



FRUITPORT Area News

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The purpose of this paper is to be beneficial to the community it serves in every way possible.



Shirley Franks: Woman of Accomplishment

By Joyce Ruster

Let me introduce you to a very special lady. Her name is Shirley Franks and she holds the official title of "Roving Ambassador" at Mercy Health Partners Lakes Campus on Harvey Street. For the past five years she has volunteered her time greeting people as they arrive, assisting them in finding their way through a maze of offices, laboratories, and rehab centers, and answering any questions they may have. But that is only the beginning of her services. She comforts those who are fearful and listens to their stories. She encourages those who are downcast. She befriends those whom she finds lonely, and mentors them. What is so remarkable about Shirley is the fact that she is 87 years old, and volunteers 38 hours per week. She arrives before 8 a.m. every day, Monday through Friday. The only reason she doesn't tally up 40 hours per week is because she leaves two hours early on Friday afternoons. She told me not even a snowstorm keeps her away from her post because she insists that her driveway gets plowed before 7:30 a.m., and her trusty Subaru can drive through anything.

On Shirley's desk is a picture she took of two trees on her property. On one tree the bark is black,

and on the other tree the bark is white (a white birch). The trees are intertwined. She calls them her hugging trees. Shirley is a "hugger" and hugs everyone no matter what race or station in life. She refers to the picture often in her relationships with people, and uses it to promote racial harmony.

Shirley's work as "Roving Ambassador" was enough to nominate her for the Women of Accomplishment Award, but the story of Shirley Franks and her impact on the community would not be complete without knowing her history. She is the mother of nine children; six of her own and three adopted Korean girls. In addition, she had four foster children. Shirley has been blessed with 23 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren.

Early in her marriage to Jim Franks, Shirley assisted him in establishing World Vision, which later became International Aid — a worldwide assistance organization in Spring Lake. For 40 years she did volunteer work for that organization until Jim retired. Also during those early years, she and Jim were active in starting a Youth For Christ chapter in Grand Haven and opened up their home for the youth of the area to meet there. Another venture that Shirley and Jim pioneered was to start the Saturday night Worship on the Waterfront (WOW) in Grand Haven, which still continues each summer.

It wasn't long after their retirement from International Aid that she and Jim established a new organization called Concern International, which set up assistance in Russia, Mexico, Hungary and Korea. For many years, Shirley volunteered as secretary and treasurer for this organization. After her husband Jim passed away, Shirley retired from Concern International. Again, it wasn't long before Shirley volunteered at Hackley Hospital as a Spiritual Care Worker for three years. That involvement led to her current position at the Lakes Campus.

Shirley is also an active member of the Fruitport Christian Reformed Church.

Shirley Franks has been an advocate for women by showing women of any age that they can contribute to their community through volunteerism. She has led a life of faithful service to God, to her family, and to others. She loves the unlovable, she looks for the good in people, she seeks people out who need encouragement and gives it to them. Shirley's infectious personality exudes a positive attitude always. She is a role model of love and graciousness to everyone she meets. •



Old Fashioned Days King and Queen serve our community

By Mary Weimer

Once again, the Old Fashioned Days will be represented by a King and Queen who devote their time and service to others.

Don and Margaret Cook have been Fruitport Village residents since 1939 except for a short seven-year period of time early in their marriage. They raised four children and still found time to serve the community in a number of ways.

Their sons, Douglas and Dennis (Nancy) live close in Norton Shores and Muskegon, respectively. Daughter Carrie (Mike) Thompson lives in Manistee, and daughter Cathy lives in Grand Rapids. In all, there are nine grandchildren to help keep this year's king and queen busy.

Don worked for National Oil Sales, retiring after 30 years. He served for eight years on the Fruitport School Board from 1980 to 1988, and has held several positions on the board and as an officer for the Fruitport Lions Club. He is a past president of the Lions Club, and was a recipient of the Melvin Jones Award from Lions Clubs International. Both Don and his wife are especially involved in the Kiddie Parade and the Ox Roast during Old Fashioned Days.

Margaret is an active member of the Lady Lions, participating wherever she is needed, selling Cracker Jacks or providing items for bake sales. She retired from Grand Haven Stamp Products after 29 years and still works one day per week for another business. She was also a Brownie troop leader. Margaret cooks for her church, United Methodist Church of the Dunes in Grand Haven, to serve the members and families of participants in the bell choir and regular choir from September to May, providing meals for 30 to 70 people each Wednesday night.

Don and Margaret are former members of Fruitport Congregational United Church of Christ in Fruitport, where they were active congregants.

The Fruitport Lions Club gives this year's King and Queen the opportunity to be a light to others, doing well and willingly whatever tasks they are asked to perform. And their legacy continues as their son, Dennis, will assume the presidency of the Fruitport Lions Club in July. •

Holly Wilson earns Fran Herrington Woman of the Year Award



(Submitted by the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association)

The Fran Herrington Award is presented annually to recognize women who have contributed to promoting high school football in their community and in the state of Michigan. Holly Wilson received that recognition recently.

In the last 20 years that Steve Wilson has been head coach at Fruitport, Holly has taken on the role of "Mrs. Coach," and has truly been the heart of the Trojan Football Program. She is loved and respected by the players and their parents. She is at every game, supporting the coach and all of her adopted sons. She is the team's biggest fan and by far one of the loudest supporters.

Holly is part of everything that goes on around the football team. She helps run the concession stand at all home games. She calls parents to set up workers for each game. Holly goes in before the game starts to help get things set up, then goes up into the stands for the first half. She returns at half time and works during the rush. At the end of the game, she goes back into the concession stand to

help clean up. There are many nights when Steve gets home before she does. She also works every single junior varsity and freshman home game.

Holly also helps with team fundraisers. One of Fruitport's biggest fundraisers is the sale of coupon cards. Holly comes in before practice and collects money, keeps track of all the cards sold, and counts money for deposits. Holly also helps to run the golf scramble every summer.

For several years, the team held its camp at the high school where all their meals were taken at the school. Holly organized all meals and was there at 5:30 in the morning to serve breakfast, at noon for lunch, at 6 p.m. for dinner, and again at 8:30 with snacks. Whenever they travel any distance, Holly organizes the parents to provide meals and snacks. At the end of the season, Holly calls moms to help decorate the hall for the awards banquet.

While doing all this, Holly has a full time job as a teacher consultant of autism for the Muskegon Area ISD. She shows the same compassion for her job as she does for helping the football program.

Holly has been married to Steve Wilson for 32 years. They have two children, Melissa, age 26 and Philip, age 24. Both kids have followed in their mother's footsteps and become special education teachers. •

Tentative Newspaper Delivery Schedule

July 14, 2012

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(Deadline July 2)