

### The Carl and Josephine Wozniak Scholarship

When David Wozniak established a scholarship fund, his mother, Josephine, was very surprised, not only that he had established the fund, but that he'd named it after his mother and late father, Carl and Josephine Wozniak. She was immensely proud of her son, and knew that his generosity would have pleased his dad. "He was very proud of David," she said.

Carl (Chuck) and Josephine (Jo) were eight years apart in age, so she hadn't known him when he was a corporal in the Marine Corps. She was born on November 24, 1928 and lived in Brookfield, Illinois; he was born March 31, 1920 in Lyons, Illinois. He had played baseball before he was in the service, and upon returning to the United States, he rejoined the team, which played at a field near her home. He sometimes walked past her house after playing ball, and she recalled, "You knew when he was coming because he had cleats on his heels!"

One day, Jo was sitting on her front porch with her mother, and he stopped to talk to them during his walk back home. Eventually, he asked her on a date, and "the rest was history," she said. She graduated high school in 1946, and they were married on June 28th, 1947.

Chuck had been a marine from 1943 until 1946. "He was on Iwo Jima... He was on the bottom when they raised that flag," Jo proudly recalled.

At that time, soldiers were guaranteed the option to return to their job when they came home from the war. Chuck therefore worked for some time again in a machine shop, and he and his brother soon began looking into opening a tavern together in Illinois. Chuck's mother told him about a place in Hamlet, and he and Jo soon decided to settle there.

Chuck and Jo farmed in Hamlet while also running the tavern. They loved country living, and believed it was the best way to raise their son. Raised on the family farm, Dave grew up with an exceptional example of hard work. His father worked at various places outside of his farm and tavern, including the Kingsbury Ordinance Plant, a steel mill, and for a surveyor in LaPorte



County. "He was a hard worker too," Jo commented about Chuck's exceptional work ethic. "My dad really liked him."

Dave followed his father's example since childhood. Jo remembered the way he worked hard when he was young, putting up hay, mowing grass, and working part-time for the same surveyor his father had worked for.

When Chuck passed away, two of the women from Jo's church talked her into letting them teach her to play golf. Later, Meryl, the owner of the golf course, offered Jo a job, which she at first refused. She remembers saying, "Meryl, I worked for thirty years!"

However, she discussed the offer with David, and he thought that working might help his mother cope with the loss of her husband. She ended up working at the golf club for the next ten years.

While working at the golf club, she met a woman named Audrey who would golf there with her husband. When Audrey's husband passed away, she and Jo began traveling together, and they took their first trip to New England in the fall. They traveled to many other places, including South Dakota, Washington, D.C., Yosemite National Park, and Canada.

Jo's friendship with Audrey, as well as the support of her family, helped her deal with the loss of her husband. Her outlook on life has been: "Whatever comes up, you just accept [it] and move on and try to work it out." David's decision to start a fund in his parents' name has made her extremely proud.

David graduated high school in 1970 and finished his Civil Engineering program at Purdue University in the next four years. In 1975, he started working for the energy company Commonwealth Edison, and he began working his way up the ladder. When he went to work at the Dresden Nuclear Power Plant, Jo says that it was at rock bottom, and he drastically improved its operation.

Chuck and Jo taught Dave not only to work hard, but always to be kind to others. "He's got the best personality and gets along with people," Jo said.

Dave's parents also encouraged him in school. Even if he didn't like the subject, he always did well. He had a really great memory and was especially talented in math, like his dad.

Dave credits his drive toward a good education to his parents. He knew from an early age that he was going to college. Not because he had special insight to his life, but rather because his parents knew that to be successful, a solid education was a key to rise above average. They made sure that David was as prepared as he could be for a college education. Chuck and Jo helped with homework and saved as much as they and David could for a college fund. It was also important to his parents to establish priorities. David understood the idea that sports, work, and other activities were never more important than his studies.

Outside of life itself, Dave believes that the greatest gift his parents gave to him was his education. At the time, neither they, nor he could envision that it would turn out the way it did.

But the success he has been able to achieve in his career is directly attributable to their desire to make him the best he could be. David believes that his parents will not know how the impact of their efforts and hard work has defined his life and brought him to where he is today.

Their philosophy of education first, everything else second, stayed with him as David's own children can attest. Both of David and his wife Lusie's daughters are college graduates of Purdue University and have become successful in their own careers.

This scholarship fund allows David to express his appreciation for the impact his parents had on his life and to leave a legacy to honor them. Through this scholarship, David also wants to give something back to the community which, over time, has defined his thought processes and values.

"I'm proud of everything he does," Jo said. "He's just a good family man... He was an easy kid to raise... I never had another child because I knew I couldn't duplicate him!"

To be considered for the Carl and Josephine Wozniak Scholarship, the applicant must have graduated from Oregon-Davis High School. The student must be accepted into, and must attend, Purdue University. Priority will be given to students with majors in Engineering, Science, or Agriculture, and who demonstrate meaningful involvement in high school activities, meaningful involvement in his/her community, and who demonstrate good citizenship.