



Butcher, Baker, Sauerkraut-Maker

A Conversation with Dick Deaner

By Sue Ressler December 2021

We have another “treasure” to add to our collection of 90 year old members at GUMC. Dick Deaner and I spent some time reminiscing about his life—we dug deep but No skeletons were found!!

Dick spent his youth in the Seven Stars area of Adams County. Seven Stars is a little blip in the road off Rt 30 West at the railroad tracks. We discovered he spent Grades 1-8 at Franklin Township Consolidated School at a time when it was a school unto itself-not part of a bigger district. I was fascinated by this bit of news as I spent my entire teaching career at the same school many, many years later! We even knew some of the same teachers and staff! When I asked Dick if he walked “miles” to school (as many kids did back in the day) he revealed that he rode the bus.....a WOODEN bus and it wasn't school bus yellow, it was MULTI-COLORED. What a visual of little Dick and his sister Katherine hopping on that!

Their home was two stories and heating it was expensive in the winter so they practically lived in the kitchen. It was cold upstairs and extra blankets kept everybody cozy. Sometimes Dick and Katherine would venture into the living room where Katherine would play the piano and Dick would sing....in their winter coats. He spent much of his free time outside hunting and trapping, just like other boys who lived in the area. His chores included taking care of their chickens, gathering the eggs, feeding and watering, and keeping the pens clean. He emptied the ashes from the stove and shoveled snow.

At Gettysburg High School he played the French horn in the band and orchestra and sang in the choir and chorus. There he met his future wife, Doris, who played the glockenspiel and sang in the choir. He was a senior and she was a sophomore. He even found time to play on the basketball team. Dick did not like anything to do with literature but found math and bookkeeping interesting and fun. To earn extra money, he worked at the local A&P store stocking shelves and started a sort of apprenticeship in the meat department as a butcher.

But as a patriotic 18 year old during wartime, he decided to fulfill a lifelong dream and join the Navy. He did two tours of duty on the Wisconsin in the waters off the coast of Korea. There were about 3000 men on the ship which was equipped with 16 inch guns on the deck with an accuracy of about 20 miles. Dick's job was a “powder passer”; getting the powder for the guns from storage to the deck. He ended his naval career as Captain's Gig, a personal assistant on the Captain's boat. That patriotism never wavered as he recently received his pin for voting in every election for 50 years!

Then it was time to start thinking of a career beyond the military. He decided to become a barber and even had memories of playing barber as a kid—leaning a chair back on the front porch and pretending to shave his customers. He married Doris and their son Rick was born while he finished his schooling at Tri County Barber School in Philadelphia. He got his license and moved the family back to Gettysburg where he worked for Bob Weikert on Chambersburg Street until he opened Town and Campus in 1966. He and his partners continued there because they had such a great relationship with their landlady who never raised their rent for 15 years! He bought the building and after the infamous fire he was able to add and expand services for the shop. At one time Town and Campus sponsored a men's softball team, and with Dave as their pitcher, won the State Championship. To sweeten the moment the playoff games were played close by in York so attending the games was easy. Dick and Doris raised 4 kids. Rick, Dave, Greg and Amy. He beams as he speaks of each of them and talks lovingly about his grandkids and great grandkids. He makes it a point to see them often and stay connected.

Dick joined our church when he and Doris married, having attended Flohr's Church in McKnightstown as a youngster. He was the Sunday School Superintendent for many years often having more folks attending Sunday School than church services because of the number of classes offered. He served on many committees and of course, he and Doris were forever linked to the Cross and Flame Singers and were a positive light for many young people.

Besides keeping up with his family Dick enjoys bowling, watching Duke basketball and the Washington Football Team and he takes part in many activities at Cross Keys. I know he finds time to bake and I can claim he makes the best molasses cookies ever. They were always a crowd favorite on the hospitality table!

And as for sauerkraut....those of us who have lunch with Dick after church know if it is on the menu he is going to order it! And take any leftovers home, IF there are any. I am now curious ...did he ever make homemade sauerkraut??? That's a teaser for the next chapter when he turns 100!

Many, many wishes for the happiest of birthdays and many healthy, happy years to come.