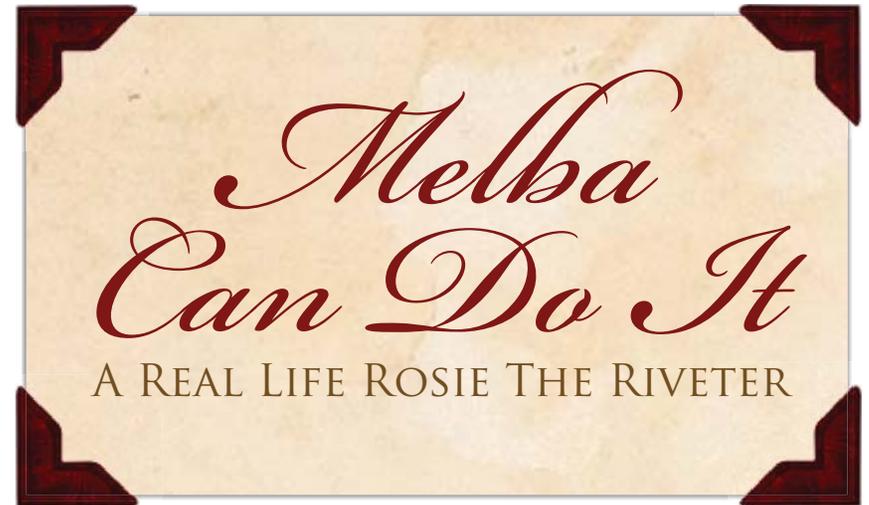


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Melba L. Davis
*Born January 5, 1922
Riverview Village,
Clarksville, Indiana*



*A*s millions of men left their homes to serve in World War II, women were recruited to work in the factories that made the war planes, tanks and weapons. The icon used to recruit the women was a fictional character known as Rosie the Riveter. This bandanna-clad character baring her bicep came to represent female strength and feminism in the United States.

Melba Lorene Hatfield Davis was a real life Rosie the Riveter. She was one of 6.5 million women working on the assembly lines in factories throughout the U.S. during the war. The social change these women caused would be lasting. They proved women could do men's work.

Melba worked as a riveter on bombers and fighter jets in San Diego, California, where she was left when her husband, Benny Davis, shipped out to go to war. While Melba worked installing aircraft meters, a family member (Melba came from a family of 11) took care of her children.

She and the other women earned \$31 per week, though men doing the same work earned \$51 a week, yet many of the women were faster and did a better job, Melba said.

“We realized we were not getting paid as much as the men, but we needed the money. And we knew the work was important. It had to be done,” said Melba. “If women do the same job, they should get the same pay.” It was an idea whose time had not quite come.

In addition to riveting, which is securing metal parts with rivets or fasteners, women were also welders and crane operators, and they worked other jobs that had been exclusively for men. Melba also taught non-English-speaking women how to rivet.

“It wasn’t hard to do once you learned how to do it,” she said.

The war years, 1939 to 1945, followed the Great Depression. There was food rationing. Home gardens, known as Victory Gardens, provided the majority of vegetables a family needed. There was gas rationing. People walked because it was too costly to drive, plus many families did not have a car. Radio was the entertainment. When asked what her husband thought about her working in a factory, Melba replied: “I didn’t even tell him.”

When the war ended, many of the women were dismissed to open jobs for the returning servicemen. “That’s when we went back to Kentucky,” said Melba.

Back at home in the Louisville area, Melba and her husband contributed to the Baby Boom and had more children, 14 in all—seven boys and seven girls. At first she worked outside of the home, cleaning up construction sites, another job men performed typically.

Cultural forces encouraged other Rosie the Riveters to return to their homes. Shows on television, which had grown more accessible by the end of the 1940s, encouraged women to be stay-at-home mothers, then called homemakers. The “Donna Reed Show,” “Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet,” and “I Love Lucy” were some of them.

It wasn’t TV shows that convinced Melba to return home. It was family responsibilities that made it too difficult to work outside of her home. “I made myself stay at home because it was important to take care of the kids,” she said.

Women can do most work a man can, said Melba, who said she often helped her husband with home construction projects. “I’ve worked for as long as I can remember.” ♦



Left: The famous representation of Rosie The Riveter by J. Howard Miller. The icon was used to recruit women to work in the factories while men were in the military.

Below: Melba L. Davis poses with a framed keepsake showing her as a young woman, a reminder of her hard work as a riveter on bombers and jets in San Diego, California.





Glenn L. Howard
*Born August 25, 1939
Eagle Valley Meadows,
Indianapolis, Indiana*

Desire for a Difference

A POLITICAL MAN ON A MISSION

*G*lenn L. Howard was one of the most widely known people in Indianapolis, even before he became an Indianapolis City-County councilman and Indiana state senator.

Glenn was a star athlete at Crispus Attucks High School, where he excelled in track and field and football. Starting in the 1950s, Glenn's athletic performance was reported almost weekly in *The Indianapolis Recorder*, an African American weekly newspaper.

After Glenn graduated from Attucks in 1958, he attended Alabama State University and later the University of Indianapolis. He returned home, but not to be idle. Glenn went to work at Allison, a division of General Motors. But finding problems there, he launched an organization called Movement for Opportunity and Equality, composed of African American GM and UAW employees who sought equality in employment and employment opportunities. The group eventually sued GM and other companies, alleging racist practices.

Glenn found an ally in William Crawford, who was a principal in a bookstore and meeting place located on North Meridian Street. Crawford became a state representative. Glenn became the voice of the Northwestside and was a tireless advocate for neighborhoods and citizens who felt powerless. His focus was on making sure neighborhoods in the United Northwest Area received adequate city services, including police services, good trash service and decent streets and sidewalks. Glenn frequently railed against the proliferation of illegal drugs in the area.

Once on the council, Glenn's voice was loud as he protested against many city practices, policies and laws, including the unification of city and county government under Unigov. Glenn was a plaintiff in a lawsuit filed to dismantle Unigov, but the suit eventually ended with Unigov intact.

That didn't stop Glenn. After serving on the council from 1975 until 1992, Glenn was elected to the state Senate and served until illness demanded that he resign in 2008.

Glenn always worked while serving in an elected position. After leaving Allison, he worked for Coca Cola, Cummins Engine, Indianapolis Power and Light Co. and the city of Indianapolis.

He was one of the early board members of Indiana Black Expo and often traveled the state helping other cities start Black Expo chapters. He worked in numerous other community organizations. He also served in the Indiana Black Legislative Caucus and the Caucus of State Legislators. He was on the state Senate's Economic Development subcommittee and committees on civil matters, commerce and public policy, corrections, insurance and others.

Glenn's voice was typically the loudest in advocating for African American entrepreneurs. He fought constantly to make sure they received a share of city or state contracts. Glenn was never one to mince his words.

Glenn often talked about his involvement in the Glenn Howard Junior Golf Outing for Youth group that he organized to get youngsters into something positive. He chaired the King, Walker, Wilkins and Young organization that recognized whites for their service advancing causes

that are important to African Americans. He was a member of too many organizations to name, but they included the NAACP, Indianapolis Urban League and Barnes United Methodist Church.

Glenn said in a political questionnaire that full-day kindergarten was most important to him. "The expansion of full-day kindergarten is imperative to ensure that all Hoosier children enter school ready and able to succeed. Studies reflect that children who attend kindergarten and other early learning programs are more likely to succeed in school, achieve higher test scores, graduate and less likely to need costly special education programs or repeat grades."

Glenn was also vocal about the issue of same-sex marriage. "If someone wants to enter into a gay relationship, it is their business and legislators have no right to control their personal lives."

Glenn was the first Democratic member of the Indiana Legislature to endorse GOP Gov. Mitch Daniels' Major Moves transportation project.

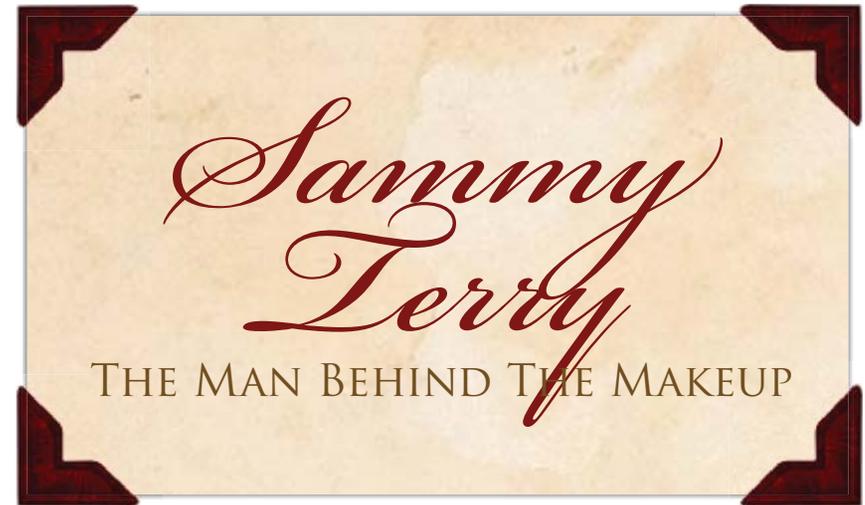
In recognition of Glenn's work in the community, a new senior apartment complex planned for Glenn's beloved Northwestside at 605 West 27th Street will be named in his honor. ♦

Below Left: Glenn L. Howard speaking to fellow Hoosiers during his time as a councilman. **Below Right:** Glenn L. Howard looking sharp in a portrait for his position as an Indiana state senator.





Robert Carter
Born December 4, 1929
Rosegate Village
Indianapolis, Indiana



The black and white television set is tuned to Channel 4, providing the only light in the room. The popcorn bowl is in hand. And it's that time: "Hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmmm hmmm... Good eeeeevening... Welcome... to Nightmare Theatre." And so another 1960s Friday night of horror movies with Sammy Terry in Indianapolis begins.

As horror show host Sammy Terry, a name that was a play on the word cemetery, Robert Carter and his props, including a spider named George and Ghoulshy, (who was actually Carter's son Mark) entertained audiences throughout the Midwest for more than three decades, showing 1930s and '40s horror films. During commercial breaks, Carter often provided commentary about the movies, but also about events and people of the day. The show reached its peak in popularity in the 1960s and early '70s, as demand for Carter placed him solidly in horror legend status.

For Midwesterners whose televisions could pick up the signal and show, Sammy Terry became an icon of the 1960s and the values that era represented—family, community, social change, progress.

Carter's life was never on a narrow path. It was full of family, a wide array of friends, community and travel, said his wife, Phyllis Carter. In addition to being Sammy Terry, Carter owned a music store in Indianapolis in the 4600 block of Shadeland Avenue for 35 years; there he offered piano and other music lessons. It was one of the few stores that sold sheet music. His shop also repaired band instruments for Indianapolis-area parochial schools. He's also been active in supporting Special Olympics.

Who is the man behind the makeup? Carter had a strict rule, said his wife.

“When he was at the music store, it was all about the music store. He was Mr. Carter,” said Mrs. Carter. And when he was at home, it was all about family. He and his wife have four children, 14 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

And when he was Sammy Terry, it was all about Sammy Terry.

Born in Decatur, Ill., a few months after the Wall Street Crash, Carter spent his childhood in the Depression Era, followed by World War II. His family was active in Masonic orders, which is how he met Phyllis Eaton, the woman who would become his wife. They sang together in a Masonic organization choir and were in college together at Milliken University in Decatur. In 1953, they were married, but a year later Carter was in the Army, stationed in Washington where his wife eventually joined him.

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“WHEN HE WAS AT HOME, IT WAS ALL ABOUT FAMILY...AND WHEN HE WAS SAMMY TERRY, IT WAS ALL ABOUT SAMMY TERRY.”

-Phyllis Carter, Robert Carter's wife



Above: Robert Carter's chilling voice and signature laugh made him into a Hoosier horror show legend known as Sammy Terry.



Above: Carter's son, Mark, is carrying on a new legacy of Sammy Terry. Mark is pictured here in the classic Sammy Terry costume.

Right: A poster for "Sammy Terry Nightmare Theater," the horror show hosted by Robert Carter. Son, Mark Carter, continues to perform stage shows.



The military and his family members wanted Carter to go to Officer Candidate School, but Carter wanted to follow his heart. He finished his military commitment and returned home. With a deep rich voice perfect for broadcasting, his first job once back in soybean-rich Decatur, Ill., was at radio station WSOY, where he did news, sports and weather.

His next stop was in Fort Wayne, where he hosted a show on a radio station owned by Sarkes Tarzian, an Indiana entrepreneur who started the Bloomington, Ind.-based television station WTTV Channel 4. One day on the radio show, a guest, Colonel Harland Sanders, in town to promote the opening of one of his Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants, offered Carter some of the chicken while on air. Tasting the chicken during the radio broadcast, Carter told listeners the chicken was “finger-lickin’ good,” a phrase that the chicken empire still uses today. Carter says he never got credit or pay for coining the phrase. KFC says Sanders coined it. You just take your lumps and keep going, Carter said.

Sarkes Tarzian moved Carter to Indianapolis to host a television show, “Coffee With Carter,” and later a horror show, which a furniture company agreed to sponsor for six weeks, which led to another six-week contract and another and another. The popular “Sammy Terry Nightmare Theater” was now firmly rooted in Hoosier and Midwest culture. As the low-budget show evolved, there were improvements in his outfit and makeup and props, but the pay remained the same, said Carter. Only after Carter began doing appearances away from the show did his income improve. Everything is not always about the money, he said. Carter loved being Sammy Terry, said his wife.

Carter's son, Mark, joined him in the show, acting as a rocking chair under a sheet that rocked sideways, and as a ghoul by the name Ghoulby who grunted. George, the talking spider that only Sammy Terry could understand, bounced through the air, tethered to a fishing line. Funeral homes donated the caskets from which Sammy Terry emerged. The last one, with red velvet lining, is now in Mark's possession (Mark is now Sammy Terry) and still contains the cigarette burns Carter put in it, though it's been decades since he last smoked. "I'm the only man who has worn out five coffins and can still talk about it," Carter joked.

Carter calls today's horror films "horrible films" because many are filled with murderous acts and carnage. His shows brought families and people together and evoked images of old values that created lifelong bonds.

Asked about how he juggled so many projects and responsibilities and he says, "You do what you can do when you can do it."

His signature laugh, a chilling rendering through pressed lips, still resonates as the most frightening part of the Sammy Terry show. As he ends his show, so he ends his public appearances: "I hope you have many pleasant nightmares..... Hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmmmhmmmm..." ♦

Right: Robert Carter with his wife, Phyllis. The two met while singing together in a Masonic organization choir. Phyllis explains that Carter's career wasn't about the money, but Carter loved being Sammy Terry.





Lucille Dean Wheeler and Wayne G. Wheeler
Born November 16, 1917, and March 26, 1917
Williamsport Nursing and Rehabilitation
Williamsport, Indiana



*H*e winks at her. She grins. He reaches over the arm of his wheelchair and takes her hand as she sits near him in her wheelchair. She blushes and pats his hand that holds hers. Wayne and Lucille Wheeler say their gestures of affection and love have endured the entire 72 years of their marriage because they have loved each other that long.

With fewer than 5 percent of married couples staying together even 50 years, the odds of a 72-year marriage place the Wheelers in a group of few peers.

How did they do it?

“A lot of people live together and they quit. We’re nice to each other,” said Lucille as she reaches over to fold one of Wayne’s cuffs. “We really got to know each other, and we have a program set up that we both abide by.”

“Get along. Keep your mouth shut. Don’t flirt with the other guy’s wife. That’s how to stay married,” said Wayne, 94. “I never ran around.”

“I never caught him,” Lucille, a spry 93, chimed in, smiling.

The Wheelers met at a 4-H Club meeting in Kankakee, Ill. He was 21. She was 20. He liked her parents and siblings. She liked his. They were married March 26, 1939, and had one child, a son Gerald.

“I met quite a few young men, but I just liked him more,” she said.

“She needed a ride home and I had a car,” scoffed Wayne. “I had a putt-putt Ford that was too dang old, but it ran.”

They lived about 40 miles apart. He came to visit her from Momence, Ill., where he lived with his family on a dairy farm. She lived on a farm in Manteno, Ill. “When the roads weren’t muddy, we’d get together. When they were muddy, I’d get stuck and her father had to get a tractor and pull me in. Isn’t that right, sweetheart?”

Lucille’s mother was a good cook and Wayne loved her food. It was a skill Lucille learned and would take with her into marriage. The couple opened an A & W Root Beer restaurant in 1958 in Attica, near their home on State Road 28. They tore it down and built Wheeler Family Dining in 1974. The rooster that topped the restaurant sign became a city attraction. But it was the chicken, juicy hamburgers and ice cold root beer that helped the couple stay in business for decades.

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“GET ALONG. KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT.
DON’T FLIRT WITH THE OTHER GUY’S WIFE.
THAT’S HOW TO STAY MARRIED.”

-Wayne Wheeler



Above: Wheelers Family Dining opened in 1974 and stayed in business for decades. Both Lucille and Wayne managed the restaurant.



Above: The Wheelers during Christmas in the 1970s.

Left: The restaurant was sold when the couple retired in the 1980s. The restaurant is now called Paragon, but the familiar chicken Wheeler purchased remains an attraction.

Even though they worked together every day in the restaurant, they never argued, the Wheelers said. Their work weeks were frequently 100 hours, but nobody was the boss. “Why have a boss?” said Wayne. “Just get in and work.” That is just what he did.

Money is often the root of many divorces. The Wheelers said they didn’t argue about money because there wasn’t much of it. “Back then we had only so much money to spend for our groceries or whatever and when we spent it, we knew we were at the end of the rope. You learn how to be conservative and not always want a lot of things.”

Getting along with each other’s siblings also helped. She had one brother and four sisters; he had four brothers and two sisters, including a twin sister.

“We’ve had a lot of fun in our lives,” said Lucille. “We played a lot.”

“That’s right, stinker,” said Wayne.

Stinker?

“He calls me that, too,” said Lucille. “We’ve always gotten along. I think from the very beginning, we learned how to do that.” ♦

Below: The Wheelers reside together at Williamsport Nursing and Rehabilitation, where they still find time to play and continue to show their love for each other, even after 72 years.





Lovell A. Walker
*Born November 20, 1927
Eagle Valley Meadows
Indianapolis, Indiana*

The Perfect Game

A BOWLING LEGEND

*L*he first time Bowling Hall of Famer Lovell Alvin Walker picked up a bowling ball and got on the lanes, he was a teenager on the Westside of Indianapolis. The owner of Fun Bowl bowling alley persuaded him to learn the sport at one of the first bowling alleys in the United States built for African American bowlers.

It was an era when Blacks were not allowed to bowl in national bowling leagues, such as the American Bowling Congress or the Women's International Bowling Congress. Both national leagues, under immense pressure, would later accept African Americans before merging into the United States Bowling Congress.

To compete nationally, African Americans formed the National Negro Bowling Association in 1939, and in 1944, the NNBA became The National Bowling Association (TNBA), which continues to exist today with over 30,000 members. Heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis and Ted Page, an outstanding Negro Baseball League member, are both credited with being instrumental in the formative years of organized black bowling.



Left: Lovell's bowling league at Fun Bowl, the first place Lovell ever bowled. He is pictured sixth from the left in the front row

Lovell credits Sea H. Ferguson, a TNBA bowler himself, with introducing him to bowling, now enjoyed by more than 95 million people worldwide. Ferguson built Fun Bowl at St. Clair and West streets, walking distance from the famous Indiana Avenue, an Indianapolis entertainment district and hotspot of Black entrepreneurship, including the operations of Madame C.J. Walker, the first Black female millionaire. Ferguson built Fun Bowl to give African Americans a place to learn and excel in the sport, and to advocate friendship, fellowship and sportsmanship.

“Mr. Ferguson broke us all in. He took about 20 of us off the streets to keep us out of trouble and I've been bowling since then,” Lovell said. “That's what we need today to get kids off the streets. Bowling helps kids stay out of trouble.”

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DID YOU KNOW?

- Bowling dates back to the 3rd Century.
- Bowling was banned in 14th Century England because its popularity caused people to neglect archery practice necessary for national defense.
- Bowling came to America from Dutch colonists in the 17th Century and consisted of nine pins set in a triangle. It wasn't until the 1840s that it became a 10-pin game.



Lovell started bowling competitively in 1947, bought his own ball by working, including carrying newspapers for The Indianapolis Recorder, a Black-owned weekly, and by 1969 had the fifth highest average of all bowlers in Indianapolis. Lovell has four 300 games, the first one in 1949, a feat obtained by only one in 11,500 bowlers. He has been a member of the Seniors Master's Classic league since its inception, was inducted into the Greater Indianapolis Bowling Association Hall of Fame in 2000 and the TNBA Indy Senate Hall of Fame in 2007.

He doesn't have room to display all of the plaques and trophies he has won. But he wears with pride the highest symbol of bowling achievement sought after by all avid bowlers: a 300 ring. He also was awarded several watches and other prized tokens of his achievements.

Walker remembers some of his league-mates at Fun Bowl, then called "The House of Champions:" legends William Brown, William Gooch, Roy Street, Gladys Chestnut, Elizabeth Stanfield and Willa Morrell. Delores Richardson was frequently his mixed doubles partner.

"We used to travel all over the country to bowl: Cleveland, Chicago, all through Ohio, Michigan and Illinois," he said.



Top: Lovell keeps photos of the many championship bowling teams he was a part of over the years.

Bottom: Lovell has four documented 300 games and wears his coveted 300 ring with pride.

Lovell was born in Indianapolis and attended Indianapolis Public Schools 24, 17 and Crispus Attucks High School. He was drafted into the Army and, after his discharge, returned to Indianapolis and was married. He has one son, Jeffrey, who is also an avid bowler. After retiring from General Motors, Lovell had more time. He was a regular volunteer for the TNBA, working at tournaments and other events.

With synthetic lanes instead of wood ones, automatic score keeping, and advanced balls, bowling scores have soared and so has the competition, he said.

He continues to have the drive to get on the lanes. Bowlers nowadays seem far too interested in bowling for dollars than for the sport, he said. “They don’t care if they win the game, they want to win money.”

Lovell still enjoys the game with his son and two grandsons. “My son says, ‘Come on, old man. I’m going to spank that booty.’ And I say, come on, puppy, just try it. I can’t wait to get out there again.”

Right: In 2007, the Indy Senate inducted Lovell into the TNBA Hall of Fame in the Veterans Category. Here he shows off his plaque.





Elfriede E. Haley

Born June 12, 1927

*Clark Rehabilitation and Skilled Nursing Center,
Clarksville, Indiana*



*W*hen World War II erupted, Elfriede E. Haley was an adolescent in Germany, too young to know what it was all about. She remembers the sirens and her family running for cover to neighborhood bomb shelters. She remembers coming home to see her house destroyed by bombs.

“We would be scared out of our minds,” said Elfriede, 83, who lived through more than 150 bombings of Mannheim, a key manufacturing city in Baden, Germany. The bombings were known as Abigail Rachael and were aimed at terrorizing civilians.

The Germany of Elfriede’s childhood was a happy place. She was an only child and had a loving family and many friends. Her family entertained a lot. The opera was a regular pastime. She had an uncle who was an opera singer.

Life changed drastically for Elfriede and her family when Adolf Hitler took Germany to war. She was 12 then and remembers that her family later was split by the Berlin Wall. Elfriede said some of her aunts and uncles risked their lives by paying off a communist guard to sneak them back across the wall.

Hitler frequently held parades. During one, someone in the crowd threw a flower pot at Hitler, striking him in the head. Elfriede smiled recalling that incident.

As Hitler's stranglehold on Germany tightened, neighbor turned against neighbor. Elfriede said her father refused to join the Nazi Party. Her father was assistant administrator for Germany's West Zone, which was later controlled by the U.S., France and Britain.

"My father said, 'No way.' He would not join the Nazis. When they came to the door my mother would always say, 'He's not home.' It was a time when German men, women and children were expected to support the Nazi Party."

As Hitler's demand for resources grew, German citizens suffered many of the consequences. To preserve resources for war, everyone's car was taken because Hitler needed the tires for their rubber, Elfriede said. "Wheels are only used for victory," he would say.

Elfriede and her family were at a train station one day when her father saw a Jewish physician friend attempting to leave Mannheim with his family. Mannheim had become one of the most bombed cities of Germany.

"My mother grabbed my father by the arm and said, 'No, don't go over there. If somebody sees you talking to him you could be gone in two days.' We couldn't talk to Jewish people," Elfriede said. "I had to sneak to play with some of my friends."

She came home one day to find her home destroyed. The family placed a sign in the front yard, stating they were all alive and living in the bomb shelters. There Elfriede lived with her parents until the end of the war.

Elfriede struggled to talk about her memories of World War II and Hitler's reign over Germany. Her father refused to join the Nazis, making life difficult during that time.



She was 18 when the war ended.

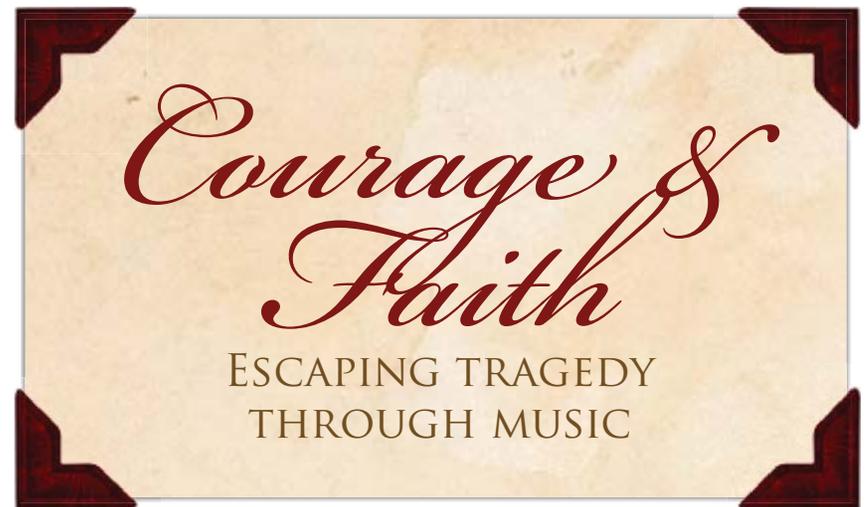
By then, all the banks had closed and the currency was changed, Elfriede said. The government gave each family the equivalent of \$250 to start their lives over.

Elfriede became an overseas telephone operator, working at a U.S. military base General George S. Patton often called. Elfriede says she often answered Patton's calls. "He could be rude," said Elfriede. Patton died in 1945 in Mannheim of complications following a vehicle accident.

Elfriede met and married an American soldier and the couple eventually moved to the United States. She became a U.S. citizen in 1955. "Those were happy days." ♦



Barbara Randall
Born June 15, 1953
Harcourt Terrace Nursing and Rehabilitation,
Indianapolis, Indiana



Barbara Randall Coleman remembers seeing a flash. That was the semi-truck crashing into her car head-on after crossing the center line on busy North Meridian Street. Both of Barbara's wrists were broken. Most of her fingers were crushed. Her body was covered with lacerations and bruises.

After several surgeries and three weeks in the hospital, the nationally known singer and author continued to recover slowly, but couldn't use her hands to do anything – hold a microphone, type on her computer, feed herself, take care of daily hygiene.

Because she had no use of her hands and suffered from a concussion, her balance was also affected. She couldn't walk without help. Barbara went through therapy at Harcourt Terrace Nursing and Rehabilitation and within a few months returned to life as one of Indianapolis' top jazz and R&B singers.

Barbara has performed around the globe. The day of the accident in the summer of 2011, Barbara, whom friends and fans call “Babs,” was preparing for a trip to perform in Europe. Still not at 100 percent, even today Barbara continues to wear an infectious smile and remains positive.

She has written two books, including “Jacob Daddy,” a story about her life and the decades of abuse and challenges she has overcome. She has also written a book of poetry. Her book “Jacob Daddy” was co-authored by her daughter Erika Roman Saint-Pierre, who provided the perspective of a child growing up in an abusive dysfunctional family. The book was healing for both mother and daughter. Both went through years of abuse. Barbara also has another daughter, singer-songwriter Tish Lyndsey.

Barbara’s music was an escape. She performed in Detroit with several well-known artists, including Wilbert Pegler, Mel Ball, Gwen Fox and Charles Green. Among the highlights of her career, she opened in concert for Babyface in 1999 and appeared at the Birmingham Jazz Festival in 1995, 1996 and 1999.

Barbara was the “Coleman” in the popular Coleman Rhoades Duo, providing vocals for jazz keyboardist, trumpeter and arranger Mike Rhoades. She also performed at the Detroit Jazz Festival and was a Diana Ross impersonator for several years.

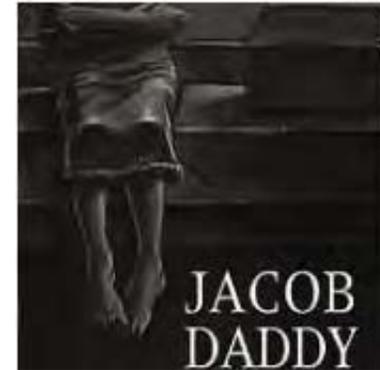
Barbara’s fans follow her throughout the city to hear her smooth vocals. She finds comfort in her music, as do her fans.

By 2005 Barbara and her husband had divorced and she returned to Indianapolis, the city where she had grown up. The challenges she has faced have made her stronger. She now performs once a week at a downtown Indianapolis sushi restaurant and at special gigs.

Today, Babs hosts an interactive workshop she developed for children on the history of jazz. Her books and music are available online. Go to: www.barbararandallmusic.com ♦

Right:

Book, “Jacob Daddy” written by Barbara and her daughter, Erika Roman Saint-Pierre about living and overcoming decades of abuse



Below:

Babs performing at a downtown Indianapolis sushi restaurant.





Edna May Koppy
*Born October 11, 1920
East Lake Nursing and Rehabilitation
Elkhart, Indiana*

A League of Her Own

THE ALL-AROUND ATHLETE

Name any sport and Edna May Koppy loved and excelled in it. But it was baseball that placed Edna in the national spotlight when a recruiter selected her to be shortstop for the Chicago Blue Sox, part of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, the first national organized professional baseball league for women.

The league was formed in the 1940s when baseball fields throughout the nation sat dormant because men had been drafted for military service in World War II. Recruiters searched for potential team members all over the country. One of their stops was in Elkhart, Ind., and that's where they found Edna.

Her teammates call her "Toots." Others called her "Red Rutledge" because of her bright red hair. She was shortstop for the Brakes, a women's amateur team based at Crull Field in Indiana. Edna became one of about 250 women nationally who tried out. Only 60 made the cut and Edna was one of them.



Left: The local newspaper pictured the Elkhart A. C. girls' softball team. Edna is second from the left in the top row.

Right: Edna pictured in the local newspaper playing softball for Elkhart A. C.

Below: Edna poses with her husband, Frank, at the golf course. She had four documented holes-in-one, including a 166-yard shot with a 9 wood.

The excitement of making the team was one of her life highlights, said her daughter, Kay Southall of Elkhart, who heard the stories of her mother's athletic prowess throughout her life. But she would never actually play for the team. "She went to Chicago for tryouts and made it. So did another girl from the area."

Edna knew what earning more money than a man might mean, especially for a young married couple. It was a tough decision, but Edna chose to stay in Elkhart and marry Frank Koppy, a decision she never regretted, said Kay.

Though she loved all sports, her favorite sport was football. "She always said, 'I would have been the quarterback if only I were a boy. There is only one position – quarterback,'" Kay said, speaking for her mother who at age 91 can no longer recall many of her experiences.

Continued on Page 24





Left: Edna Kopy with her husband, Frank. She chose to marry Frank instead of pursuing baseball, a decision her daughter said she never regretted.

Below: Edna was extremely talented in playing golf. She played the sport well into her 80s.





Left: Edna was pictured in the local newspaper. Here she is posing with just some of the awards she won throughout her golfing career.

Center: Edna on her 80th birthday.

Bottom: Edna now resides at East Lake Nursing and Rehabilitation in Elkhart, Ind.

As an adult, Edna rolled several 300 bowling games and had four documented holes-in-one, including a 166-yard shot with a 9 wood. She would often shoot from the men's tee because she'd overshoot from the women's.

"I'm not sure where she got her athletic ability because certainly no one else at that time in the family had it," said Kay.

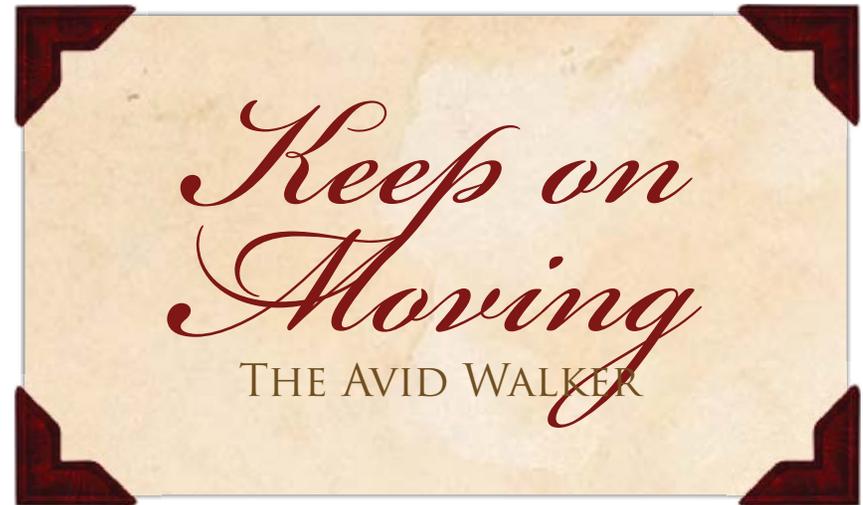
Well into her 80s, Edna showed she still had it. Her nephew took her with him to try out his new set of golf clubs. She took her clubs, too. Edna teed off at the men's tee. Her nephew watched. Hole after hole, she shot at or under par.

"He said he couldn't wait to get to work to tell the guys his 84-year-old aunt had beaten the crap out of him," said Kay, laughing. "And she did." ♦





Florence May Rumrill
*Born October 27, 1918
Brownsburg Meadows,
Brownsburg, Indiana*



*W*hile in her 80s, Florence May Rumrill completed six Indianapolis Life 500 Festival Mini-Marathons, walking the 13.1 mile course in Downtown Indianapolis with thousands of other walkers. She was 86 when she participated in her last race.

Even in her 90s, Florence stands erect and is ready to throw on her Nikes and grab a hand for a walk. Her greatest joy is walking outdoors. “I love to walk,” she said.

Florence grew up in South Dakota, and as a girl, she often walked the three miles home from school. South Dakota winters were brutal. Snow often drifted well above her 5 foot 2 frame, but she walked anyway. There were dust storms and insect swarms, deterrents to most. But Florence said she walked through the dust and insects.

Times were difficult for Florence and her family, which included her parents and five brothers. The third oldest, she grew up on a 640-acre

farm in Blount, a town of 300 people. She received a pair of hand-me-down boots from an aunt, and wore them when walking through snow. She would walk in front of her younger brothers so they could walk in her tracks.

“Nobody had any money in those days,” Florence said. “So walking was sometimes the only way. Oh, I learned to ride horses and we had a wagon and a Model T and could ride sometimes. But I loved to walk.”

Train tracks ran through the family’s property. When railroad cars were left on the tracks, Florence and her younger brothers would climb on top of them and walk the plank typically reserved for railcar workers, not youngsters. “We’d jump from one car to the other,” she recalled fondly, her blue eyes sparkling.

In high school she played basketball, but it was a “girl version” of the sport. “It was just exercise and shooting baskets. We couldn’t play against other schools, just ourselves,” she said. “Girls weren’t supposed to have that much ambition.”

Shortly after graduating from high school, where she was one of five in the graduating class, she, her mother and younger brothers moved to Michigan, where she found a job in a real estate office. It was in the middle of the Great Depression when the family moved East. Few families had cars and many that did could not afford the gas.

“I walked from the house to the office and I walked to get my lunch,” she said.

Florence was walking when she met Eddie Rumrill, the man who would become her husband. “He lived about a fourth of a mile from our house. I’d walk back and forth to work and we kind of got acquainted. One day I was walking and a car drove up beside me and it was him. He asked if he could give me a ride, and I said, ‘Oh, no.’ In those days you weren’t supposed to accept rides from anyone. So he came to my house to visit. And we went from there.”

Continued on Page 27



Above: Indianapolis Star artist, Gary Varvel created a caricature for Florence’s 90th birthday. It depicts Florence walking in a Mini-Marathon.



Florence never learned to drive, even after marrying and having children. But there was an upside to this: This meant if her husband didn't take her where she wanted to go, she'd walk and he'd often walk with her, holding her hand all the way. The family moved to Brownsburg when her children were small, she said.

"Everyone knew me because I walked. I walked everywhere—to church, everywhere. When you walk, you can see things. The pretty flowers, the vines on the trees."

When her sons were boys, she took them on a hike through the mountains of Colorado. When her grandchildren visited, she walked with them on train tracks or to feed a neighbor's goats. She walked with her granddaughter.

As Eddie's health failed, Florence continued to walk, taking her husband of nearly 50 years with her, pushing him in his wheelchair. He passed in 1994.

In Mini-Marathons, sometimes Florence's granddaughter or one of her two sons walked with her. Many Brownsburg residents rallied behind her as she trained. She inspired many to start fitness programs, said her granddaughter, Meschelle Kolb.

Before each race, she'd have something light to eat, like yogurt and a wheat muffin. She'd stretch her legs and walk in place to get set for the race. Her pace was brisk, about one mile every 15 minutes. During her last race, she finished in just over three hours. The top female finished in an hour and eleven minutes.

Left: Florence walked with her husband, Eddie (pictured here). Even when he was unable to walk, she took him with her, pushing him in his wheelchair.

“EVERYONE KNEW ME BECAUSE I WALKED. I WALKED EVERYWHERE—TO CHURCH, EVERYWHERE. WHEN YOU WALK, YOU CAN SEE THINGS. THE PRETTY FLOWERS, THE VINES ON THE TREES.”

-Florence May Rumrill

“I couldn’t run, but I tell you, I went by a good many,” Florence said.

Florence walks the hallways of the home where she’s lived for the past year, checking in on staff and other residents.

“I walk around here and when it gets warm and I can talk someone into going out with me, I’ll walk around outside,” said Florence, who said she’s never had leg or knee problems, “praise the Lord.”

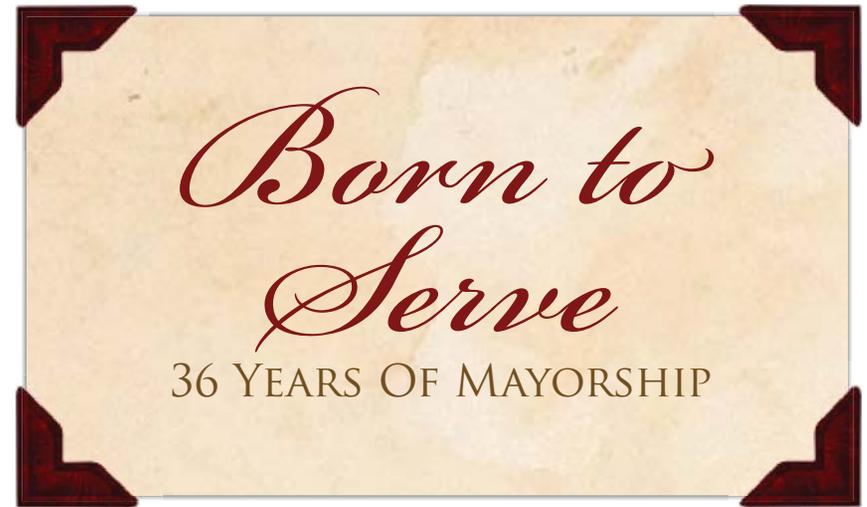
As spring approaches, Florence longs to do what she loves. She thinks a mile-long walk would be enough. Florence said, “I haven’t been walking much, but it’s getting nice outside now and all of the birds are out, and the flowers are blooming. I say ‘thank you, Lord,’ every day. So many people are being pushed around in chairs and so I try to help them. As long as we can keep moving, we’re doing OK.” ♦

Right: Florence says everyone knew her because she walked everywhere. She walks so she can see things like the flowers and the trees.





Herbert H. Roemer
*Born June 6, 1921
Heritage Park
Fort Wayne, Indiana*



*I*f you ask Herbert Roemer what a mayor does for a living, he'll tell you the duties include emptying trash cans, mopping floors, painting fire hydrants and shoveling snow. That's how he operated as the longest serving mayor in Indiana history.

As the top city official in Woodburn, Ind., located about 15 miles east of Ft. Wayne in Allen County, Roemer, 90, ran the smallest incorporated city in the state for 36 years after winning nine consecutive elections for mayor. His tenure ended January 1, 2000, when he retired.

Roemer said he never hung a campaign poster. He never had an election committee. He never passed out campaign literature. Yet when he was persuaded to run in 1963, he made some promises: the city had no municipal water system, no city sewers, few sidewalks, few street lights. He promised to fix all of those problems. He won hands down, taking most of the 178 votes cast and it was pretty much that way every election after that one. There was one time, however, the election of 1983, when he won by only 7 votes. "That was a close one," he said.

“We didn’t have a decent road. If there was an emergency somewhere, you could hardly get to it. We didn’t have street lights. We had outdoor toilets. You couldn’t get a permit to build a house in the county (because there were no public sewer and water systems in place and the state outlawed building in areas without them),” he said.

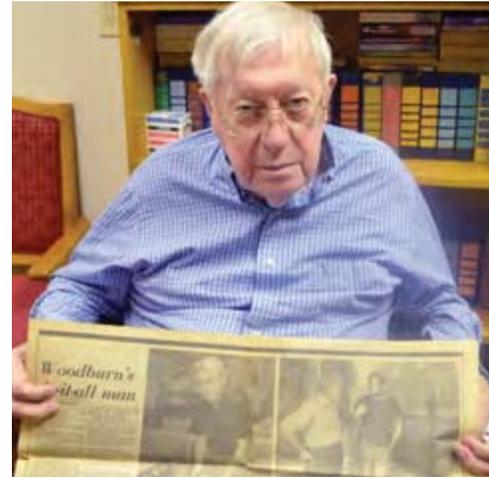
Without public sewers and water, the city could not grow and citizens of Woodburn were ready for a change. Only one major employer, B.F. Goodrich, had come to town and the city needed jobs.

What did Roemer receive in return for running a city with a population of 668 people? As mayor, his annual salary started at \$125 a year. “That was big money,” Roemer joked. “The money I got paid for being mayor wouldn’t keep me alive.”

It was not the money that Roemer was interested in. He served to help improve Woodburn, he said. Before becoming mayor, he was a city councilman for 12 years and the city’s clerk-treasurer and a member of Woodburn’s Board of Public Works. After the mayoral election he was also elected to the Maumee Township School Board. “People laugh when you tell them you’re a city official of a town this size,” Roemer once told the local newspaper, “but there’s just as much pride here as in Ft. Wayne, Chicago, or New York City. If there’s pride, you’ll tie yourself down and get the work done.”

Roemer grew up with six sisters and a brother on a farm about a mile west of Woodburn. His father died when he was 13 years old. He and his mother and brother operated the farm, which grew wheat, corn, oats and beans. After graduating from high school, he married his sweetheart, Berdena, in 1940 and they had two daughters. In his free time, which he never had much of, he bowled and went to Christ Lutheran Church. He worked full-time as a salesman for a heavy truck frame company.

In addition to getting public water and sewer systems built, Roemer is also proud of his role in getting improvements started on U.S. 24, between Fort Wayne and Toledo, Ohio. That stretch of U.S. 24 was known for being deadly. Dozens of accidents occurred on that stretch every year.



Left: Herbert was recognized in the local papers for his many years of service to Woodburn.

He also led the charge to annex additions to the city: the Reichart Addition, the trailer park, Becker Road and other areas.

Were there scandals during his administration? Yes, he said. The former police chief, one of only a few city appointments Roemer made, was shot and killed by his wife in their home over a love triangle dispute. Roemer said he contracted with the county to provide police protection after that incident.

Were there political clashes? Roemer remembers when he was challenged to a fist fight on the street by a man from Payne, Ohio. Roemer had hired the man to do a job for Woodburn and he did such a poor job, Roemer wouldn’t pay him. Police and a local attorney broke up the dispute before fists were drawn.

Would he change anything? “Not a thing. People are here to serve each other, not to be recognized for what they do.” ♦



Margaret Macke
Born November 12, 1905
Heritage House Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center
Connersville, Indiana



*M*argaret Macke has earned service patches for raising money for a Connersville, Ind., homeless shelter and for the city's animal shelter. She also earned a patch for craft making after completing a necklace. Last summer she learned to pitch a tent and earned another patch just as any Girl Scout should do. But at 105 years old, Margaret isn't just any Girl Scout. She's believed to be the oldest Girl Scout in America.

"When I grew up years ago, we lived on a farm and we didn't have Girl Scouts. I always loved Girl Scouts," said Margaret, who became a member of Connersville-based Troop 1816 in March 2011.

Margaret Macke was born six years before the Girl Scout organization was founded. She joined after Scout Leader Lucy Schoenfeld and her troop from Fayette Central School visited her in Connersville. The 12 Scouts, most of them 4th and 5th graders, and Margaret really hit it off. The girls asked if Margaret could join the troop, which was just fine with her.

Right: Margaret surrounded by her Girl Scout troop. She became a member of the Connersville-based Troop 1816 in March 2011.

Photo Credit: The Connersville News Examiner

Margaret, a Cincinnati, Ohio, native, moved to Connersville when she was a teenager after the death of her mother. She helped take care of her two younger brothers before getting married at age 21 and having a family of her own. This meant she didn't have time to join Girl Scouts even then.

Margaret had four boys. "I wanted a girl," she said. Because she has all boys, she has a special love for her fellow Girl Scouts, her niece and granddaughter, she said.

For Margaret it was never too late to try anything for the first time. In 2011 she joined the Girl Scouts and had her first school bus ride at age 101. She got on a house boat for the first time at age 102, and the following year, she planned a hot air balloon ride, but it was too windy that day, yet she got into the passenger basket and had her picture taken anyway.

Margaret attributes her long life to being active and praying a lot. "I pray in the morning, the evening and in between," said Margaret, who is Catholic. She also drinks a Diet Coke and takes a walk every day.

"She still plays bingo, goes on outings, and is one of the most active people here," said Lucy, a Heritage House staff member. When asked if Margaret actually helped pitch a tent with the troop this summer, Lucy said: "She supervised. She does that pretty well." ♦



"WHEN I GREW UP YEARS AGO, WE LIVED ON A FARM AND WE DIDN'T HAVE GIRL SCOUTS. I ALWAYS LOVED GIRL SCOUTS."

-Margaret Macke



Jean Ferris
Born November 1, 1927
American Village
Indianapolis, Indiana

Weathering The Storm

A HURRICANE SURVIVOR

Jean Ferris survived the deadliest, most powerful, costliest hurricane in New England history. This monstrosity, with an accompanying tidal wave, killed about 800 people, damaged or destroyed over 57,000 homes and caused millions of dollars in losses.

Jean was 11 years old that Sept. 21 afternoon in 1938 when her mother hurriedly picked her up from school before classes were over. The weather was strange that day. People could tell the barometric pressure was high by the pressure in their ears, the kind of feeling you get on an airplane. There was no early warning equipment in those days, just the gut feeling that tells you bad weather is heading in.

“In those days, all of the students went home for lunch if you lived close. We did and I went home and walked back to school, but my mother came back to get me. This thing started up and my mother was afraid,” said Jean, an only child who grew up in the town of Westerly, R. I., about a 20-minute drive from the Atlantic Coast.

By the time Jean and her mother were back at home, the wind was howling. The rain had started. The sky was dark. “We went into the closet and my mother just prayed,” said Jean. Jean’s mother was supposed to go with her church group to an outing at the beach, but she decided against going because of the weather. Jean’s father was an electrician for the power company and he was at work when the storm reached the coast.

The hurricane that hit Westerly formed near the coast of Africa and became a Category 5 hurricane before making landfall as a Category 3 on Long Island. The storm reached its peak in the Westerly area at 3:30 p.m. and didn’t die down until about 5 p.m., leaving electricity knocked out, boats upside down on land and at least 100 dead. Jean and her family were not injured.

It wasn’t until the next morning that the extent of the storm’s damage along the coast would be known. The storm had pummeled Rhode Island, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine and Quebec. Coastal Rhode Island hotels, cottages, businesses and people had been swept away. There were reports that a women’s church group picnicking on the beach disappeared and was believed swept away into the sea. It was the group Jean’s mother had planned to be with that day.

“If it had been the time when school was out, there would have been children there, too,” said Jean.

The towns of Mystic, Charlestown, Watch Hill and Narragansett were struck by a tidal wave 30 feet tall that left the areas desolate and ravaged by the water and wind. Fishing boats and small yachts were piled high in back yards. Power outages affected thousands. People who had been trapped shopping in department stores or in restaurants and other downtown businesses were killed. Whole families drowned together. The schools became makeshift morgues. A fire horn would sound whenever more bodies were brought in so families might come to identify missing loved ones. Never had a hurricane struck a region so thickly populated and unprepared, said historians. It was decades before the area would fully recover.

Jean married and eventually moved out of the area, but has told the story frequently of how she survived the hurricane. The experience left an indelible mark in her memory, said daughter Jill Lyday. “When Hurricane Katrina struck, she kept saying, “At least they had warning.”

Like many New Englanders, Jean has been what her daughter described as a “hardy woman.” She has a strong faith in God and an appreciation for blessings.

She became a bank teller, a bank trainer and an expert in computers. Said her daughter: “She’s never let anything get in her way.” ♦

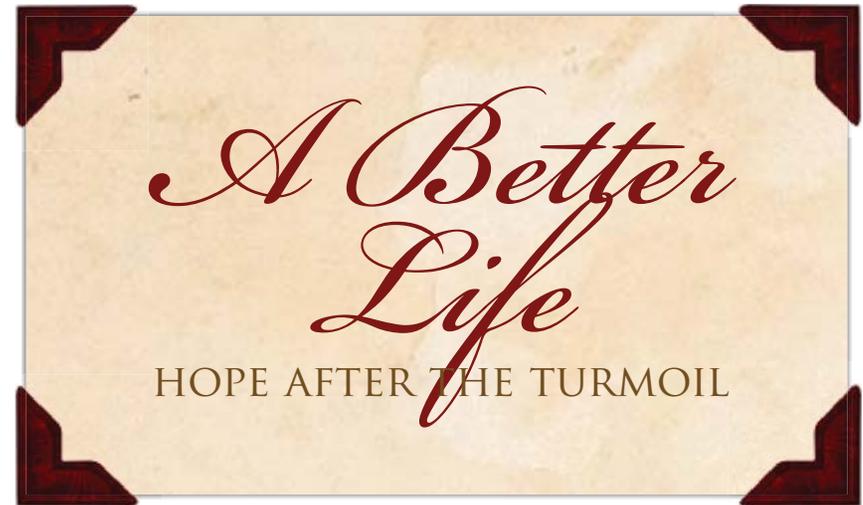


Left: Jean’s town before and after the hurricane hit.

Above: Jean at the age of 11. It was at this time that she and her mother survived a devastating hurricane.



Suad Mathani
*Born November 19, 1945
Franklin Meadows
Franklin, Indiana*



Brave is the best description of Suad Mathani. The 66-year-old Iraqi native was left homeless and responsible for a disabled adult daughter with nowhere to turn for help. The mother and daughter were scooped up from the streets of war-ravished Baghdad in 2009 by a refugee organization that whisked them to safety in the U.S.

Suad and her daughter, Eman, 30, were moved to Indiana, where comforts and friendships have helped them live in peace.

When the Iraq War started in 2003, millions of Iraqis, including Suad and her family, fled to Jordan and other countries. Suad's husband died there, leaving Suad and their daughter with no source of income. The two moved in with one of Suad's adult sons, but he could not handle the responsibility, so they moved out to live on their own.

Suad's savings ran out. Some neighbors helped by dropping off donations. Then Suad began having kidney problems, but because of the

war there were no hospitals equipped to provide adequate treatment. She went without treatment.

Suad and her daughter became homeless. A refugee worker spotted Suad on the streets carrying her daughter on her back. The worker took Suad and Eman to a refugee camp. At the camp, Suad and Eman were registered as war refugees and eventually flown to Indiana.

Once in Indiana, the two were placed in an apartment and given furnishings and other necessities. Life was getting better, but the new land and new people were unfamiliar and intimidating. It was helpful that a few neighbors could speak Arabic, Suad's native language.

The monthly stipend she received from the state refugee assistance fund paid her rent and other household expenses. The grocery store was a few blocks away. She could walk to shop at a store that carried many of the foods she liked, she said through an interpreter.

Life became comfortable in Indiana. But months later her kidney problem returned and Suad was hospitalized, leaving no one to take care of her daughter. Eman was placed in a home for the developmentally disabled. Suad was sent to Franklin Meadows for nursing care.

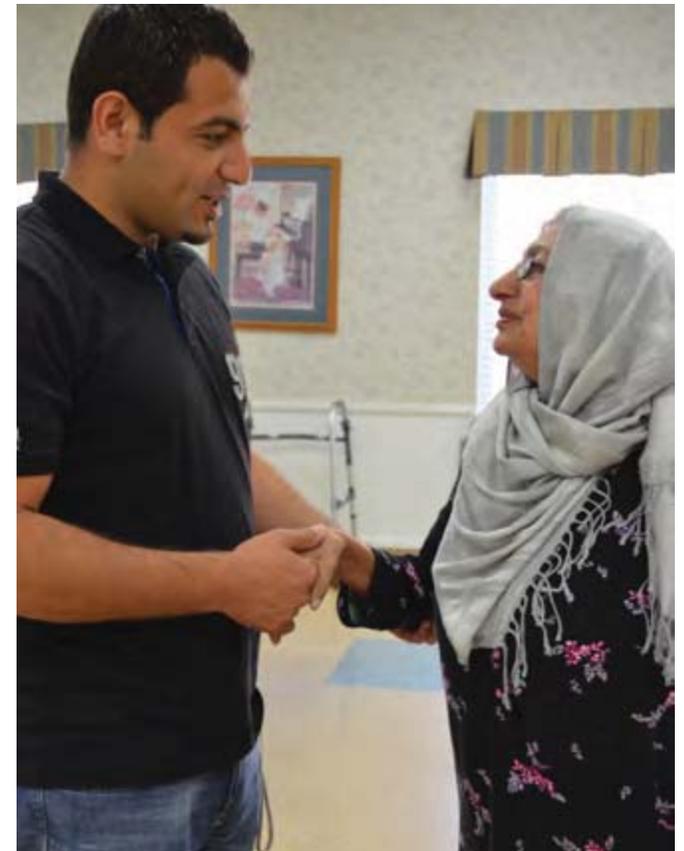


Though mother and daughter now live hours apart, Franklin Meadows staff makes sure Suad is taken to visit her daughter monthly. They also help the two talk on the telephone regularly, though Eman can only listen. Still the calls help both mother and daughter.

Suad says she is grateful for the help she has received in the U.S, said Nadim Al Gazali, the interpreter. “She says she came here with the hopes of a better life and it is better.” ♦

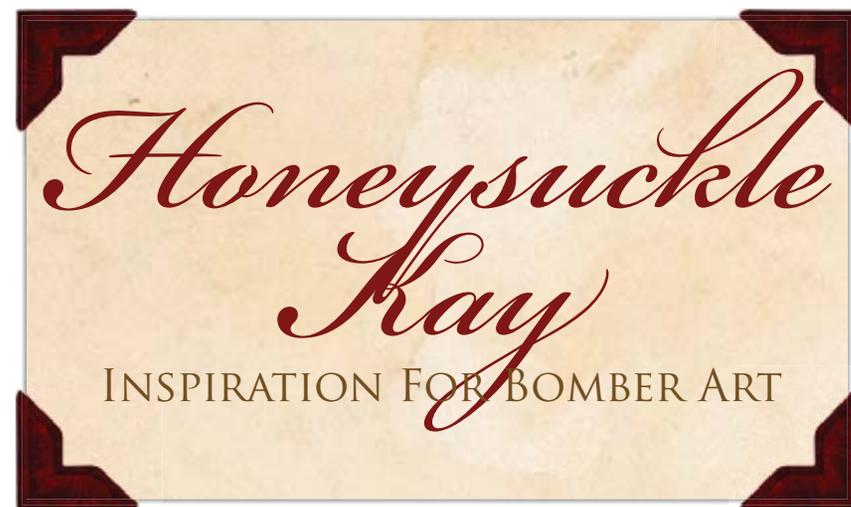
Left: Iraqi street scene

Right: Suad with her Arabic interpreter





Kay Powers Jensen
Born August 4, 1918
Zionsville Meadows
Zionsville, Indiana



*K*ay Powers Jensen was working as a secretary at Glidden Company in Chicago when World War II erupted. As the war churned on, some of the Glidden men who were drafted longed for letters from home. One of them, Pvt. Jerome B. Jarosz, wrote to his colleagues at Glidden and Kay wrote back.

“To compensate for months of silence, she sprinkled the letter liberally with honeysuckle perfume,” reported the Chicago Daily Tribune in an article published Oct. 19, 1943. In gratitude, Jarosz and his Army buddies named a new B-24D Liberator bomber in Kay’s honor.

“Powers Girl, Honeysuckle Kay” was stenciled across the nose of Pvt. Jarosz’ bomber by the plane’s flight officer, who also sketched Kay’s face and form, as described by Jarosz, across the side of the plane.

While no known pictures of the plane and its artwork survive, the Tribune reported that the bomber saw “successful action.” The B-24 was one of the most used of all aircraft. More were built than any other American airplane.

Military aircraft nose art is considered a form of folk art. It helped the soldiers somewhat escape the stresses of war and the probability of death. Some of the most famous drawings were of a shark's open mouth on the plane's nose. Other popular art often focused on glamorous women.

Kay didn't know about her infamy until later when a Tribune reporter interviewed her for the story. She told the reporter she wrote to Jarosz because "I hoped they were well and would soon be home; that kind of thing."

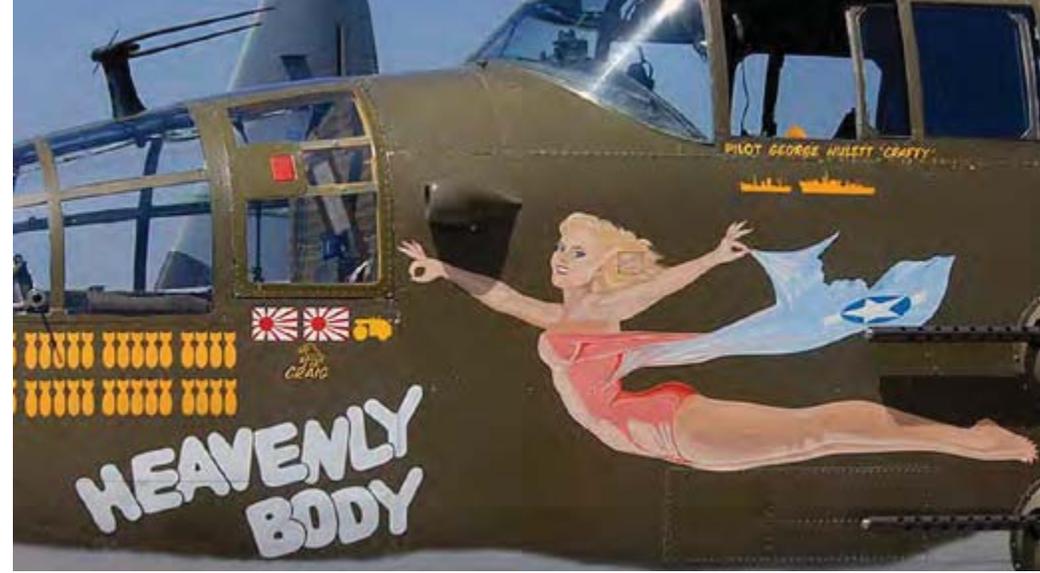
Kay's son Dan Jensen said he was amazed to learn of the story. "We never knew about this."

Much of the nose art depicting women was risqué. The most widely known was on a B24J Liberator named "The Dragon and his Tail." The dragon artwork was painted from the nose just forward of the cockpit, down the length of the fuselage's sides, with the dragon's body below the cockpit. The dragon holds a nude woman in its forefeet.

According to the National Archives, Jarosz never returned to Glidden to personally thank Kay for her kind words. He died during the war and was buried in Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial site in England, where more than 3,800 other American soldiers are buried. The war ended with more than 370,000 Americans killed and thousands more missing in action.

Kay met Edward Jensen, another Glidden employee, and they were married in 1947 and moved to Indianapolis when Edward was transferred to a Glidden office there. The couple had two sons, including Dan. After the death of her husband, Kay returned to school and earned a bachelor of arts degree at Marian University and a master's degree in education from Butler University. She taught 16 years at Indianapolis Public Schools, mostly as a School 79 6th grade teacher.

As she looked at the newspaper clipping of the story about her bomber, she smiles. "I remember that very well." ♦



Above: An example of military aircraft nose art. The bomber art became popular in World War II as it helped soldiers to escape the stresses of war.

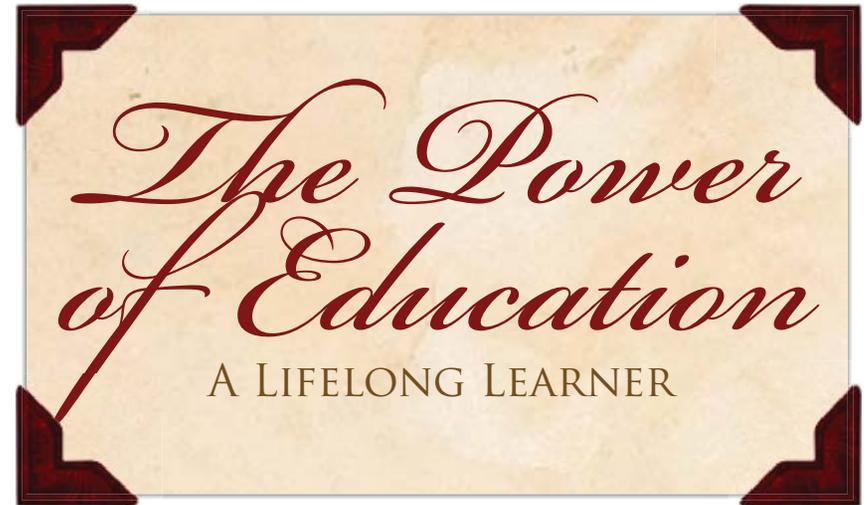
Left: Kay Powers Jensen inspired the name of the bomber, "Powers Girl, Honeysuckle Kay." Her face and form were sketched across the side of the plane. Pictured are Kay (left) and an unidentified friend.



Doris Evans Russell

Born June 21, 1918

*North Capitol Nursing and Rehabilitation
Indianapolis, Indiana*



*W*hen Doris Russell left Indiana University after her junior year to marry her sweetheart, always in the back of her mind was completing her college degree. She did at age 74 when she graduated from Butler University in Indianapolis, majoring in education and becoming one of the oldest to graduate from that university.

Witnessing the occasion were her then 81-year-old husband and three children and grandchildren, who had all heard her message of the importance of education throughout their lives. All of her children completed college.

Doris, 93, was born in Workinger Bayou, La., and moved with her parents, four sisters and two brothers to the East Chicago-Gary area. Her family moved during the Great Migration, a period between 1919 and 1930 when more than two million African Americans moved from Southern states to the North and West to escape racism and find jobs. Doris' father became the first African American foreman at Inland Steel in East Chicago.

In Gary, Doris graduated from Froebel High School. She was the first African American student to be salutatorian of a graduating class at that school. She won scholarships to Drake University in Iowa and Indiana University. She chose I.U. and began her studies there, majoring in elementary education.

At I.U., Doris met Guy E. Russell, married him and they had their first child, Guy Evans Russell. She had three other children, losing one when she was a baby. Her husband, a member of Crispus Attucks' first graduating class, earned his degree, but because of racial discrimination could find work only as a janitor at the old Allison's plant in Indianapolis. He had other jobs and retired as a vocational rehabilitation counselor for the state of Indiana. The family, however, was always comfortable.

The Russells' first home in Indianapolis was at historic Lockefield Gardens in the 900 block of Indiana Avenue. Lockefield was the first public housing project built in Indianapolis and was exclusively for African Americans. The project replaced slum housing in the area and was one of 50 low-cost public housing projects built as part of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal. When completed, the development included 24 buildings, with 748 housing units. Lockefield was considered one of the best public housing projects of the New Deal.

Due to income restrictions imposed at Lockefield, citywide challenges to housing discrimination and the financial ability to move into other Indianapolis neighborhoods, many Lockefield families, including the Russells, moved out of Lockefield.

In 1949, the Russells bought a house on contract in the 600 block of West 40th Street in the Butler-Tarkington neighborhood, a middle-class enclave near her in-laws. Many of their neighbors were among the city's elite African Americans, including Attorney Henry J. Richardson, John Brooks, Dr. Paul Batties and Dr. James Anderson.

The area included a number of schools, including Butler University and Christian Theological Seminary. Several large churches were also founded in the area. While still majority white, the area embraced the

growing diversity and a neighborhood organization was formed. It still exists today as the longest operating neighborhood organization in the country. Butler-Tarkington is often cited as an example of successful racial integration in Indianapolis.

The area was considered the "Black Mayberry," said Doris' son, Guy,

Doris was active in her church, Mt. Zion Baptist. She became a teacher's aide, worked in a local catering business and tutored children in reading, all while her children kept encouraging her to return to school. Finally, she did.

As an older student, she was focused and determined. "She was always very independent," said her son. "And she was always excellent with kids."

Mayor Stephen Goldsmith recognized her achievement and proclaimed May 8, 1993, Doris Evans Russell Day.

Now 93, Doris doesn't make a fuss over her achievement. To her, it was no big deal. Getting an education opens doors and provides comforts, she said. "It's what you're supposed to do." ♦



Left: Doris Russell was determined to complete her college degree. And she did. At age 74, Doris graduated from Butler University with a degree in education.



Dean MacAlpine and Maxine Grimm

Born May 19, 1920, and April 5, 1919

*Coventry Meadows
Fort Wayne, Indiana*



Dean MacAlpine first noticed Maxine Grimm eating dinner in the Coventry Meadows dining room. He was at a table with two women and noticed her sitting at another table. He was the dapper 90-year-old guy in the black fedora with a white band, the guy with the twinkle in his eye. She was the “cutie” about to become the apple of his eye.

Once Maxine, then 91, saw a chance to sit at Dean’s table, she seized the opportunity. A relationship was budding and it bloomed May 7, 2011, when the couple married after a yearlong courtship.

The courtship was enchanting. As he rolled by her dining table before they became better acquainted, he would wink or tip his hat. When he

stopped to chat, he'd tell the other ladies he was there to see the "prettiest lady at the table" and look straight at Maxine. Sometimes he serenaded her with "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" or "I Love You Truly," songs sung at their wedding.

"One day he said, 'Would you kiss me?' And I said, 'yes.' I thought he was just kidding," Maxine said.

He wasn't. The relationship heated up. He visited her room frequently to chat or play cards with her. Maxine preferred to entertain in her room because she cannot hear well when in rooms with multiple people talking, she said.

The question was posed: Why not be roommates? So he moved in with her. A few days after her 92nd birthday on April 4, 2011, he popped another question and she said "yes" again. The couple was married at Coventry Meadows in a service the following month witnessed by about 70 guests. They exchanged personally written vows as family, friends and staff looked on.

Because of retirement benefit complications posed when two retirees marry in a civil ceremony, they did not get a marriage license. "I thought to myself why can't we have a Bible wedding? In Bible times, that's what they did. They didn't get a license," Maxine said.

Continued on Page 43



Left: Dean and Maxine on their wedding day. The ceremony took place at their retirement home.

“I WAS A WIDOW 30 YEARS AND I NEVER THOUGHT I’D FIND HAPPINESS AGAIN, BUT I DID.”

-Maxine Grimm



Right: Dean and Maxine exchanged personally written vows during their wedding ceremony.

“I was a widow 30 years and I never thought I’d find happiness again, but I did,” said Maxine, looking adoringly at Dean. “I was single for so long.”
“I put an end to that,” Dean chimed in.

Maxine and Dean have each been married four previous times. Deaths and divorces ended those unions. Both have children; she has a son. He has a son, three daughters and a stepson. They also have several grandchildren.

Dean grew up in New York City with his grandmother, uncle and aunt, who were all doctors. He was always gutsy. At 15, he left home for a year to experience life as a hobo. He spent a year living on a Native American reservation. He was drafted into the U.S. Army and became a paratrooper with 80 jumps under his belt, including a jump into the Battle of the Netherlands, which earned him the Bronze Medal and Purple Heart, and several daredevil jumps for the Howard Dutton Air Show. Always the risk taker, he won \$50,000 in the Hoosier Lottery in the 1990s.

She grew up Catholic in rural Decatur, Indiana. She became a registered nurse and worked at local hospitals before going into the nursing home business as an owner. She was also a real estate agent. She made wedding party dresses and still loves tinkering in various crafts. “That’s why there’s so much stuff in my room. I mean our room,” said Maxine, smiling and looking at Dean.

Maxine and Dean are one. They eat lunch and dinner together, but breakfast time is time she spends alone while Dean has breakfast in the dining room. She takes a nap every day. That’s when Dean plays bingo or participates in some other activity. They play cards and dominoes together. “I’m going to teach her how to play checkers, too,” said Dean.

At night he reads, sometimes to her. And when it’s time to go to bed, they give each other a good night kiss and they get into their beds. “That’s our day,” said Maxine.

“I’ve had a slam bang terrific life,” said Dean. “I call this Happyland here because I’m always content. It’s magnificent.”



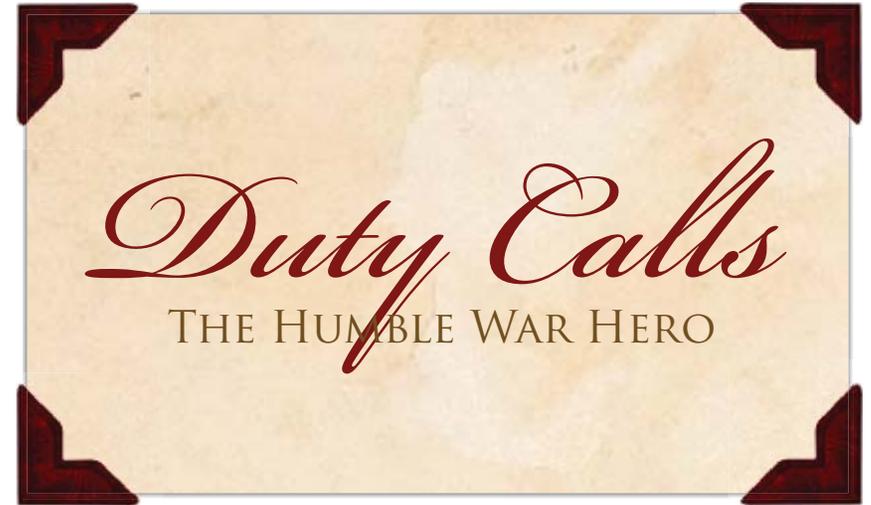
Above: Dean and Maxine enjoy spending their days together at their retirement home. They eat lunch and dinner together and play cards and dominoes.

“Yes, we’ve been very, very happy. He keeps me happy. He keeps me on the go.”

Their advice for finding true love: “Make sure you care for the person,” said Dean. Maxine’s advice: “Go for it.” ♦



Kenneth Chance
Born February 16, 1922
Riverwalk Village
Noblesville, Indiana



The target was Bordeaux, France. They got me up at 4:15 a.m. They woke me up late, because I was flying as a spare on Lt. Marionivicks crew, and that upset me besides being my first mission. The flak over the target was pretty heavy and accurate. Just after we left the target we had about 30 FW. 190's to jump us and I got to use my gun for the first time and I started praying to God after seeing them take one of our ships out of the formation.

-Jan. 5, 1944, Bordeaux, France

This entry in Kenneth Chance's diary was the first of 29 he made about his missions as a B-17 gunner in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II. Each mission exposed him to the possibility of death. During many of the missions, several colleagues were killed. After each mission, Chance penned his day's activities, ending each entry by thanking God he had returned to the base in England alive.

He and his crew are major reasons France and Germany were liberated in 1944. Chance's crew was one of the first to bomb Berlin. His service garnered national and local recognition, but none of that would come until decades later, most recently in November 2010, when U.S. Congressman Dan Burton awarded him a certificate of special congressional recognition. He was also thanked by the French government in 2002 for his efforts in liberating France and honored during a ceremony at the Indiana War Memorial in downtown Indianapolis.

Born in Hamilton County, Ind., Chance enlisted into the military because he believed he had a duty to serve, he said. "Hitler said we would never be able to bomb Berlin," he told a local newspaper after receiving local recognition for his service. "But we did three in a row there."

Chance was one of five gunners on each mission of Mr. Lucky, the name they gave their aircraft. His crew was part of the U.S. 8th Air Force, which was organized to destroy Germany's ability to wage war. He was a right side or right waist gunner. Other crewmen were stationed on the front, back, underbelly and left sides of the aircraft. Usually, the men would be awakened between 2 and 4 in the morning at their base, receive a briefing and take off, not knowing if they would return. Anxiety was always high. The men were obligated to fly 25 missions and only one in three was expected to avoid death, injury, or imprisonment. Chance flew four more than the obligation.

Their missions were all daytime flights. Their crew was part of the U.S. 8th Air Force, in the European Theater of Operations, credited with shooting down more than 6,000 aircraft. On one mission, most of Chance's crew, all of them volunteers, most were killed. On many others, the men saw other crews' planes shot down. Numerous times, he saw crewmen jump from their burning planes, parachuting down into enemy territory. About 370,000 American soldiers died in the war.

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Above: Chance, pictured second from the left in the back row, was one of five gunners on the aircraft they named Mr. Lucky. Chance's crew was one of the first to bomb Berlin.

“READING HIS DIARY, EVEN AS A YOUNG BOY, I COULD SENSE THE FEAR. ON EVERY ONE OF THE PAGES HE THANKS GOD.”

-David Chance, Kenneth's son



Above: Kenneth Chance as a young man. He served in World War II as a right side gunner in a crew of the U.S. 8th Air Force.

*We lost two crews, one was Lt. Terrace's crew, who were in our barracks and a darn good bunch of boys. Seven chutes were seen when the plane went through the overcast and it was still under control. I hope they got out. The barracks seems sorta quiet here without them. They slept right beside us. It's what the army calls just one of those things, but to us fellows it's just plain hell. God did answer my prayers except for not bringing them back..
-Feb. 24, 1944, Rostock, Germany*

Back in the states, Chance became an aircraft engine instructor and married Doris, a girl from Texas. The couple moved back to Hamilton County and he got a job at Delco Remy. He didn't like factory work and became a salesman until his retirement. He also operated his own business, a Sunoco service station, for several years. He and his wife had two children.

Chance's son, David, said he was a young boy when he found his father's diary at home and began to learn about Chance's military career. "Reading his diary, even as a young boy, I could sense the fear. On every one of the pages he thanks God."

David Chance said his father never talked about the war or his military service until he was an adult. "In later years, as man to man, he told me some things. For example, he thought his pilot walked on water."

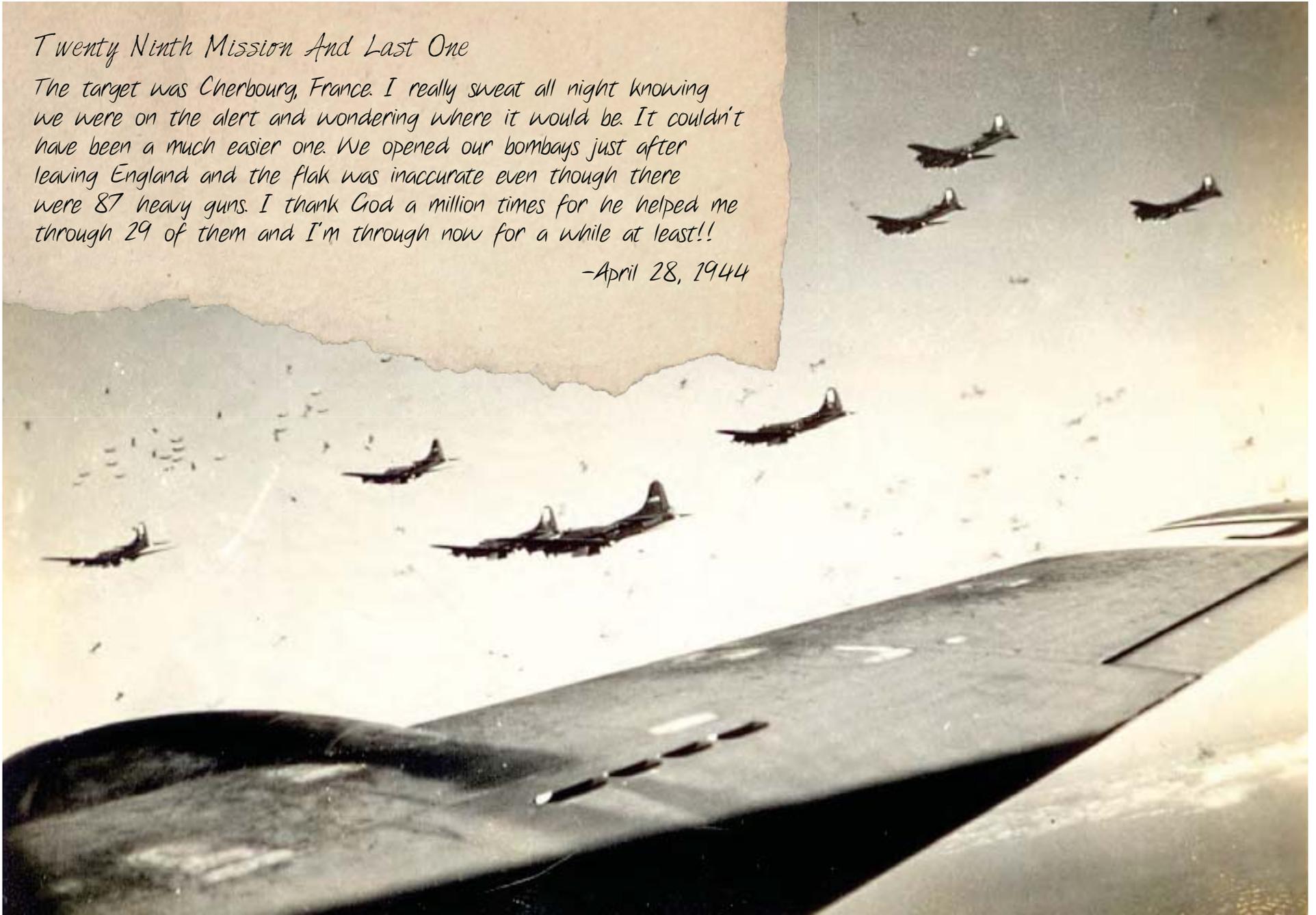
The effects of the war on his father would be lifelong, said David. "He's always been noise sensitive, real jumpy around noise."

Chance doesn't see himself as a hero. With a mild demeanor and a twinkle in his eye, he spends his time now chatting with old friends and neighbors. When asked what he thought of all of the recent recognition, Chance smiles: "Well, I just did my duty," he said. ♦

Twenty Ninth Mission And Last One

The target was Cherbourg, France. I really sweat all night knowing we were on the alert and wondering where it would be. It couldn't have been a much easier one. We opened our bombays just after leaving England and the flak was inaccurate even though there were 87 heavy guns. I thank God a million times for he helped me through 29 of them and I'm through now for a while at least!!

-April 28, 1944





Bette Reed
Born May 27, 1920
Harcourt Terrace Nursing & Rehabilitation
Indianapolis, Indiana



*F*ront and center stage. That's where Bette Reed basks. As an actress, public relations specialist, journalist and psychic, all eyes were often on her. She traveled from coast to coast, working in show business during the John Wayne era or pushing for acting jobs for the man who would later become her husband.

"From day one, I was a show-off. I'm a Gemini," said Bette, a young 91, who loves wearing clothes that shimmer, such as her close-fitting black sequined slacks. Though she held several jobs—from door-to-door saleswoman to a hometown reporter for the Veedersburg (Indiana) News, to switchboard operator—her first love was show business. She was bitten by the acting bug as a child reciting a poem for a school play and as a teen doing improvised shows with a neighborhood boy, Harold "Sparky" Songer, the "best dancer in Veedersburg," who recently retired as director of the Vermillion County (Illinois) War Museum.

Part Phyllis Diller, part Lucille Ball and a whole lot of Katharine Hepburn, though she'd rather be told she looked more like Gloria Stuart, Bette can spew off a long list of acting credits, including jobs she calls "crowd work," being part of a group scene. She's also performed on stage

in numerous plays at many venues, including the Indianapolis Civic Theater, and throughout New England. She's rubbed shoulders with lots of big names: acting icon John Wayne, Richard Boone of "Have Gun, Will Travel" fame, and Alan Ladd, who played Raven, a hitman in "This Gun for Hire."

In her 20s, Bette left Veedersburg for California and landed a few "mob scene" roles as an extra before her then-boyfriend, Woodson Reed, followed her there. He also wanted an acting career. The couple ventured to Old Tucson and to St. George, Utah, where a Western was being filmed, starring Alan Ladd and Susan Hayward, who achieved Hollywood acclaim as an alcoholic in the 1947 movie, "Smash-Up, The Story of a Woman."

"Alan Ladd was my dreamboat, but he was a little guy. If he had to appear in a scene with a woman who was taller than him, they'd dig a ditch for the woman to walk in so she would be shorter than him."

Bette pushed for roles for Woodson and he got to be a double for John Wayne, Bette said. One of his tasks was to do rope tricks and another was to ride horses, though he had to learn rope tricks and had never ridden a horse, other than "Old Plowboy" back in Veederburg, said Bette. Woodson also was a double for Richard Boone.

In later years, many of the actors who had performed in St. George died from cancer and related diseases. "I always thought this was from the fallout of the atomic bomb they set off near there," said Bette.

The U.S. government detonated test bombs at the Nevada test site northwest of Las Vegas, but winds carried fallout 135 miles to St. George, where there were marked increases in cancer, leukemia, and other diseases from the mid-1950s to 1980. Several famous actors and actresses who had been in the vicinity later died from one of those illnesses. Woodson died of a lung-related illness in later years.

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Right: Bette was compared to some of the great actors of her time, Katharine Hepburn, top left, and Lucille Ball, top right. However, Bette said she would much rather be told she looks like Gloria Stuart, left.



Left: Bette as a young woman. She was quick to catch the acting bug. “From day one, I was a show-off,” Bette admits.

Bette also recalls days when acting work was slow. She was in Arizona for the filming of the 1954 movie “Drum Beat,” hoping to land a role in that Alan Ladd movie about an Indian fighter sent by the government to make peace with the troublesome Medoc Indians.

“I remember we’d sit in Nick’s Cafe every night wanting Native Americans, who were hired regularly for Western films, to get sick, so the rest of us could get work.”

Bette has opinions about many of the celebrities she got to know. “Randolph Scott, (Hawkeye in the 1936 film “The Last of the Mohicans”) was snooty, but boy could he sit on a horse and look great. Woodson subbed for him as a double,” Bette said. Donna Martell, (“Love is a Many Splendored Thing”) is the girl Woodson had to carry to her carriage.

One day, she had a strong feeling that something had gone wrong back home in Veedersburg. “This was the first indication I had psychic power,” she said. She soon learned her mother had a stroke. Bette went home and never returned to California.

Right: Bette, pictured on the right, showing off a leopard coat. At 91, she still made a statement with clothes that shimmered and loved her fitting black sequined pants.

Bette worked in Newport and at other jobs to make ends meet while she cared for her mother. She and Woodson (Bette calls him “Woody”) were married in 1956 and the following year son Randall was born. The couple moved to Indianapolis, where she landed a job at the Civic Theater as a press agent and was able to get bookings of local greats, including Hoagy Carmichael, actor and composer of many hits, including “Georgia On My Mind.” Bette also worked for a commercial credit company.

She continued to act, landing a positive review by Indianapolis Star arts critic Corbin Patrick, who praised her for the ability to cry “real tears” during one scene of a stage play at the Civic Theater. Then came television. “When TV came in, movies and theater started hurting because people were staying home watching television,” she said.

Bette finished her working life at the Better Business Bureau. After the passing of her husband, she wrote occasional stories for the Veedersburg newspaper.

Give her a stage and she goes live. “I always loved acting. My only regret is never returning to California to do more of it.” ♦





Sarah Van Blaricum
Born April 22, 1924
Bethany Village
Indianapolis, Indiana

Fostering Our Youth

LIFE AS A MOTHER

*L*he dozens of babies brought to her came without names, so Sarah Van Blaricum named them. Noel, Anita, Neil, Erica, Christopher and other strong names. Some would be with her a few months, others a few years. Saying good-bye was always tough. But the Children's Bureau, a century-old adoption and foster care agency, would always bring another baby after the last one was placed in a permanent home.

Sarah's life as a foster mother in Indianapolis spanned 41 years. She provided care for more than 100 babies whose biological mothers had given them up for adoption as soon as they were born. Most of the babies she parented were African American or biracial, a population which had a spike in adoptions in the 1950s and '60s. In 1993, the Children's Bureau selected her for the Community Service Award in recognition of her service.

Why would she devote so much of her life to mothering children who were not biologically her own? "I just love children. It definitely was not the money," said Sarah, now 87, who treasures photo albums she has kept for decades of all the children she parented.

Sarah was about 25 when she accepted the first child. She was single and living alone on the Southside of Indianapolis. The agency did a background check, including talking to her pastor at Woodruff Place Baptist Church, before delivering the first child. It was a baby boy. “I couldn’t tell you if that baby was black or white. It didn’t matter,” she said.

She was responsible for feeding and clothing the babies, making sure all of their vaccinations were given, taking them to doctor visits, giving them love. She had only one baby at a time, allowing her to devote full attention to that child. “Generally, they stayed with me until they started walking, even talking,” she said. “They were always healthy with me because I made sure they were well fed and taken care of.”

She kept her camera loaded with film, snapping photos of the cute things they would do. Sometimes she’d catch them in an “amazing” moment. “I remember one of my babies who wasn’t even three months old just sat up. I couldn’t believe it. It seemed that over the years, the babies were coming to me brighter and brighter.”

Sarah got married and her husband, Jesse, accepted her role as a foster parent without hesitation. “He loved children, too,” she said. They adopted a boy with special needs, Dwight David, who she was told would never walk or talk. And to their surprise, she became pregnant a few years later, thinking she could never have a biological child. It was a boy, Joseph. The two brothers grew close and live together today. Dwight David became a healthy man who did learn to walk and talk. “The Lord had it all planned,” she said.

Sarah continued to take foster children over the next years, her own children helping. In photo albums are pictures of Sarah’s sons holding or feeding the babies. When the blended family was on outings, sometimes there would be stares as the Van Blaricums carried or pushed their Black infants in strollers through stores and other public places. “No one ever said anything negative. They’d better not or they would get a piece of my mind.”

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“I REMEMBER ONE OF MY BABIES WHO WASN’T EVEN THREE MONTHS OLD JUST SAT UP. I COULDN’T BELIEVE IT. IT SEEMED THAT OVER THE YEARS, THE BABIES WERE COMING TO ME BRIGHTER AND BRIGHTER.”

-Sarah Van Blaricum



Right: Sarah fostered children for 41 years and provided care for more than 100 babies before they were placed in their permanent homes.



Sarah kept her camera loaded with film to capture special memories with her foster children. She would attempt to capture the cute and amazing things they did.



Her husband died in 1972 and she continued taking babies while still rearing her own sons. By the early 1990s, the agency began to contact her less often. “As I got older, they said I couldn’t keep taking them. But I could have done just as good as the young girls did,” she said. “They said it was my age.”

Sarah smiles when she thinks about the children. “Baby Clara was less than 4 pounds and she was two months premature. She had Down syndrome. But she left me plump and happy. Neil was mischievous. Friends of mine loved him. His mother had been raped and she gave him up because she felt she should for the baby’s sake. She didn’t know what she would do if the baby looked like the man that raped her. Erica used to ball up her fists all the time. Noel was sweet. Christopher is the one who sat up when he was an infant.”

Sarah said she had little contact with the mothers and none with the children after they were placed. Once an adoptive mother brought her a picture of one of the children, but she never heard from her again. Sometimes she’d see a face in the crowd that made her wonder if that person was one of the babies she had kept. The names she gave the infants were likely not retained after their adoptions, she said.

Sarah said she hopes that the plight many adopted children face when they desire to connect with their biological pasts would be somewhat lightened through her actions. “When the Children’s Bureau picked them up, I’d always send a big picture of them as a baby. I’d put it in their car seat, right behind their back.”

Of all the babies, she’d most like to see Neil. “He’s been on my mind a lot. He’d be around 20 now. I really loved him.” ♦



Right: Sarah treasures her photo albums she has kept for decades of all the children she has parented.



Amelia May Richter
Born April 5, 1915
Arbor Grove Nursing and Rehabilitation
Greensburg, Indiana

Hidden Talents

UNCOVERING A TRUE ARTIST

*M*ay Richter didn't pick up a paint brush until she was well into her 60s. When she did, it was just something to do, she said. It was a pastime, a budding hobby that filled time once consumed by farm chores or family responsibilities.

May did not know she had the ability to paint until she took an art class to have something to do. Now 96, her artwork is displayed in doctor's and lawyer's offices and other businesses in Northern Indiana and in England.

The subjects she painted came from memories of her life on a 160-acre farm in southeast Rush County, where she spent most of her childhood with five sisters and a brother. She also liked to paint scenes she saw as an adult in rural Indiana. Beautiful flowers and lush landscapes, a young couple walking during a fall day, little girls feeding geese floating in a calm stream and a pet cat were captured in her oil paintings.

May took an art class after she retired. She and some of her classmates would hold painting parties, which were also times for the ladies to have fellowship and fun as they painted. For May and most of the other ladies, it was a time to have a good time.

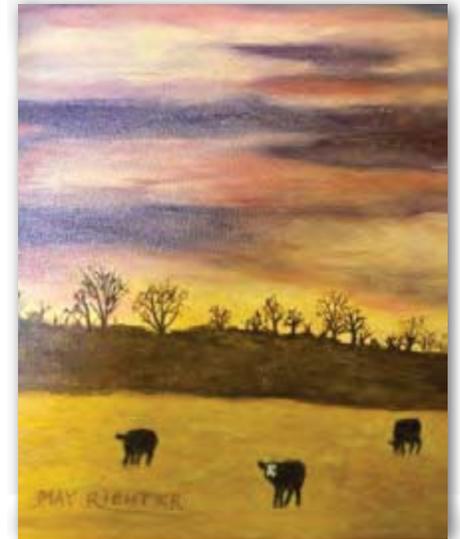
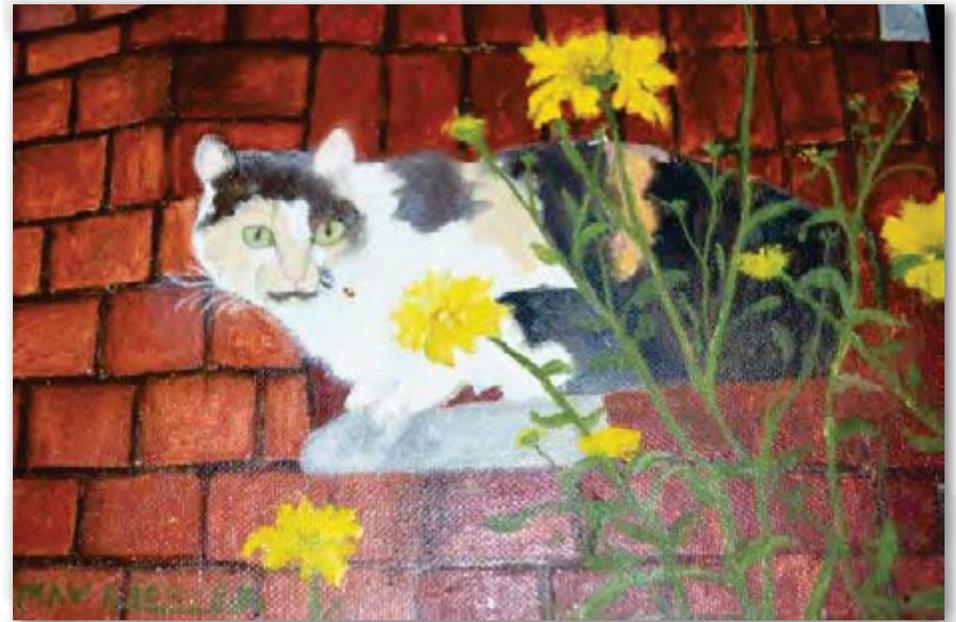
“I wasn’t a serious painter,” said May. “I did it just for fun.”

As family and friends realized her talent, many of her paintings were exhibited publicly, where others soon learned of her talent. But May never considered her work good enough to sell. “It was just something I did to pass the time.”

May and her husband, Merle Richter, reared their three children on a farm in Ripley County near Napoleon, Ind. The family’s first television made her feel like “the richest person in the world,” May said.

Besides the work she did on the farm, May also worked for the township Farm Bureau. She collected for Easter Seals and also helped raise money for the local heart association. She sang and played piano for the church choir.

May is humble about her talent. She said she never knew she had artistic ability until well after her children were grown. “Painting was something to do.” ♦



Above: May’s paintings were inspired by her life on a 160-acre farm in Rush County. She painted scenes depicting rural Indiana—beautiful flowers, lush landscapes, and her pet cat.





Michael Lee Anderson
Born March 1, 1941
Autumn Ridge Rehabilitation Center
Wabash, Indiana

Life Goes On
BATTLING A MENTAL ILLNESS

*M*ichael Lee Anderson published a book that he sold door-to-door across Indiana. He wrote the book to provide hope and encouragement.

Michael details his struggles with life and mental illness in “I Remember, A True Story by the Man Who Lived It,” a book he self-published a few years ago. He went to 40 cities in Indiana and Ohio selling the book and donated the money he raised to Wabash Friends Church in Wabash, Ind.

In “I Remember, A True Story by the Man Who Lived It,” Michael shares his thoughts and experiences on war, marriage, and life through the lens of a person with mental illness. He said his symptoms began after a nervous breakdown when he returned home from the U.S. Marines. His thoughts increasingly became paranoid. He had a second breakdown, he said. In one section of the book, he describes some of his past torment:

“I do know one thing, someone was waiting on me because I would turn the radio on and people were talking about parts of my life, which brought back bad memories of the past sometimes.And I would also hear them on the television.”

Michael was born in Toledo, Ohio, graduated from high school and joined the U.S. Marines in 1960 during the Cold War era. He served six years and was discharged in 1966. His symptoms were appearing by the time he returned home. In the book, he says he attempted to get people to help him stop the U.S.-Communist escalation of tensions, fearing a war in Vietnam was imminent. He also feared nuclear war and discussed this with anyone willing to talk about it.

Following his military service, Michael moved back to Ohio and worked at a couple of factories. He hated the work, he said. Multiple deaths in his family forced him into depression. He said he was married at “thirty-something” and had four children, but the marriage ended in divorce. He bounced through Indiana a few times.

Michael’s battle with mental illness landed him in a hospital multiple times. During many of the years he calls “desolate,” he was separated from family, rejected by women and haunted by voices in his head. Sometimes he was homeless.

Michael was happiest when he worked for 16 years with Boy Scouts in Kokomo, teaching Scouts how to hunt and cope in the wilderness, he said. He loved the work and loved the time he spent in the woods. He offered this advice in the book:

“You have to do things and be around people who make you happy.”

Michael believed he has advice to share with others who need hope and encouragement, and, using his own money, had his book published. He went to various cities selling it, before landing back in Indiana.

Rev. Rich Davis found Michael sitting on a pew at Wabash Friends Church in need of help. He had not been taking medication for his mental illness and was exhibiting symptoms, said Rev. Davis. The church helped Michael find a home and get medical and psychiatric treatment.

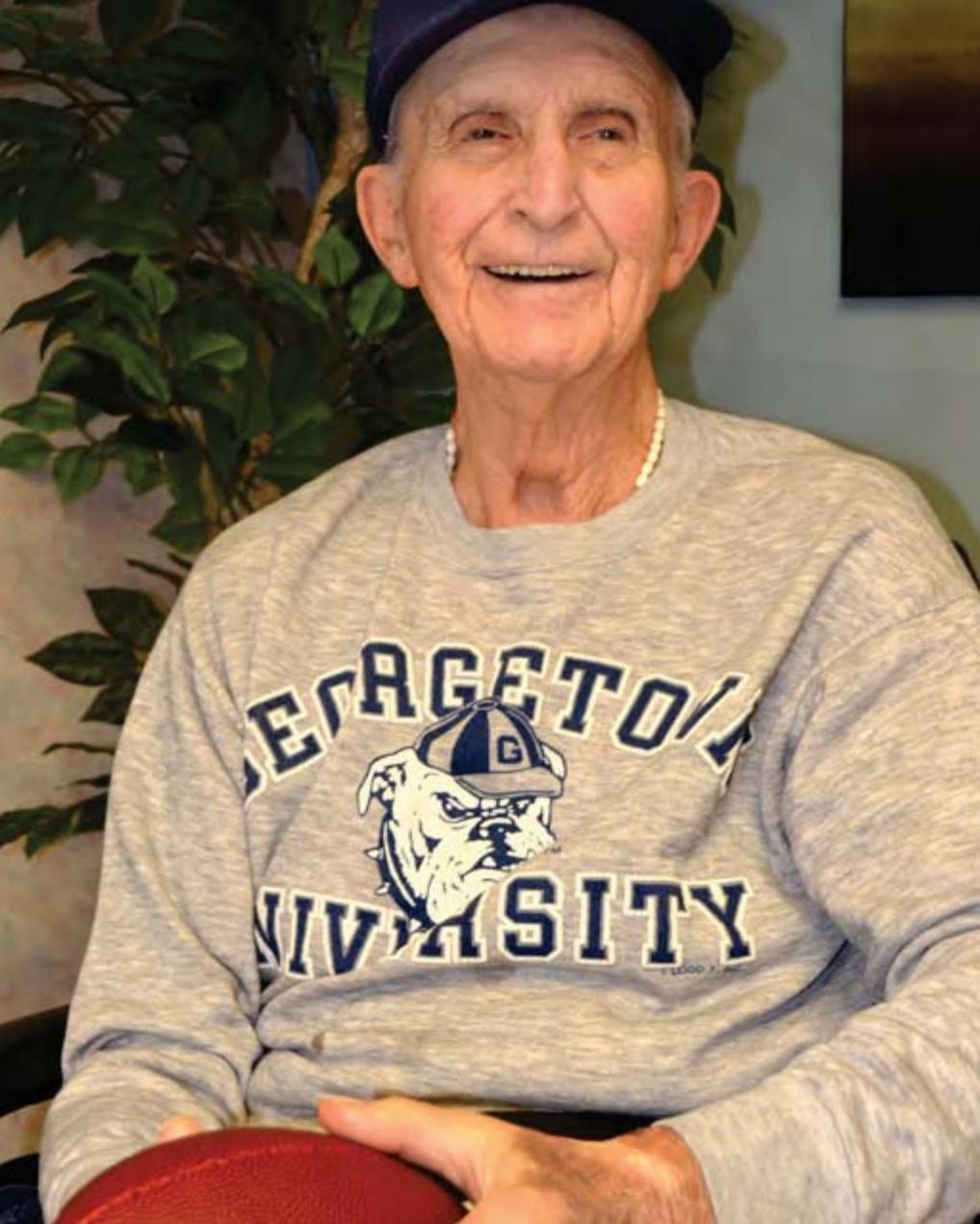
Michael gave the church his car to sell and instructed that the proceeds could go toward building a youth program. He loves children. Boxes of his book were left behind and today only one remains available.

Michael is doing much better, he said. He takes trips with Autumn Ridge Rehabilitation Center, where he now lives, and always has a smile for staff and other residents. He’s happy again. He says in the book:

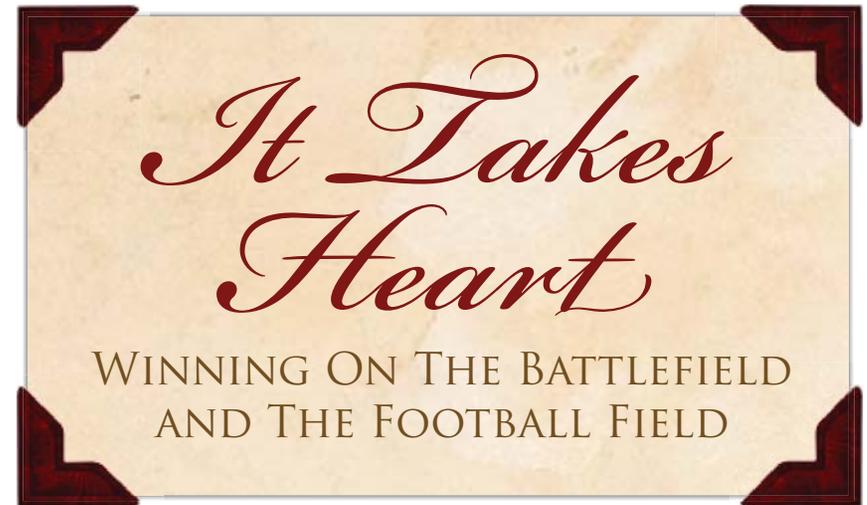
“I do hope this book offers some encouragement and hope and courage to those without hope. Only by being brave and doing the right thing for others as well as ourselves can we go on in life.” ♦



Above: Only one copy of Michael’s book, *I Remember, A True Story by the Man Who Lived It*, remains. His self-published book details Michael’s battle with schizophrenia.



Oscar Harte
Born October 7, 1920
Columbia Healthcare Center
Evansville, Indiana



Oscar Harte was a tackle for the Hoyas, Georgetown University's football team, when they went to the 1941 Orange Bowl undefeated.

By that time, the circumference of the football had shrunk, making it easier to grip and throw. There weren't separate teams for offense and defense. Oscar said he played both offense and defense. "There was just one team," he said.

Players did not wear the equipment they wear today. They didn't have all of the padding and didn't wear hard plastic helmets, which were invented in 1939. Their helmets were leather and were optional. The face mask came during the 1930s, the invention of Indiana's sporting goods retailer Vern McMillan. It was a rubber-covered wire mask on a leather helmet.

Punting wasn't allowed. The goal posts were moved up to the front of the goal line and the ball was moved away from the sidelines on the first play after an out-of-bounds.

"Whoever wanted it most, won," he said.

Left: Harte was a decorated officer in the U.S. Marine Corps. He was discharged with numerous honors, including the Bronze Star.

Right: Harte as a student and football player at Georgetown University.



Oscar was always an athlete. Born in Evansville, Ind., Oscar grew up on Mary Street near St. Anthony's Catholic Church, the church he attended most of his life. He played football for Reitz Memorial Catholic High School when that school was on a statewide winning streak, and he was named to the All State and All City teams in 1937 and 1938. He recalls that the team won so consistently, other schools did not want a match with the Memorial Tigers.

"We'd travel all over just to have someone to play us," Oscar said.

At Georgetown, the Hoyas were undefeated most of the years he played (23 straight wins), culminating in a match at the Orange Bowl under Coach Jack L. Hagerty, for whom a coveted award is named.

After college, Oscar joined the U.S. Marine Corps and became a decorated officer in the much celebrated Fighting 4th, from which he was discharged with numerous honors, including the coveted Bronze Star. The division saw combat at Roi-Namur, Marshall Islands, Tinian and Iwo Jima, where the division had 2,000 casualties, 28 percent of the men. For their work, the division was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation. The Iwo Jima battle, which lasted nearly 27 days, was recognized as the greatest battle in Marine Corps history.

"The good Lord looked after me," Oscar said.

After military service, Oscar married and he and his wife, Bette, had four daughters. He held positions with the U.S. Navy and also worked at International Harvester, Fairbanks Morse and Zenith Corp., retiring in the 1970s. Back in Evansville, Oscar frequently gave talks to Reitz Memorial High School football team members. He would open his talks with: "Hello, fellow teammates." His talks were encouraging and inspirational. "I'd tell them whoever wins wants it most. Some of it is skill. But it's also heart." ♦

GAME RESULTS DURING THE YEARS HARTE PLAYED

1939 (7-0-1)

Georgetown 3, Temple 2
Georgetown 25, Roanoke 0
Georgetown 13, Syracuse 13
Georgetown 13, Bucknell 7
Georgetown 7, George Washington 0
Georgetown 14, West Virginia 0
Georgetown 20, Maryland 0
Georgetown 14, New York University 0

1940 (8-2)

Georgetown 66, Roanoke 0
Georgetown 14, Temple 0
Georgetown 26, Waynesburg 12
Georgetown 46, Virginia Tech 4
Georgetown 26, New York University 0
Georgetown 28, Syracuse 6
Georgetown 41, Maryland 0
Boston College 19, Georgetown 18
Georgetown 8, George Washington 0
Mississippi State 14, Georgetown 7
[Orange Bowl]

1941 (5-4)

Georgetown 16, Mississippi 6
Virginia Tech 3, Georgetown 0
Temple 17, Georgetown 7
Georgetown 25, George Washington 0
Boston College 14, Georgetown 6
Georgetown 26, Maryland 0
Georgetown 20, North Carolina State 7
Georgetown 7, Manhattan 0
Xavier 14, Georgetown 6



James E. Polk and Gertrude Polk
Born March 19, 1918, and January 10, 1924
Rosewalk
Indianapolis, Indiana



*W*hen James and Gertrude Polk moved to Indianapolis from Greenwood, Miss., they wanted to attend a Southern Baptist Church with Southern Baptist ways of worship. Not finding one, they and seven others started their own.

Southern Missionary Baptist Church is now approaching 60 years old, with over 100 members who attend services regularly. The church started in a storefront at 16th Street and Martindale Avenue and is now located at the corner of 25th Street and Gale Avenue in Brightwood on the city's Eastside. Martindale is now known as Andrew J. Brown Avenue, named after a minister who headed St. John Missionary Baptist Church just blocks from where Southern Baptist was started.

James E. Polk, 93, was the first Deacon Board president at Southern Baptist. Gertrude was an organizer of the choir and at 88 years old today still sings Southern Baptist hymns with the richness of a young woman who has seen a lot.

The couple was in their 30s in 1953 when they made the move to Indianapolis for more opportunity. Thousands of other Blacks from the Deep South had also made this move. Living conditions were oppressive in the South. James had worked in a cotton seed oil mill 12-hour days in a culture steeped in racism. “There was a whole lot of prejudice there then,” James said. His great-grandmother was born into slavery and died when she was 115 years old, he said.

Gertrude picked cotton and also had the primary responsibility for caring for their six children. The family grew most of their own vegetables and raised their own livestock.

They loaded up their 1949 Chevy truck with a bedroom suite, clothes and some household items and drove to Indianapolis to start a better life. A friend and native Mississippian, John Wilson, welcomed them to his two-bedroom house at 1436 Columbia Ave., and that’s where the family lived for six months.

The area had seen many new arrivals like the Polks. At this time, Interstate 65 had not been constructed. Segregated schools, churches and small shops were the center of activity in the area. Farther north in the neighborhood was Douglass Park, where James used to spread out a blanket and nap; the Douglass Theater, across the street from the park; a men’s club, a funeral home, storefronts and industrial businesses dominated the blocks. There were people who had chickens and horses in yards throughout the neighborhood.

James quickly landed a job at a steel casting company in Speedway and worked there until he retired. “I was a good worker,” he said. Gertrude worked at Cooper’s Restaurant on 11th and Pennsylvania streets. The kids went to School 26 and later to Arsenal Technical High School.

Church was the center of their lives. The couple and their children were involved in just about every aspect of church life. The first pastor of their church was W. E. Pittman, also a Mississippi native. One of their children was the first to be baptized at the church.

Churches in the neighborhood were not like the churches in Mississippi, said James. “They didn’t have services here like we did in Mississippi. So we had Mississippi people and got a Mississippi preacher, and we had church.”

Rev. F. Benjamin Davis, a noted Indianapolis pastor in the area, prayed the first prayer consecrating the church. The previous year Davis had become pastor of New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church at 16th and Martindale Avenue and was pastor there until his death in 2003. He also operated a neighborhood confectionery on East 16th Street, James said. Rev. A.M. Hughes preached Southern Baptist’s organizing sermon, and Rev. D.B. Dudley, pastor of Galilee Missionary Baptist Church, led the council that organized the church.

Before landing in its current location, the church moved to a building on Schofield Street then to the Westside of Indianapolis for a short period in an old theater. “But then we had more bills than we had members, so we left and moved to 25th and Gale,” he said.

The Polks, married now more than 70 years, are proud of their family and proud of their church. “We did what we did.” ♦

Left: Southern Missionary Baptist Church, founded by the Polks, almost 60 years ago.





Nancy B. Pillon
Born July 28, 1917
Springhill Village
Terre Haute, Indiana

Waves of Change

PARTING THE SEAS FOR WOMEN
IN THE NAVY

Women were allowed to enlist in the U. S. Navy reserves starting in 1917, the year Terre Haute resident Nancy B. Pillon was born. When Nancy joined the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) in 1942, she was among the first group of women allowed into the regular Navy.

Nancy was a communications officer who decoded and encoded secret and top secret messages for the military. She served in the WAVES for five years, and after her discharge as a lieutenant commander, she continued her career in education. Nancy received a doctor of education degree from the University of Kentucky. She served on the library science faculty at Northern Illinois University and was a library science professor at Indiana State University.

In an article Nancy wrote for a local newspaper, she recalled sitting at a corner drugstore with some other high school teachers when the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was announced. She wanted to serve her country during the war effort, so she went to Washington, D.C., where her sisters had government jobs. She found a position as a registrar at Southeastern University, but she soon found a way to serve.

The WAVE bill, allowing women to become a part of the regular Navy, had just passed and at age 25, Nancy entered the first class of WAVE officer candidates as a midshipman in October 1942. She completed basic training at Smith College. Mount Holyoke College and Smith College share the distinction of being the first training facilities in the nation for female officers in the armed forces, although several universities had training courses for enlisted personnel.

Women typically served in clerical or nursing roles. Work in communications was not a field many women were allowed to enter. Nancy was an exception. Women received the same pay as men, but they also had the same rigorous training.

“I hated marching in the extremely cold weather of Massachusetts, so when we were given some choices about our next duty, I requested Miami,” Nancy wrote in the newspaper article.

Her assignment in Miami lasted 20 months. She was next sent to Washington, D.C., where she was assigned to the code room at the main Navy building on Constitution Avenue. That building has since been torn down.

“We were under a lot of pressure to get the messages out and often had to work past midnight,” Nancy said.

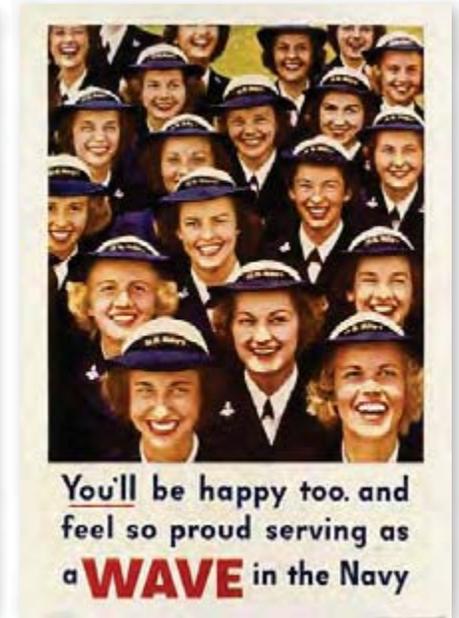
After discharge from the Navy, Nancy continued her teaching career. She married and had a son, Richard, who now lives in Kansas.

A woman who joined the military in those days was often met with criticism. But those women were able to tear down barriers, allowing women today to serve the country without discrimination. Separate branches for women in the military were eliminated in the 1970s.

Many firsts continue to be achieved by women in the Navy, including the recent announcement that female sailors would be allowed to serve on military submarines. Previously they could serve onboard a



Top Left: Nancy entered the first class of WAVE officer candidates as a midshipman in 1942.



Top Right: A propaganda poster for WAVE.

submarine only for short periods. There is no law banning women from serving in combat. Women now comprise about 15 percent of the Navy.

Asked if she would rejoin today, Nancy said yes without hesitation. “I really loved it,” she said. “A lot of people are still strict about us women going in. But things are changing.” ♦



David Overton
Born October 4, 1942
Good Samaritan Home and Rehabilitation
Oakland City, Indiana



*P*resident John F. Kennedy promised the world in 1961 that before the decade was over American astronauts would walk on the moon and return to Earth safely. Six years later, David Overton joined other NASA scientists in making Kennedy's prediction a reality.

Overton's work with simulators at NASA's Langley Research Center helped prepare astronauts for the historic 1969 moon exploration, during which astronauts Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin Jr. and Neil Armstrong stepped onto the surface of the moon and Armstrong declared: "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." That mission was considered the most significant accomplishment of space exploration.

Overton's work at Hampton, Va.-based Langley, the oldest of NASA's centers, leading to and after that historic Apollo 11 mission, involved preparing astronauts for lunar exploration. As an engineer in NASA's differential maneuvering simulation division, Overton helped design and install simulators that would give astronauts realistic experience of flight and landing on the moon. The simulators were built in spheres that engulfed the simulator and astronaut trainees in a realistic setting aided by video cameras.

Overton said he was at home on vacation the day of the historic Apollo 11 launch from Kennedy Space Center at Merritt Island, Fla. Like the nation, he was glued to a television set, watching as the astronauts placed the U.S. flag in the powdery soil of the moon.

The year he started at NASA, three astronauts died during a simulated flight experience. During the simulation aboard Apollo-Saturn 204 on the launch pad at Kennedy Space Center, a flash fire broke out in the pure oxygen atmosphere of the capsule and flames engulfed the capsule. The three astronauts aboard— Gus Grissom, Ed White, and Roger Chaffee — died of asphyxiation.

Langley was established by the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, which became NASA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Overton worked there until 1973.

Was it true? Did man actually walk on the moon that day in 1967? After spending millions of dollars for missions leading up to and after the famous Apollo 11, were there any gains for humanity? Was it worth it?

“It’s true as far as I know,” said Overton, a jovial 68-year-old. “They were on the moon. Yes, it was worth it. We learned a lot about fuel cells, personal computers and integrated circuits.”

Fuel cells produce electricity, water, heat and, depending on the fuel source, nitrogen dioxide and other emissions. NASA was the first to commercially use fuel cells. Integrated circuits have revolutionized electronics. They are used in computers, cell phones and other digital devices.

Before leaving NASA, Overton witnessed dozens of other astronauts train in simulators he helped build and maintain. Similar simulators remain in use today.

A native of Owensville, Ind., Overton prepared for his career in engineering at Purdue University, graduating in 1964. He said he studied 100 hours a week to make good grades. After graduating, he was hired by General Electric in Syracuse, N. Y., where he was instrumental in the

design of the 13-inch color television, he said.

But his heart wasn’t in science and engineering. It was in farming. Overton returned to Indiana in 1973 and purchased 120 acres in Owensville. He and his wife reared their two children on the wages he made farming melons.

“I made more money working for NASA,” he said, laughing. But farming was what he loved. Eventually, the family’s farming business entailed 480 acres.

Overton said he has no regrets. “I did what I loved.” ♦



Above: Overton worked for NASA leading to and after the historic Apollo 11 mission that first landed humans on the moon. He worked for NASA as an engineer and helped prepare astronauts for lunar exploration.



Robert H. Rucker
Born July 26, 1930
Markle Health and Rehabilitation
Markle, Indiana

*The Will
To Survive*
A CHAMPION BOXER

Robert H. Rucker had a hard-knock childhood. He grew up poor. He was prone to bizarre accidents and learned early that he had to fight to survive.

It was this spirit that Robert took with him into the boxing ring, where he reigned in the early 1950s as Bob “Rocky” Rucker, a two-time light heavyweight Golden Gloves champion. Robert was crowned light heavyweight champion in 1950 and 1951 in Fort Wayne and Chicago, where he participated in the Tournament of Champions. He continued boxing in Golden Gloves tournaments during his years in the U.S. Army at Killeen Base, Camp Hood, Texas. During the 1952 Fort Hood Boxing Tournament, Robert, at 6 foot, 1 inch and 195 pounds, won 6 of 7 bouts.

Indiana and Fort Hood sports reporters frequently referred to Robert’s “devastating right hooks, sharp left jabs and fancy footwork.” Robert’s family has kept stacks of newspaper clippings, awards and trophies attesting to his skills. In 1952, he was considered Fort Hood’s most promising heavy division boxer. But in 1953 in a Fourth Army boxing tournament for amateurs, Robert was pitted against an opponent who TKO’d him 35 seconds into the second round with one dynamic punch.

Robert and his trainer later found out that Robert's opponent was a pro.

Today, Robert is coping with Parkinson's disease, a neurological condition that affects motor and speech control, and he believes the blows he received fighting pros could be responsible for his ailment. Yet, like Muhammad Ali and thousands of others who also suffer from the same disorder, he continues to fight, but now his battle is for good health.

"Even in his sleep, he's boxing," said his wife, Sharon. "At first I thought it was on purpose, but I later learned it wasn't. He was fighting."

Still Robert takes the bitter with the sweet. He fondly recalls the thousands of fans screaming for him in the ring. "The one thing I learned from boxing is how to fight and that's what I'm doing now."

Born in Southeastern Ohio, Robert attended several schools as the Rucker family moved frequently. By the time he was 18, the family had moved to Fort Wayne, Ind., where Robert met boxing trainer Frank Newport and joined the General Electric Boxing Club. "Look at that pair of big hands. They were made to fight," Robert said Newport often told him.

Robert was a natural. He trained hard in the ring and outside of the ring, working for a Fort Wayne concrete block company. He had worked at several other jobs before then, helping the family make ends meet.

Preparing him for matches in the ring were bouts Robert had with life and fate. He got his first pair of boxing gloves at age 7, a gift from his father. He had his first fight at age 10, when a neighborhood bully took him on. "I beat him up," Robert said.

While taking a bath one day in a cow trough, lightning struck the vessel, shocking Robert. He was able to jump out. Another day while chopping wood, the ax head came off and came down, blade first, on top of his head. His father closed the wound by tying his hair across it. "We didn't have money for doctors in those days," he said.

Yet another calamity was when his nose was broken during a scuffle

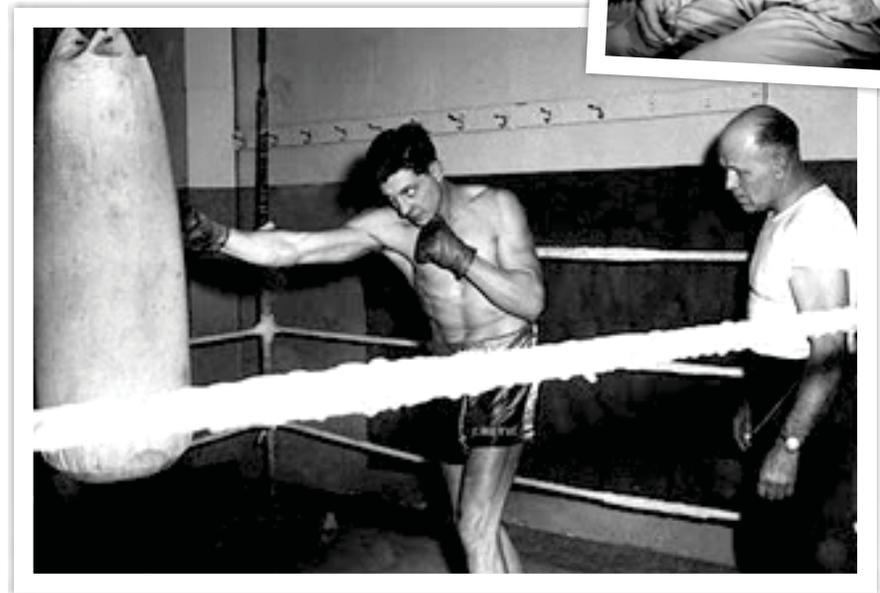
with his older brother and then there was the time when he jumped into a shallow stream and struck his head on a rock. He took those lumps like a man, he said. He broke a foot while skating and cut off most of one of his fingers in an accident at work. He caught an arm on a meat hook and broke three ribs in a motorcycle accident.

Ever resilient, Robert continued to have an active life, taking family on camping trips, fishing and spending time with friends. He retired from General Electric after working there 25 years.

Robert's advice to anyone who sees a tough fight ahead: "Just keep on fighting." ♦

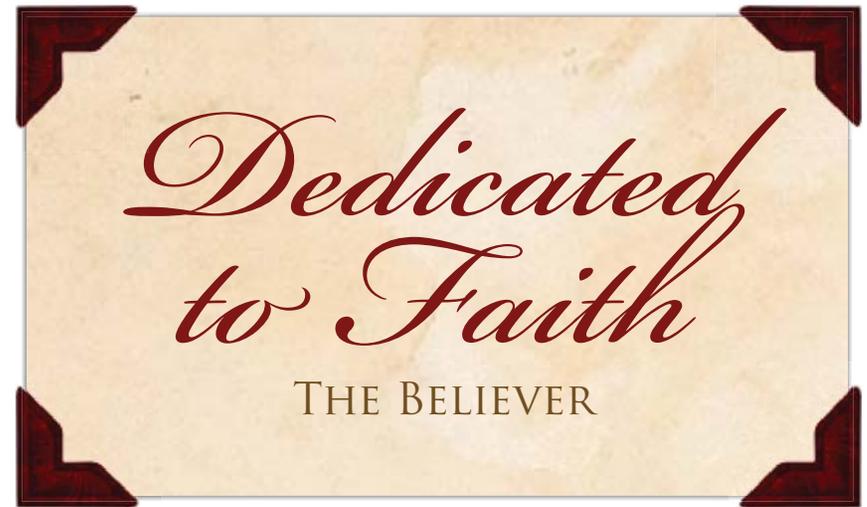
Right: Rucker in the Army.

Below: Rucker training with Frank Newport. Newport told Rucker that his hands were "made to fight."





Velma G. Gerig
Born August 21, 1907
Betz Nursing Home
Auburn, Indiana



*L*he Gerig brothers cut their way through dense woods of Dekalb County more than a century ago to settle on Indiana land that would become the location of County Line Church of God. Today, the nondenominational Christian church is one of the largest in the state.

One of the church's oldest members is Velma G. Gerig, whose father-in-law helped build the church. Velma, now 104 years old, became a member of the church and a part of the Gerig family when she married Virgil W. Gerig, son of one of the three brothers who helped build it. The church was built on land donated by the three brothers' father, Joseph Gerig. Velma has been active in the church for more than 70 years as a song leader and Sunday school teacher.

Before there was a physical structure, County Line Church meetings were held in a wooded grove owned by Brush College School on Garman Road in Auburn. When school trustees would not allow additional revivals there, the meetings were moved to the Amstutz schoolhouse two miles east. In the summer of 1897, the meetings were moved to one of the convert's properties. Branches were laid across erected poles to

provide a roof, and people sat on boards laid across logs.

Soon Eli Gerig, who lived just west of the present church buildings on the Allen-DeKalb County Line Road at the intersection of County Road 29, opened his home for services. New converts and the curious gathered in his parlor. It was a period when the community referred to County Line Church as the “Saints’ Church.”

The first physical structure was completed in 1903, with the help of Noah Gerig. His brother Eli Gerig was ordained the church’s first deacon; and their brother David Gerig was ordained a minister. Because of its earlier roots at the Brush College School, the church was renamed Brush College Church of God in 1910. In 1957 the church was given its current name, County Line Church of God. It is independent but associated with the Church of God Reformation Movement, which has headquarters in Anderson, Ind. It is a holiness Christian body rooted in Wesleyan pietism. The body is not historically related to other Church of God bodies such as the Church of God based in Cleveland, Ohio, or the Church of God, based in Charleston, Tenn. The Anderson-based movement has more than 1.1 million adherents in 7,446 congregations worldwide.

Church was always an important part of Velma Gerig’s life, she said. Her family attended Concord Methodist Church, “a little church in the country near St. Joe.” Besides two grocery stores, the church was all that was in town.

Before marriage, Velma landed jobs at the Auburn Postcard Company, which became the Messenger Corporation, the largest funeral home stationery company in the nation, and later for the Gerig Funeral Home, which was owned by a relative.

When she began dating Virgil W. Gerig in the mid-1920s, their early dates were at County Line Church. They were married Dec. 31, 1930, at the Presbyterian Parsonage, a common location for weddings during that period because most couples did not have large church weddings, Velma said. However, Velma’s two daughters were married at County Line



Above: County Line Church of God today.



Left: The original building for the County Line Church of God.

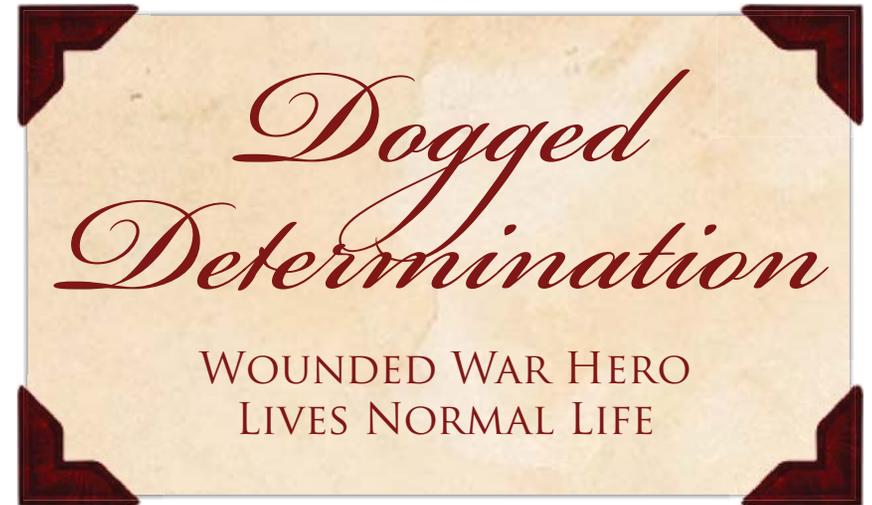
Church. The church now averages weekly attendance of 850 and lately has attracted up to 1,500 people at services.

Velma recalls fondly her early years at County Line Church and life in Auburn. She talks about riding a horse to her one-room school and days she could catch a ride on the B&O Railroad to go to her aunt’s and uncle’s home. Sometimes she’d ride a horse-pulled sled to school during blustery winter days. Before and after marriage, she had a garden and the family typically ate food from it. The family had cows and she helped milk them. Her greatest love was sewing, she said. She made her own clothes, did lots of crocheting and “I made lots of baby blankets.”

One of her lasting contributions to the community, however, is her support of County Line Church. ♦



Paul Speth
Born Nov. 24, 1919
North Woods Village
Kokomo, Indiana



*H*e was running to a foxhole with two other U.S. Army soldiers when they were struck by enemy mortar during a fierce battle at Okinawa, Japan, in May 1945. One of the men died instantly, and another died at a military hospital after Paul Speth prayed for him.

Paul Speth was seriously injured and hospitalized for four years. He had more than two dozen surgeries as a result of the injuries. He returned to Indianapolis with one ankle missing and shrapnel still in his body. It would surface periodically and his wife would pick it out with tweezers. But he was determined to have a normal civilian life and he did.

After returning home from World War II a decorated war hero, Paul Speth pushed to get a job. It was a push because many prospective employers thought he could not do the work because of his war injury. During an interview at the U.S. Post Office, Speth said a prayer, then picked up a heavy padded wood chair and held it over his head to show the postmaster he could handle far lighter bags of mail and he was hired. He retired from the Post Office after 30 years.

Once captain of his basketball team at Sacred Heart High School, he played basketball with his son as he grew up. He bowled on a league, taught his daughter how to play tennis, fished, did many things for his church, volunteered with the Knights of Columbus, drove his own car, a 1949 Pontiac that was fitted with special equipment, including one of the first automatic transmissions because his injured foot and leg could not operate the clutch.

“When he first came home with bandages, mother was told don’t do anything for him that he could do for himself,” said Speth’s daughter, Joan Atkinson. “She drove him wherever they went until he got the Pontiac. But even when she drove, he would get out of the car on his crutches and open the door for my mother. People around him would want to open the door for him, but he wouldn’t let them. My father expected to do everything a person could without an injury and do it better.”

Paul Speth, now 92, was one of 11 children who grew up on the Southside of Indianapolis. He and his siblings and the neighborhood kids often played baseball together and he was always the pitcher. So it was natural that he would become the person who carried the hand grenades during war. He had a belt full when the attack in Okinawa occurred and it is likely the attack was especially meant for him.

When he was drafted into the Army, he already had a wife and baby son. Many of the men in his unit were much younger. He was about 25. The man he prayed for was 18. “He set some kind of record for being on the front more than three weeks,” said his son, Peter Speth.

While on the battlefield, Speth received more than one promotion, but the officers who promoted him were killed before the promotion could be documented, said Peter Speth. He earned a Bronze Star and Purple Heart and was discharged as a sergeant.

Once home, he never used a cane and made do with a steel leg brace that cradled a specially-fitted shoe and strapped onto his leg at the knee.

Peter Speth says his father never talked much about the war. “He didn’t talk about the disability at all.”



Top Left: Paul in his U.S. Army uniform

Top Middle: Example of leg brace Paul wore home from the war

Top Right: Paul and his family posing for a portrait

Bottom: Paul (fourth from left) with his bowling team

His dogged determination helped him recover, said family members. “They wanted to cut off his leg, but my father said no,” said daughter Joan Atkinson.

He worked at just about every job the Post Office offered, said family members. But he especially liked teaching the new employees. “He held himself to an extremely high standard. He never considered himself disabled.” ♦

A close-up photograph of two hands, one appearing younger and the other older, with wrinkled skin. The hands are positioned to form a heart shape. The background is a light, textured surface. The text "The End." is written in a dark red, cursive font in the center of the heart.

The End.

laugh. dream. cry. smile. wonder.

