

PEDALS TO PLANES

Ray Mueller

*To the memory of my mother,
who inspired me in my youth,
and to my wife, Norma,
who inspires me now.*

Acknowledgements

I am grateful for the support and encouragement, while writing this biography, of several people whom I wish to acknowledge. First of all, Norma was very tolerant of the time I had to commit to the project. When I first considered the idea, I perceived it as a very short effort, but it developed into a much longer task, and for her patience and understanding during this period, I am extremely thankful.

Lisa McCarthy was at my beck and call. When the computer stuttered, she responded. She provided the guidance for the initial layout of the book and the scanned photographs. My special thanks to Lisa.

Julie Hotchkiss of Custom Editorial Productions, Inc. edited the manuscript for correctness and explicitness. She simplified many of my complex sentences. I thank Julie very much. Others at CEP, particularly Kevin Cox and Mary Lou Motl, were most helpful, and I wish to express my deep appreciation for their efforts.

Finally, I asked Mr. David Phillips and Mr. Wendell Upton to review the manuscript for clarity and understanding. I am most appreciative of their responses and contributions.



Preface

This is the story of one individual's life and quest for success in lifestyle, family, community, and business. In my case, I would define success in terms of goals attained. Success is a moving target. As one plateau is reached, another appears on the horizon. Even as this is written, there are a number of goals in my life still unfulfilled.

As a very young man, I was not aware of my quest for success. I recognized it as I matured, and the level of intensity at which I pursued success increased as the years passed. With each achievement, with each new level of comfort attained in life, another goal appeared.

I think I first realized that I had a chance to succeed and make something of my life when Norma stayed with me through my illness, allowing our love to bloom to the point of marriage.

She provided me with a real purpose in life, and with the motivation to excel at whatever I tried. Mediocrity was simply not acceptable to her.

Seeing God's hand in our marriage was of profound importance to me, and with it came other opportunities to recognize life's beauty—the birth of our first-born child, Gloria, on April 1, 1945, and the subsequent births of our other two children, Judy and David. The birth of each of our children made a deep and lasting impression on me. As our family grew, so did my ambition to succeed in life.

In my life, there have been a series of challenges I have had to face. Some were physical, some emotional or mental, some related to my family, and some were opportunities to improve my life and the lifestyle of my family. I believe that in each case, I responded to the challenge at hand in the best way I could. However, I know I did conserve my energy for challenges that had significant merit. I was able to sort out the really important issues from those that were nebulous in my life. So often, an individual is sidetracked by an insignificant concern that may seem important at the time, but in the grand scheme of things, it is an unimportant issue.

I once heard that the difference between an engineer and a salesman was that the engineer knew more and more about less and less until he knew absolutely everything about nothing, whereas a salesman knew less and less about more and more until he knew absolutely nothing about everything. I think my curiosity qualified me for the role of a salesman. I had a great deal of interest in a wide variety of subjects, becoming an expert in none.

A strong motivation for writing about my experiences in life was to put on record that anyone can achieve success, regardless of their origin, their environment, and their health. Success does take a strong will, commitment to the task at hand, dedication to succeed, and a definable goal. If I could elevate myself and our family to a higher standard of living, overcoming a lack of education, poor health, and no financial support, then anyone can do it.

Doubt rarely entered my mind. Once I was determined to accomplish something, I went after it with all the mental and physical energy I could muster. For this characteristic, I am eternally grateful.

Ray Mueller

Earliest Recollections.....	1
Growing Up Fast.....	15
A Time of Change.....	28
The Entrepreneur.....	43
Building the Business.....	59
The Athlete?.....	73
Fly Boy.....	85
Comair and a New Career.....	91
Memorable Business Colleagues.....	107
A Struggle for Good Health.....	119
Family Portraits.....	130
Business Trips and Family Travel.....	148
Thoroughbred Horses—The Kentucky Influence.....	181
Special Friends.....	191
Overview of Life.....	199
Epilogue.....	213

Chapter 1

Earliest Recollections

“I am what I am and that’s all I am” – Popeye

My earliest memory is from about 1926 or 1927, when my grandmother Schmidt lived on Washington Avenue in Bellevue, Kentucky. She always had a half grapefruit for me when I came to visit her, and to this day, my passion for this fruit continues—it is the first course of my breakfast nearly every day of my life.

I clearly remember a time in 1927 when I saw the Spirit of St. Louis as it flew over the Cincinnati area after Charles Lindbergh’s historical solo flight across the Atlantic. At the time, we were living at 346 O’Fallon Avenue, in the house where I was born, attended by a midwife & Dr. Klements on May 26th, 1922.

O’Fallon Ave. in Bellevue represented a cross section of middle America in the 1920s and 1930s. Most of the people who lived on our street had a strong work ethic and Christian values that considered family life to be of primary importance. Recreation in our house and in our neighborhood included listening to the radio, reading, playing cards, and general conversation.

The neighborhood provided an early opportunity for developing friends and community involvement. I remember characters from that time in my life who may have helped me form my first ideas of worldly ways.

Mom was Marie Schmidt, born October 28, 1897, in Bellevue, Kentucky, and Dad was Richard C. Mueller, born September 29, 1897, in Cincinnati. They produced four children, R. Charles (4-24-21), Raymond A. (5-26-22), Loraine (9-9-23) and Thelma (2-10-25). The Catholic attitude and discipline of my parents did not provide for “family planning”.

There was a closeness in our family because there was very little difference in the ages of the four children. We played together while Dad worked from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday plus a half day on Saturday when we were young—44 hours a week was the norm for him.

Some of my early recollections of family life center around the availability of money. The Great Depression started with the severe crash of the stock market in October 1929. At that time, Dad was employed in the construction field, as a sheet metal worker with the firm of Jacobs & Co. in Cincinnati. But as a result of the depression, practically all new construction came to a halt, and he was soon laid off.

There were no unemployment benefits nor any other source of income for the family, so we had to deal with our own financial needs any way we could. This meant a steady stream of odd jobs, with no regular weekly paycheck. Unemployment rates varied throughout the Depression years, but the rate was usually in the 20% range, more often than not at the high end of that range. This situation lasted for nearly nine years, until 1938 when World War Two started to unfold in Europe. Then the United States began a military build-up to prepare for the possibility of war, and that helped our national economy come out of the Depression.

The lack of financial stability and security in my life during the Depression influenced me, especially my mental development, in a very substantial way. "Pray for steady work for Daddy" was repeated in conversations in the household throughout these years, and it left me with the overwhelming desire to contribute to the family income and our well being in whatever way I could. Working to produce income for the family was paramount in my mind.

SCHOOL YEARS

Education was something everyone did to prepare for later years, but I think it was done without solid direction in our case. As Catholics, we all attended parochial school at Sacred Heart in Bellevue. As I look back, the school was probably a fairly decent educational institution. All eight years were in classes of fifty or more students, usually an equal mix of boys and girls, taught by a Sister in the order of Notre Dame. Only one year did we have a lay teacher.

The nuns expected disciplined students. Any lapse of good behavior was dealt with by using the well proven method of "spare the rod and spoil the child". I received my share of discipline at Sacred Heart, and one phrase that has stuck with me through the years was used by a sixth grade teacher who described me as an "insignificant ignoramus". In spite of her opinion, my last report card in the eighth grade was mostly A's and I was in the top 10% of the class.

The Catholic religion was an integral part of our education and the application of it took precedence over any other school activities. There were no extracurricular activities at all, other than the informal socializing normal to any group of fifty young people. There were no school buses, no cafeteria, no library or recreation facilities of any sort. We ate our lunch at home, eight blocks away, where our mother had to be waiting to prepare something to eat for four hungry children. Our midday meal was usually something left over from the night before or a hastily thrown together "smallice", cold cuts or soup of some sort.

In general, grade school was fairly uneventful. When it came time to begin high school, the decision of what school to attend was made for me. I was enrolled in a Catholic high school, Newport Catholic, which had just opened in a former grammar school in Newport, about three or four miles away. Classes were taught by secular priests, whose primary duties were to the various parishes in the diocese of Covington. But again, there were no school busses, no recreation programs of any sort, and no facilities for feeding the students at the school. So we walked back and forth to school carrying our lunch, and other than a school band and an oratorical contest each year, we enjoyed no organized activities at all.

I tried to play the clarinet in the band, but for some reason that I can't recall, this did not last long, so I was a musical drop-out. However, I had more success in the school's oratorical contest, where I finished third in my sophomore year (the only year I could participate). I wrote my own speech with some help from my English teacher, Father Bussemeyer. As I recall, my theme was the developing threat of Adolf Hitler and the Nazis in Germany. My only achievement in school served me well in later life, when I made my living with my ability to speak reasonably well.

EARLY OCCUPATIONS AND PASTIMES

A spark of entrepreneurial spirit surfaced early in my life. Like many other youngsters during those days, I had a magazine route, selling Liberty magazines for 5 cents each to about 20 regular customers. I could usually sell about ten more copies of the magazine in three of the local bookie parlors. A bookie parlor was a wire service, usually in the back of one of the saloons, that took bets, with a minimum of 50 cents per bet, on the results of the horse races around the country throughout the day.

One of the most popular weekly journals at that time was the New York News, which was distributed through drug stores and a few other venues. I had the idea that I could sell the New York News to my regular Liberty customers and thus double my take for the same amount of work. With this idea, I approached the distributor and he agreed to give me a try. It turned out to be a success, so my income jumped to about \$1.00 per week instead of 50¢ per week. I was quite proud of my first venture as an entrepreneur.

As a youngster, I worked at a variety of jobs, starting with the magazine route, then moving on to the corner grocery store, Burkes. I worked at Burkes one weekday after school and every Saturday, when the hours were from 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM. I cannot recall the pay, but it was less than \$3.00 a week. This was before the days of the supermarket, so the customer would come to the counter and order their groceries, and as a clerk it was my job to get the items from the shelves and put them in paper bags, ready to carry home. Again, this training prepared me for later life, because I learned at an early age the importance of showing courtesy to customers and providing good service. On some occasions, I even had the chance to try my hand at salesmanship in the store, and handling money helped me to understand the value of honesty and accuracy in a business that is successful and profitable.

I always looked forward to summer vacations with great anxiety. Since there was no money available in our family for summer camps, travel, or other modern vacations, we occupied ourselves with simpler activities. Our recreation was confined to the lot by the railroad, where we constructed a miniature golf course, played baseball, built huts for private get-togethers, and amused ourselves with almost anything young minds could conceive.

I remember a particularly bad summer when it was in vogue to see how much penny candy and other small items we could steal from various candy stores. These penny candy thefts progressed to include bakery goods, cigarettes, and other things, until our cache, stored under the bridge, was stolen from us by one of the many hobos that lived along the railroad. That same year, we found a certain amount of recreation in hopping a railroad freight car for a ride of a

mile or two down the track. This practice came to an abrupt halt when one of the guys lost a leg by sliding under the wheel of a railroad car.

We always made an annual sojourn to South Fairmount, a Cincinnati neighborhood where our older cousins lived. It was during these visits that we really learned about “the facts of life”. There was nothing we didn’t feel compelled to examine and subject to complete discussion during our visits with our cousins.

One summer we did get the opportunity to travel. Aunt Matilda and some of her unmarried friends decided to take us with them to visit Buckeye Lake, where their boyfriends were staying. We had a five year old Chevrolet that seemed to be in reasonably good condition, but when we got to Columbus, an axle broke and it had to be repaired. It was a Sunday morning and most of the garages were closed, but somehow the adults arranged to get the car fixed, and by 5:00 PM we were once again on our way. That evening, the boyfriends provided a big party at the camp. My brother and I were put to bed, but from the reactions we saw the next day, it must have been a lulu.

At age thirteen or so, one of the older boys in the neighborhood started to caddy at Highland Country Club in Ft. Thomas, and arranged for some of us to work there, too. This was about five miles from our home in Bellevue. Somehow we always managed to get a ride to the links in time for a drawing each morning at 7:00 AM, when we got our “out” slot. The chances for getting out were established by how many golfers played each day along with the position we drew. Sometimes it was a long wait for naught and other times a caddy could get out twice in one day. The caddy fees were 35¢ for nine holes and 50¢ for eighteen. There was usually also a nickel or dime tip that I was allowed to keep instead of turning it over to the family purse. I can recall more than one occasion when the money I earned at the golf course was the only money the family had for food for a few days.

Caddies were allowed to play on Mondays, but since I had no clubs and had to find a ride out, I did not get to participate more than once or twice. But I did develop respect for golf as a sport which helped much later.

If you grew up in the Cincinnati area, baseball and the Cincinnati Reds were bound to be a part of your general interest. I joined a Knothole team and played with them for two years. Our sponsor was Becker Clothes, and they provided us with uniforms and a few balls and bats.

The Cincinnati professional baseball team supported the Knothole players by inviting various leagues around the area to attend games, then they let the kids come to the ballpark early, when several of the players would show up and go through the fundamentals prior to the start of the game. My strong support of the Cincinnati Reds team began with the informal training offered to us by these players, and has endured throughout my entire life. Playing on the Knothole team was my only exposure to organized sport in any form.

When I was a first year student at Newport Catholic, one of the second year students I knew was becoming a pretty fair boxer, training at the Times Star Gym. He invited me to go with him. Boxing as a sport was fairly accepted at the time, promoted through various gyms around the

area. Each gym would send a representative team to another gym or social club to box three rounds or so with one of the other gym's boxers. After four or five training sessions, I was invited to box in the flyweight class (120 lb.). I had about a half dozen bouts until one time when I got flattened by an opponent with a hard punch to the head. This ended my potential career as a boxer. My friend, Ray Steigerwald, went on to become a champion Golden Glove boxer in his division as I recall, and may have won the Ohio state championship.

A GOOD DEED BENEFITS ALL

Reflecting on my family situation during the first sixteen years of my life, the strongest influence on my ambition, work ethic, personality, and the genuine concern for doing things for other people came from my mother. One of her favorite expressions was that "whatever good you do for others comes back tenfold".

One of the neighborhood boys whom I befriended was raised in an orphanage until he was through the eighth grade, at which time he was dismissed from the home, and sent to live with an aunt, who was suspected by the neighbors of being somewhat mentally retarded. Joe and I hit it off fairly well. I had a cousin who was married but who had no children, so I suggested to my mother that the couple consider adopting Joe. They did, and it was a success. My cousins adopted another child, a baby girl whom they raised along with Joe. It turned out to be a most happy move for all.

My friend and adopted cousin Joe dropped out of school when I did, after the second year in high school, and I was able to help him get a job as a Western Union messenger boy. Later I helped him get a job at the American Tool Works machine tool factory, where he worked for the rest of his life.

THE GREAT FLOOD

In January 1937, the Ohio River flooded to an all time high level of 79.5 feet. There was no flood protection at that time, and the Kentucky side of the river was extremely vulnerable. The river turned sharply just above our neighborhood, and the terrain along the river was much lower than on the Ohio side. The cities of Dayton, Bellevue, Newport, and Covington in Kentucky, and the Mill Creek Valley in Cincinnati, were particularly devastated. Our water supply was contaminated, so we had to look for other sources for the limited supply of water we needed. Since the entryways to the bridges were flooded, Kentucky residents could not get to their places of employment in Ohio. Food items were in short supply, but not serious enough to cause any long-term problems.

THE MUELLER FAMILY ANCESTRY

Mom was the first born daughter of a family of 12 children. She had five older brothers, four younger sisters, and two younger brothers. Her family's ancestry was solidly German. Her mother was Kathryn Foltz, born January 25, 1865 in Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky, and Kathryn's father was Peter Foltz, born Sept. 6, 1820, in Hilbring Germany. My mother's father was

Michael P. Schmidt, born December 18, 1961 in Twelve Mile, Kentucky. I have not found any record of the birthplace of his father, my great-grandfather Schmidt.

My father was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, a middle of eight in his family. His father was John C. Mueller, who was born in Germany and came to the United States around 1880. I found no further records of his family's ancestry. My father's mother was from the Alsace-Lorraine region of Germany. She was born in 1868, and her name was Mary Gregeois.

I have read that in 1991, forty-five percent of the population of the Greater Cincinnati area was of German descent. In 1890, more than fifty-seven percent of the people in Greater Cincinnati could claim a German heritage. The Germans who came to the area began mutual savings societies, edited German language newspapers, formed singing groups, and built breweries. At one point, there were seventeen concert halls and thirty-six breweries in and around Cincinnati. The 1890 city directory lists 12 Muellers and 15 Schmidts who owned saloons. From the bratwurst and mettwurst at the ballpark to Fountain Square and the Roebling Suspension Bridge, you can still see the stamp of Germanic influences on the Greater Cincinnati area.



My Birthplace on O'Fallon Avenue in Bellevue, Kentucky



The Mueller Kids in 1926



Determination!



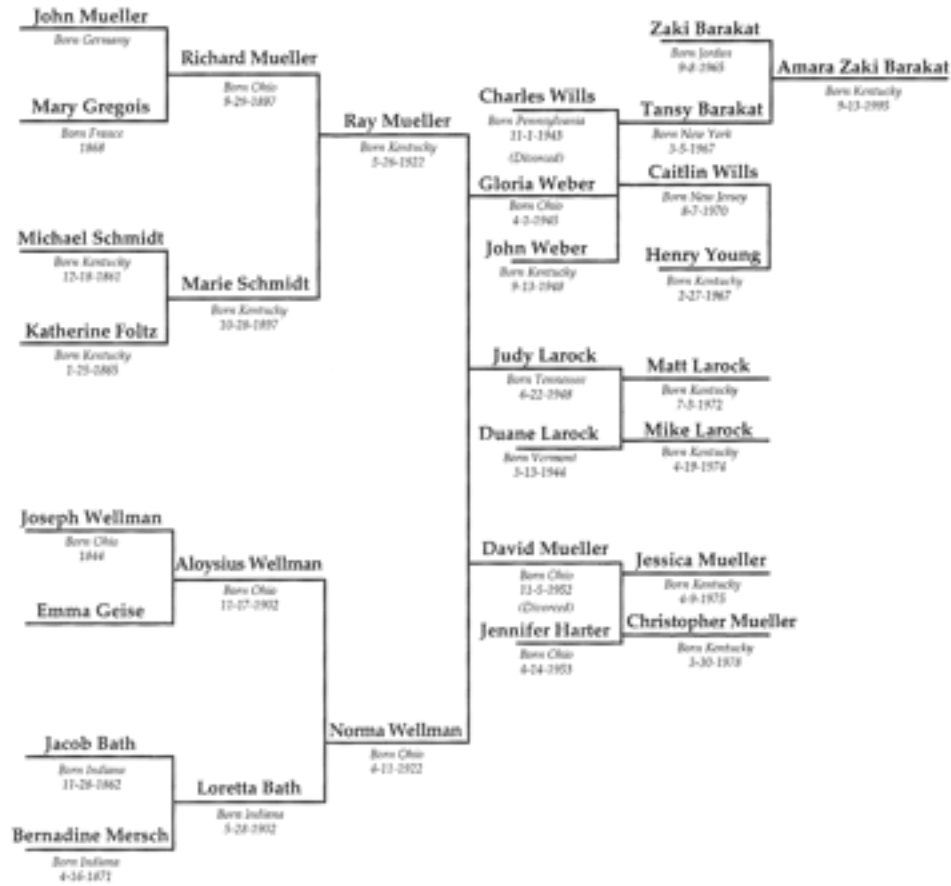
A Family Picnic, Less Dad



Mom and Her Brood



At Age 14, with My Brother and Spike, Our Beagle



Raymond A. & Norma W. Mueller, 1995



Mueller—“My Hope Is In God”

Growing Up Fast

*Growth is a leap in the dark,
a spontaneous, unpremeditated act
without benefit of experience.*

Henry Miller

WESTERN UNION JOB REPLACES HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES

I turned sixteen years old on May 26, 1938, just prior to the end of my second year of high school. At that time, a neighbor of ours worked at Western Union in downtown Cincinnati. He arranged an interview for me to work as a Western Union boy, delivering telegrams on a bicycle to businesses in an assigned area. They provided a uniform and I provided a used bicycle. My brother and I had been given the bicycle to share about two years earlier.

For the three summer months, I was a substitute in the downtown office, filling in for anyone who didn't show up on a particular day. When school started again in September, I had a decision to make—whether to go back to school or leave school to work full time. It wasn't a difficult decision, especially since my parents felt I could continue my education at night school while I worked during the day. Dad volunteered his car to drive to and from Holmes High in Covington for night classes.

While I was a fair student, I could not see how the subjects I was studying at Newport Catholic could possibly help me in later life and no one ever took the time to explain this to me. At this point in my life, the only way I thought I could make a living was by using my hands or by some physical effort. My high school courses included English, American literature, Algebra, Latin and Physics, and none of these subjects seemed very applicable to a working man. This was my rationale for becoming a high school drop-out.

Going to school at night after being on the streets all day delivering messages on a bicycle in Downtown Cincinnati, studying all those boring subjects, had little to no chance of success; I can see that now. At Holmes, I met Jack Ruff who lived in Dayton, Kentucky and who was willing to pay for some gasoline expense in driving to and from school.

Things went downhill in a hurry. I quickly found out that most of the other night school students felt much the same way as I did. We spent some time in class, but we spent a lot more time across at a local bar where they didn't hesitate to sell us beer if we had the money to pay for it, no matter what our ages. Further, the girls in the school were more interested in meeting boys

than studying, so there was a natural opportunity for extracurricular activities that were far more interesting than the courses being offered.

I stayed at night school less than three months. When I decided to drop out again, the news was not well-received at home, but since the trips to Covington were adding to the wear and tear on the car, and the expense involved had become a problem anyway, my decision was easily accepted. This was a decision I came to regret later, because it was difficult to pursue a formal college education without a high school diploma. My education continued in more unconventional ways, however, and I never stopped pursuing knowledge throughout my life.

I grew up in a hurry in the work environment. My first assignment was at the 904 Race Street office which was responsible for the entire west end of Cincinnati. This included a number of businesses, as well as Station X (the main office of the police department), the burlesque theater, and about 80% of the black community of Cincinnati.

I remember two stories from these days quite clearly. The first episode involves Station X on Sunday morning. We got a call every week to pick up messages from anyone who had been jailed on Saturday night. This included all the derelicts, pimps, whores, drunks, thieves, and con artists—the entire spectrum of law breakers. They were permitted to send a telegram to anyone they wished as long as they had the funds to pay for it. I had sole responsibility for determining and collecting the charges for the telegrams, and the temptation was enormous to include an extra charge for myself to make up for the extra trouble this assignment caused me (Extra trouble at least in my mind). It wasn't hard to succumb to the temptation when you had no money of your own.

My other recollection from this time concerned the Gayety, the burlesque theater in Cincinnati. Telegrams were always treated with some respect, because no one would pay the extra money for a wire instead of a letter unless it was important. I remember one time when a dancer called for a pick-up at the stage door. Now, that stage door was directly off the exit of the stage, and the girls were usually in a state of undress as they came off the stage after one of their acts. It was extremely difficult for a sixteen year old to focus on the task of writing a message in front of a girl wearing nothing but pasties and a G-string. Occasionally, I found it tempting to arbitrarily appear at the stage door inquiring if anyone had called for a messenger boy. Even though no one needed the services of Western Union, it was usually a worthwhile experience for me.

The bicycle that I rode had been second-hand when I started my job, and with all the day-in and day-out use on my rounds, it required considerable maintenance. I rode this bike from Bellevue to the office, a distance of some six miles, worked all day on my route, and then rode it home, so it got quite a workout. I remember fighting with the bike all day to keep it going, then going home, only to have it break down right in front of the house. My parents must have known it would be a good investment to get me a new replacement bike, because they had no trouble getting me a new one immediately, with balloon tires yet.

Our pay was based on distance from the office. For telegrams delivered within a half-mile radius, a messenger received one cent. For a half mile to one mile, it was three cents; for one mile to three miles it was a nickel, and over three miles the pay was ten cents. When the minimum wage law was established in late 1938, establishing the minimum wage at 25 cents an hour, I received a raise to a flat \$10.00 for 40 hours a week. My mother received \$8.00 of my paycheck and the other \$2.00 was mine to spend or keep. However, my resourcefulness provided an additional source of income when I was offered a job to provide janitorial services in an office adjacent to the Western Union building. Mom never knew about this second job, and it provided me with an extra \$5.00 every week.

There was one other activity during my telegram-delivering days that I should document for those who find problems with my singing ability. Western Union started to advertise singing telegrams, promoting the service with uniformed messenger boys who would sing an appropriate message to the recipient. You better believe that I volunteered for this duty, and I got the job. I did fairly well until some other boy came along with a better voice.

Summarizing this experience, I sometimes wonder if those two years on the street better prepared me for life than two years I might have spent in-classroom studying all those important subjects and trying to get a passing grade.

WAR IN EUROPE, UNCERTAINTY AT HOME

The next twenty months were fairly uneventful, although there was a lot of turmoil in the rest of the world. The Allies in Europe engaged in an all-out war with Germany and Italy while the United States struggled to define its position in the war as the conflict continued to escalate. Looking back, this seems like one of the most difficult periods of my life. Here I was, an unskilled youth with little formal education and military service on the horizon. There was no hope of making any kind of long-term plans; it was a period when I just took things one day at a time.

And what I took was a series of jobs—short-term employment first at Krogers as a grocery clerk; then with my father at A.H. Gerdson's, where we installed home heating systems; and finally at American Tool Works as a lathe operator, making parts for machine tools to be used in military machinery.

An interesting sidebar I recall from this time involved a heating job. I had an uncle who needed me to install a new coal furnace in his basement. My father arranged for him to get the furnace wholesale, and my uncle and I were to install it. I forgot one important detail in setting up the furnace, and that was to determine the amount of headroom needed. The furnace consisted of a cast-iron fire bowl, radiator, grates, and an ash container, weighing eighty to one hundred pounds each. We set the entire unit in place before we realized we had a headroom problem, so we had to disassemble the unit, then dig out the basement and reset the furnace.

We were supposed to be paid twenty-five cents per hour for the installation, but my uncle decided he would not pay me for tearing the furnace down and resetting it, because it had been my mistake in not determining the correct headroom in the first place. This caused a major

upheaval in the family, since my mother agreed with me and tried to force him to pay for all my time, but to no avail.

I did another job like this for a friend of the family, Ed Lutkenhoff. This time, I hired my friend Bill Taylor to help me. I forgot to tell Bill not to put asbestos paper on the smoke pipe (this was the way it was done, in order to heat the basement). Ed didn't think I should charge him for the time it took us to get the paper off as well as the time it had taken to put it on. There were a lot of delicate negotiations, all for twenty-five cents an hour.

While I worked eight hours a day, I always went out in the evening for three or four hours. Going out usually meant drinking beer in some saloon where there were no restrictions on selling beer to under-age youths. I cannot recall any auspicious events that occurred during this period of my life until July 1941, when I was introduced to Norma Wellman, my future wife, on a blind date set up by my friend Bill Taylor. To this day I don't understand how she tolerated me, with my insignificant background and lack of demeanor. Why she agreed to date me I will never comprehend.

On December 7, 1941, "a day that will live in infamy," as Franklin Roosevelt said, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. The United States declared war on Japan the next day, and within a week against Germany and Italy as well. The entire country was thrown into the most intensive war effort in our history. Everyone in the nation was involved, helping in any way they could.

But when I look back and try to remember my own thoughts during this time, I really did not take the talk of war very seriously. Perhaps I was just naive. Our family—and most of my friends too—were totally unfamiliar with the military. It was cool to say you wanted the toughest duty, as long as you didn't actually commit or enlist. So, like everyone else, I talked tough, but I really had no idea of the intensity or the consequences of war.

I was happy, remembering this time, because I got to see Norma twice or so a week, while working at American Tool Works (now making big money, twenty-five dollars a week). I drove a used 1934 Plymouth that my brother and I bought together for about \$185.00. But as weeks passed, the draft started to get closer to my age. Perhaps I started to think more seriously about the future when my brother was drafted in February 1942. He reported for basic training in Ft. Campbell in Morgantown, Kentucky. He was dating Millie, his future wife, at this time, so he tried to get home on as many weekends as he could.

DIAGNOSED WITH TUBERCULOSIS

Disaster struck my life on March 10, 1942. I went to the doctor for a persistent cough. Dr. Heringhaus recommended that I have a chest X-ray to check for tuberculosis, and the X-ray came back positive. The threat of TB was always with us. I learned later that the disease has been traced back to 163 AD in Greece. Throughout the years, the medical profession had worked diligently to find a cure, but up to the day I went in for that X-ray, they had had no success. People who had TB were isolated from the general population because it was highly contagious. The word tuberculosis was nearly as disturbing then as AIDS is now. The mortality rate from the

disease was nearly 90%. Most people thought that this diagnosis meant I was on my death bed. Most people might have believed this, but not my family, not Norma, and most of all, not me.

Instead of sending me to a sanatorium, which is a place where nearly everyone with the disease went, my mother cleared out the front room of the house, removing all the living room furniture and making a convalescence room for me.

I was committed to total bed rest. A chair was reworked to make a commode, and the only time I left the bed was to transfer to the chair for bowel movements. All my dishes and any object that I came in contact with had to be sterilized in boiling water to kill the communicable bacteria. My diet included only wholesome, nutritious, well balanced meals that the doctors recommended. I was fortunate because Dr. Heringhaus was acquainted with a lung specialist in Cincinnati who had been successful using a method of collapsing the infected lung through compression of air in the chest cavity. After consulting with my parents, Dr. David Huesinkveld came to see me, and following four weeks of bed rest and additional chest X-rays, he decided I should have this procedure. It was done in my room with a portable compression container, first every other day, then after the lung was totally immobile, once a week. I later found out the success rate for this treatment was about 10%. Needless to say I was the lucky one out of ten. It worked on me.

After three months totally in bed, he allowed me to get out of bed three times a day for an hour each time. This was gradually increased over a period of nine months so that by the beginning of January of 1943, he suggested I could do some light office work or another non-physical occupation. Dr. Huesinkveld recommended an employment agency that specialized in hiring the handicapped, but I did not consider myself handicapped and would not compromise my ability to pursue a career that was reasonably normal.

I looked at this as an opportunity to find employment that would lead to something much better down the road. Since so many people were either in the military or completely engaged in some form of war effort, I had little trouble finding a job. Employers were hiring warm bodies.

At my first interview, arranged through a paid employment agency, my eyes nearly popped out of my head, when the branch manager of Fairbanks, Morse & Company showed me the bonus checks he was sending his salesmen for their year end bonuses based on sales achievement. They averaged \$2500 with one check for over \$3000. I never knew money like this could be made without use of your hands or by some physical effort. This was the ideal situation for me. Fairbanks, Morse operated a branch sales office, with sales engineers backed up by clerical office people called sales correspondents. This position would let me learn and develop into a sales engineer while I was still being treated by Dr. Huesinkveld.

But I lacked the necessary education in business or engineering. I had dropped out of high school after two years, and I was almost completely unfamiliar with the world of business, but I jumped at the chance of starting at Fairbanks, Morse. My pay was \$100 per month, working 40 hours a week. The only fringe benefit was a two-week vacation after a year of employment.

NORMA AND NEW EMPLOYMENT

It was in about January 1943, with the suit that my brother had left at home when he went into the service as the only presentable clothing I had to wear, that I started on a career path that continued until retirement nearly fifty years later.

Classified in the draft as 4F, I was in a very uncomfortable position. I felt a lot of eyes on me. People wondered why I was roaming the streets while their loved ones were called for military service, because I did not really show any outward appearance of physical deficiency.

Meanwhile, having had no business education, I started to educate myself, beginning with the language of business. I didn't have any experience writing business letters, so I would go to the file to find a letter similar to the one I needed to write, using it as a guide. I even taught myself how to use the dictation equipment in the office.

As a sales correspondent it was my job to convert sales orders into factory orders. This meant checking for accuracy, correcting mistakes, establishing delivery schedules, and monitoring the progress of the order for both the customers and the field sales engineers. But when I started with Fairbanks, Morse, I didn't know an invoice from a credit.

It quickly became obvious to me that if I was to become successful in this field I would have to have more business and technical education, and I wasn't going to be able to learn everything I needed just by looking at old files. So it looked like I was going to have to take another stab at night school. However, my physical stamina was not yet back to the level needed to allow for this extra activity, so formal schooling would have to wait. In the meantime, there were many technical brochures and other material available for reading at home. During all of 1943, in addition to seeing Norma three times a week, I studied at home and tried to absorb as much information as I could find that related to my opportunity.

I'll never forget one evening, when I was walking from the street car line to Norma's house in Norwood for a date, wondering why Norma could possibly be interested in me. I was a high school drop-out, I had very poor health, and neither my family nor I had any money. What I specifically remember about that night is that I was determined to change all that, and I set my mind to make it happen.

There never was any doubt in my mind, after meeting Norma nearly two years earlier, that we would marry and have a family as soon as it was practical. We had the same set of values. We were both of the same religion, we both had a strong work ethic, our social interests were similar, and we shared a basic dedication to building a beautiful life together and raising a family that would make us both proud. Of course, there were other compelling factors, such as strong physical attraction, companionship, and many other reasons to be together.

I don't remember how my marriage proposal took place, but I know it was not the usual, "down on your knees" proposal. It just kind of happened. I did go to Norma's dad and mom to request her hand, and I sold an automobile that I had purchased from a cousin who was in the military for \$140.00 to raise enough cash to buy a ring for Christmas in 1943. So, with the

ring and the consent of Norma's parents, we set the date, July 15, 1944. It was also the birthday of Norma's brother Bob.

Our courtship was greatly restricted due to the lack of gasoline and spending money. Most young people our age were in the military or very busy in the war effort, and didn't have a lot of time left over to socialize. This is not to say that we did not enjoy this period of our lives, but our fun then took a little different form. We spent many evenings in Eden Park watching the submarines go down the river, while very rarely did we go out for dinner, which is more the norm in the 1990s.

We prepared for our wedding day, doing the usual things, such as taking care of furnishing an apartment. But at the same time, I was absorbed with a passion for learning anything I could to help advance my career in sales. These activities occupied my time almost totally during the early part of 1944. In addition, I still had to make bi-weekly visits to the doctor to have my left lung checked and to get an additional "shot" of compressed air to keep the lung immobile.

Probably the single most important event of my life occurred on July 15, 1944, the day Norma and I were married. Looking back, I know that at the time I had no idea how important that day was.

From the beginning, our hopes and dreams melded into one. Our goals were simply to have a family (with no premonition of how many children, but ready to accept what God gave us), and to raise the family with the best Christian values, education, and good health, without regard to what their place in society might be—that would be determined throughout their development.

We chose the location of our first home to be close to Norma's work as a secretary at Coleman & Bell's, a manufacturer of sophisticated chemicals. This was in Norwood, Ohio, where we found a suitable apartment within walking distance of Norma's workplace and her parents.

It didn't take long for Norma to get pregnant. In late September we found out we were to become parents. This solidified the soberness of our dedication to family. We realized we were just not being idealistic; we had a real commitment to each other, and our goals for life were firmly in place. Naturally, Norma worked until her pregnancy interfered with the typewriter, which was when she was about eight months along.

There was one offsetting advantage to her pregnancy, because urine from pregnant women brought \$1.00 per gallon. The urine was used to make penicillin at the Seagrams plant in Lawrenceburg, Indiana. This encouraged her beer drinking as there was residual value, since beer sold for only 60 cents per gallon.

In September 1944, I was finally able to make plans for more formal education. I had absorbed all that I could from the office environment and the technical literature available there, but it was still inadequate to prepare me for a position as a sales engineer. At the minimum I knew I needed to learn the basic fundamentals of mechanical and electrical engineering.

The Ohio Mechanics Institute offered night courses in mechanical drawing two nights a week from 7:00 PM until 10:00 PM, and I thought a class like this would provide the basics of

mechanics. No prior credentials were required; no high school diploma; no prerequisite math courses. All I had to do was show up, since it was war time and there were not many students at home to fill schools of higher education. All this suited me just fine, so I enrolled.

Since we had two incomes (totaling about \$250 per month), and an apartment that cost about \$40 a month, we could afford to buy a 1938 Ford that I drove to work and to night school. The car performed fairly well, but we often had trouble with the transmission—it sometimes locked in reverse. We had a number of experiences that Norma liked to talk about when we could only go in one direction—backward.



The Beginning

FINAL EDITION

THE CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

WEATHER—High, 50; low, 30; wind, light; clear. Forecast: High, 50; low, 30; wind, light; clear.

VOL. 61, NO. 247—DAILY—ESTABLISHED 1804—FRIDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 18, 1941—32 PAGES—THREE CENTS—CINCINNATI, OHIO

THREE JAP WARSHIPS SUNK, ANOTHER DAMAGED

America Declares War On Germany, Italy

ALL ATTACKS

Of Japs Strained.

Shipsmen Expected In

Of Philippines Report Near

Of Britain Headed

By Rear Admiral Who

As Troops Withdraw From

"All In This," Churchill Says, Announcing Axis

London, December 18.—(AP)—"We are all in this together," said Winston Churchill today in a broadcast to the British people, announcing that Britain has declared war on Germany and Italy. "We are all in this together," he said, "and we will stand together to the end."

BATTLE FLEET

Of Britain Headed

By Rear Admiral Who

As Troops Withdraw From



KEEP IT FLYING

NAVY CHIEF

Remember Pearl Harbor!

OLIVE BRANCH

Axis Is Pledged To Finish Fight, Hitler Asserts

Berlin, December 18.—(AP)—"The German people are pledged to finish the fight," Adolf Hitler asserted today in a broadcast to the German people. "We will not stop until we have won," he said.

DESTROYER.

Tank Sub Sunk

And 11 Planes Downed,

Japanese Claim.

Captain of USS Absecon At Coast, Heavy Damage At Gunter Reported.

BOMB HITS

Scored By Yankees

On Second BattleShip

Off Coast Of Luzon.

Naval Force Destroyed

With BattleShip

Off Coast Of Luzon.

Naval Force Destroyed

With BattleShip

Off Coast Of Luzon.

Naval Force Destroyed

With BattleShip

Off Coast Of Luzon.

A Nation at War



January 1943—A New Job and the Beginning of a Career



Our Wedding, July 15, 1944: Back row, left to right, Tony Schmidt, my sisters Thelma and Loraine, and Al Feldman. Front row, left to right, Lucille DeNoma, Ray Mueller, Norma Mueller, and Mary Lou Blesser



Young, Married, with Gloria on the Way

A Time of Change

*Stretch your foot to
the length of the blanket.
Persian proverb*

June 6, 1944 was D-Day, the date that America and our allies established a beachhead at Normandy in France to begin the invasion of Europe. It signaled the beginning of the end of the Third Reich. Our lives were dominated by the news of the military action both in Europe and the Pacific. These were extremely difficult days for all of us. The entire country was completely mobilized with a single purpose, total victory in both Germany and Japan. Volumes have been and will continue to be written about this time of my life.

On April 1, 1945, the single biggest thrill I had up to that time occurred; the birth of our first child, Gloria, on Easter morning. It truly is an exciting event to experience the birth of your first child. Since she was the first grandchild on both sides, she received a great deal of attention from the entire family.

After finishing my first year of night school at OMI, I felt I was ready for more advanced engineering courses, so in June 1945, when summer classes began at the University of Cincinnati, I applied and was accepted. I started taking the basic engineering courses that would lead to a BS in mechanical engineering. Even though I had not studied any math since age 16, and now I was 23, with hard study I was able to understand college algebra. Of course, the first few sessions of the class were a review of the high school course.

Through June 1947, including the summer months, I attended the University of Cincinnati for three nights every week and on Saturday mornings. I completed just about three years of the five year night course in mechanical engineering.

It was an eventful time of my life, a time during which Dr. Huesinkveld expanded my lung to 75% of its normal capacity and released me from his care except for annual visits. There was no longer any evidence of tuberculosis. I had gained weight, and was now at about 165 pounds, thanks to Norma's cooking and tender loving care. There was no reason from a health point of view not to anticipate a long and healthy, vigorous life.

About the same time, Fairbanks, Morse & Company offered me the position of sales engineer in their East Tennessee territory. I would be replacing Ralph Chism, who was promoted to a department manager. The territory was well established and its principal sales were to a reseller, Tennessee Mill & Mine Supply Company. I would be responsible for selling the entire product

line, which included diesel engines and generators, a very broad line of heavy duty industrial pumps, a full product line of electric motors, a full range of platform scales, from 60,000 lb. motor truck scales to a single portable 100 lb. scale, a full line of home water systems for private water sources, single-cylinder water-cooled gas engines, home laundry appliances, power lawn mowers, water softeners, and finally a line of small railroad hand and motor cars.

Things were looking up for the country and our families at the time I was offered this new job. The war had ended in August 1945, and my brother Charles was home and married in 1946. My two sisters were self-sufficient, and Norma's brother Bob was playing baseball in the minor leagues in anticipation of playing in the majors. My father had returned to his former job as a heating and air conditioning installer. Dad was talking about starting his own company, with my brother and uncle Gus Benken. Throughout our country, things had calmed down and were beginning to get back to normal. America had moved from the depression era to an all-out war effort, and now the country was enjoying a time of peace, a good time for a strong home environment.

Most people had gone for a long time without any home appliances, automobiles were not manufactured during the war, and even many food products had not been available in abundance for quite a while. So there was a built-up demand for many goods and services for the home sector. However, since all our country's manufacturing had been military-oriented for so many years, it took a long time to change over to a peacetime industrial climate to satisfy these demands.

The timing couldn't have been better for me to consider the job offer. We had one hitch, and that was that we were both very close to our parents. Norma and I talked to our parents, who were very supportive and encouraging. So we made the big decision and decided to move to East Tennessee.

LIFE IN ALCOA

On about June 1, 1947, I drove the new company-issued Plymouth coupe down Route 25 (well before the days of expressways) with Norma, Gloria (two years old), and all the attendant paraphernalia that a young couple with a small child needed to live. I remember we stopped for dinner at Colonel Sander's restaurant near the junction of highways E25 and W25, in Corbin, Kentucky. This was the original "Kentucky Fried Chicken" restaurant, long before it became a world-wide chain of franchises.

We had made arrangements with Ralph Chism, whose place I was taking, to exchange living quarters until each of us got settled in our new position. He had a nice house in the western part of Knoxville, while we had a very basic apartment in Norwood. We definitely improved our life-style in the short term. It took us about twelve hours of driving time to get to Knoxville on that trip; now it only takes about five hours on the highway, and only 33 minutes by Comair jet.

Ralph was a very gracious host. We stayed in a hotel the first few nights until he and his family left for Cincinnati. After they left, we moved into their house. Norma was a little upset with the lack of cleanliness; otherwise, it work out just fine. We stayed there for about a month

until for some reason, we had to make a trip back to Cincinnati. I don't really remember the reason for the trip back; perhaps the Chisms had found another home in Cincinnati and were moving from our apartment. In any event, after we got back to Cincinnati, we decided I would return to Knoxville by myself for a few weeks to look for a permanent place for us to live. Soon, I was on my way to Knoxville again, this time alone. After living in a hotel for a few weeks, I knew I had to find a place where our family could be together again.

I found a simple two-bedroom home in Alcoa, Tennessee, some 15 miles south of Knoxville. It was situated on a 50 x 150 lot, and the price was \$5000. The house looked like it would be adequate, but since we had no money for a down payment, I asked my dad to co-sign a note for a \$500 deposit and we financed the balance. This turned out to be the only time in my life that I had to ask for financial help from family, and it was only to co-sign a note.

The house had a coal-fired furnace in a unfinished basement (Norma referred to it as "mud walls"), and it had asbestos shingles on the exterior. The town the house was located in, Alcoa, was a very strong Southern Baptist community made up of employees of the Aluminum Company of America, who had three different manufacturing facilities there. There was a subdivision in Alcoa that had a community of transients, people who had just moved to the area, usually to work for the aluminum company. It became our main source of social contacts.

The nearest Catholic church was located in Knoxville, about 15 miles away. Every Sunday, we went to St. Mary's in Knoxville, and then went to brunch somewhere. After about three months of this, the diocese decided that Blount County, Tennessee should have a Catholic church, and they appointed Father Paul Clunan to head the new parish. Father Clunan was the assistant pastor at St. Mary's and an avid supporter of University of Tennessee athletic programs. He also served as the Chaplain at UT. For the next five years, he was to be a strong influence on our lives, intertwined in our social as well as our religious activities.

Our first mass in Blount County was in the adjacent community of Maryville and was held in a funeral home. This met with some serious opposition by the local non-Catholics, who threatened to boycott the owner of the funeral home unless he ceased to allow the Catholics to use his facilities. So we moved again and after a month or so, we were able to rent a house, where we only had to make some minor alterations to have it serve both as a church and a residence for Father Clunan. This was the origin of Our Lady of Fatima in Alcoa, Tennessee.

I was invited to join the local Rotary Club while we lived in Alcoa, and I decided to join in order to develop some social contacts. I was very happy to be a Rotarian. The meetings were held in the basement of the local Baptist Church. The rules of the Rotary Club provide for each member along with one alternate to be a different classification of employment or professional endeavor. I think there were some liberties taken with the rules in the case of the Alcoa Rotary Club, since about sixty percent of its members were the management group of the Aluminum Company of America. The Rotary Club was a source of great enjoyment to me. It also provided an avenue for friendships throughout east Tennessee, since members were always welcome at other clubs in the area, and I often dropped in to "make up" the attendance requirements of another club.

We developed a fairly active social life, participating in what were usually church-related activities with a small number of other Catholic families, and other times socializing with Rotary Club acquaintances. This was a new situation for us, since we had never been involved in a lifestyle centered totally around people who weren't family. Looking back, it was valuable experience in self development for both Norma and me. We became totally independent and self-reliant. The friendships we formed and the activities we enjoyed during this time in our lives contributed in a substantial way to our well-being.

We had numerous experiences while living in Tennessee that would be worthwhile to relate, but one stands out in my mind. We agreed to chair a fundraiser for the church, and we decided to have a 4th of July festival. There would be games of chance (little chance), handicrafts for sale, and other money-raising booths, all for the benefit of the building fund of the church. To attract people, we offered a ham dinner at a good price and we planned a fireworks display. All the hams were donated and Norma agreed, after some persuasion, to run the kitchen and cook and serve several hundred people.

There had never been a "fireworks display" in Blount County before. Since this was a rural area at the base of the Smoky Mountains, many people had never even seen a "fireworks display". Add to that fact that no one in our group had ever shot off fireworks of this magnitude. One courageous soul, a Captain in the military, volunteered to assume responsibility for lighting the firecrackers. The local fire department sent out a truck to stand by while we discharged these "crackers". Entire families parked along the road in their trucks; we must have had a thousand people. I think we paid all of a hundred dollars for the display. The event was extremely successful, and we made over \$2500 for the building fund.

Our work with the church paid dividends, and the day we moved from Alcoa to start a new career in Cincinnati, the bulldozer shoveled the first load of dirt to build a new church. Needless to say, Norma and I have always been very proud of our contribution to the Catholic Church in Alcoa, Tennessee.

Meanwhile, our time in Tennessee was rewarding for my career, too. The product training I had acquired in the office of Fairbanks, Morse, along with the night school engineering courses, had made me reasonably prepared to represent the company, at least in the pump line and the home water system line, which together made up approximately 60% of the total volume of sales anticipated in any year. My title was sales engineer, but I was not a degreed engineer, nor had I any formal sales training, so it was all "on-the-job-training". Still, I have to say that the folks in east Tennessee were very charitable and tolerant of a young, ambitious individual determined to be successful in life. I know I made a lot of mistakes, but I believe that I did not gain at the expense of anyone else.

The compensation system was heavily based on sales achievement, or increase in the assigned quota. I learned quickly that it was important to send in orders every week, so I found an item for which there was a good demand. As a part of the dealer line, we sold washing machines, which hadn't been manufactured since before the war. But new machines were going to be available soon, we were told; just when, nobody would say. They were promised "some day". It was easy,

even with no sales savvy, to move these popular items, so I quickly got started achieving my sales quota on a regular basis.

I had a variety of accounts. My principal account was the mill supply house, and I traveled with their salesmen on a regular basis. I also had among my customers the Tennessee Valley Authority, the federal agency that built dams to harness the power of the Tennessee River for hydroelectric generation of electricity and flood control; the coal companies operating mines in southeast Kentucky; a smattering of small industrial accounts; and a dealer network of approximately 30 dealers, one in each county. My territory also included an account of historical significance—the nuclear research facility at Oakridge, Tennessee. The scientists at Oakridge had played a large part in the Manhattan Project, the code name for the development of the atomic bomb. In the late 1940s, Oakridge was continuing to generate advances in the country's nuclear arms programs.

So, at age 25, I had been presented with an excellent career opportunity and I wanted to succeed. I was determined to get one of those bonus checks that amounted to more than my annual salary. My salary was \$325 per month, plus a car, and of course an expense account that proved to be most valuable. In our small home in Alcoa, with a company-furnished car, and an expense account, we were able to live reasonably well on my salary, so we could save any bonus we made. The first full year we lived in Tennessee, 1948, my bonus check was \$1800.

The year 1948 was outstanding for us. On June 22, our second daughter was born in Knoxville. Judy Rae was the name Norma chose, helped along with some suggestions from the nun at the hospital.

I was fortunate to be able to gain a lot of experience as a sales engineer on the job. Fairbanks, Morse had a manager for each of its product lines who was responsible for generating business for that particular product. It was impossible for a sales engineer who handled all the product lines the way I did to be knowledgeable about every product. Therefore, on the least volume opportunities, all we were expected to do was generate leads. Then we called in the specialist, who defined the prospect. After that, the sales engineer would follow the lead to a point where help was needed to close the deal.

One of my casual pump accounts was Kentucky-Virginia Stone, located just outside Middlesboro, Kentucky, a town right at the Cumberland Pass. This was the point where the westward migration from Virginia occurred in the early nineteenth century. It is steeped in history and prominently mentioned in the life of Daniel Boone and other early adventurers.

KY-VA Stone purchased electricity from Kentucky utilities for their stone crushers, pumps, and other electric motor-driven machinery. Since KU had a monopoly in the electric service in the area, they were very independent, arrogant, and elusive to their customers in those days. In addition, their rate was determined by state regulators, and the utility controlled the regulators through their political connections and contributions. Fairbanks, Morse had been successful previously in Illinois and other areas selling municipal generating plants and we had good supporting data about the cost to produce electricity using one of our diesel-generating unit.

In early 1949, KY-VA Stone's contract with KU was up for renewal. I somehow managed to find out about this, and I proceeded to get load data and other pertinent information that allowed me to do a preliminary evaluation, with the help of the diesel department manager. Our numbers looked good, so we believed we had a viable sales opportunity based on savings from their existing utility costs.

We began to build a proposal for KY-VA Stone. I spent a lot of time with their president, pointing out the value of generating their own electricity. In my final meeting, they decided to continue their contract with KU if the utility would agree to certain concessions and a firm rate over an extended period of time. They told me they were meeting with KU in a few days to sign the contract and if there was any change they would call me. My dauber was down, because I was sure KU would get them to sign the contract. I went back to Knoxville feeling blue.

Usually I did not drive to the office from Alcoa on Saturday, but for some reason I decided to make the trip on the following Saturday. When I got there, I found a note telling me to call KY-VA Stone. I telephoned immediately, and they asked if I could be there on Monday. Of course I said I could, and it was a great weekend, anticipating this big order (about \$55,000). It was worth approximately \$1,650 to me, 3% of the contract price, and that was big money in 1949. On Monday morning before dawn, I drove the 75 miles to Middlesboro, got the signed contract, along with a deposit of \$20,000.

The equipment would require about four months to manufacture. A building had to be built to accommodate the diesel-generating unit. Electric transmission lines had to be installed and a lot of other extraneous work had to be performed.

I was there when the railroad flat car pulled into the siding with the equipment. A number of craftsmen were also there to unload and install the units. I will never forget how impressed I was that through one person's persistence and enthusiasm, employment could be created for a whole host of individuals. This experience, which occurred when I was 27 years old, taught me a lesson that stayed with me for the rest of my life.

BEGINNING A NEW BUSINESS VENTURE

I am sure this experience gave me a great deal of confidence. I felt I could be totally self-reliant and sell almost any kind of product, given the right tools.

As we always did when we lived in Tennessee, we celebrated Christmas with our own family a week early, then drove to Cincinnati to celebrate again with our parents and the rest of the family. It was an ordeal, but one we felt compelled to repeat each year.

We also had our share of visitors in Tennessee, as it was a good day's drive from Cincinnati, and for anyone going to Florida, it was a convenient place for a first night stop. Still, every Christmas, the family started to talk about the chances of us coming back to Cincinnati. And while we enjoyed the Smoky Mountains and the new friends we had made, I was beginning to feel a little urgency to do something more.

I knew any promotion within Fairbanks, Morse & Company would probably involve a move to some other location in the United States, and if I was to do well with the company, there would be a continual moving process. Our children would be raised without any geographic roots. This was not very appealing.

So, with the family's urging, we decided to take what little money we had accumulated, add to it our equity in the house, sell Norma's car, and move to Cincinnati to be close to our family. Our plan was to start a manufacturers' representative business. After all, it would not be too different from what I was doing, except it would mean selling different product lines, in an area where I had no contacts or experience, paying all my own expenses, and collecting a commission only after an order was received, processed, and paid.

Our savings amounted to about \$2000. The equity in the house amounted to about \$500, and the car brought in another \$500, so the total amount of capital was approximately \$3000. In 1952, this was enough to live on for a year, so we decided to roll the dice.

In January 1952, with a typewriter left over from ancient times, we started to write to every company we could find that manufactured what I considered to be a reasonable product. We inquired of these potential clients about their method of sales representation, and the opportunity for me to represent them. I composed the letter and scanned the trade magazines for qualified products, then Norma typed the letters. We did this while living in Alcoa, trying to set up an agency for the Cincinnati area before we moved back.

While working in Tennessee I became acquainted with Paul Chapman, who operated in east Tennessee as a sales representative for a group of chemical process products. Paul was very helpful in providing leads and even set up some appointments for me to talk with their sales managers. From these discussions, I was able to get a commitment to represent Lawrence Pumps Inc. in a designated area based in Cincinnati starting May 1, 1952. I had not yet told anyone with Fairbanks, Morse of my intentions, but now the commitment was made.

The Lawrence Pump account would generate about \$1,000 per year in commissions. I needed at least \$10,000 to break even, so there was a lot more work to do. Never the less, we were determined to make this work, so at the beginning of May, we sold the Alcoa property and moved to Cincinnati, where we rented an apartment on the west side of town, an equal distance from each of our families.

We set up an office in one of the apartment's two bedrooms (in hindsight, this was not conducive to a good work environment). We had the ancient typewriter, a telephone, a used desk we had brought with us from Tennessee, and a new file cabinet—this represented the total furnishings of our new "office". I had to finance a car since we had sold our only other car to use as capital. It was important to use the name R.A. Mueller and Associates to confirm the commitment I had to the endeavor. Then came the good news—Norma was pregnant.

RECALLING YEARS OF PROGRESS AND GROWTH

When I look back at the years when I started working, married Norma, and began a family, I realize it was a time of dramatic change, in my life, in the history of our country, and in the world. When I joined the workforce, the United States and a good part of the rest of the world was in a serious economic depression, with unemployment over 20%, and Europe was already under siege by Hitler. In 1938, at the age of 16, I was not mentally prepared to understand the scope of what was happening in the world. My whole outlook in life at that time was occupied with the preservation of my family unit, with little regard for my own destiny.

World War II changed the world in many ways. Most notably was the Marshall Plan, established after the war to provide funding for the nations we defeated to rebuild themselves in the climate of democracy. Nothing like this had ever occurred in history. In the past the conqueror had always reaped the resources of the conquered.

The next giant move by the United States was the GI Bill, which assured any individual who served in the military, male or female, the opportunity for a college education. This gave our country a leg up in developing a pool of educated workers, and it also meant that many more women would receive college educations.

Not surprisingly, a more educated populace began to demand more from the leadership of the country. And the pent-up demand for goods and services put a high burden on the nation's manufacturers. Every type of product was in high demand, and temporarily in short supply. To meet the demand, there was a great surge in low-cost, entry-level housing, with an associated burst of production of all sorts of convenience appliances and automobiles to satisfy the growing mobility of the population.

The automobile demanded the expansion of our road systems and an increase in living accommodations while traveling (the word motel was coined during these years). Companies sprang up to manufacture spare parts for cars, and workers were needed to provide fuel, maintenance labor, and insurance. New safety precautions were called for due to the increased speeds allowed on the limited access roads called "expressways" or "freeways", where there were no toll charges.

The technology America had encourage during the war was now applied to peacetime endeavors. The first commercial jet aircraft appeared in the early 1950s, and this changed the world, making it more accessible. Crossing the continent and traversing the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans became routine. The United States began to build the greatest airline industry in the world.

Research in the medical field expanded exponentially, producing a variety of health resources that gave individuals the chance for a longer, healthier life. Prior to the war, people made very few visits to the hospital. Most medical treatment was provided in the doctor's office or at home. The tools of the medical industry had been limited to monitoring blood pressure, X-rays, surgical operations, and pain sequesters, with no antibiotics or vaccines to fight numerous communicable diseases. The changes and advances in the field of medicine brought on by necessity during the

war could now be used to make incredible advances in the treatment of disease and injury for everyone.

This period in my life was certainly filled with dramatic change, not only for me but for the entire country. But the rapid advances in lifestyle may also have contributed to some of the excesses that occurred in the following years.



Proud Parents



Our First House, in Alcoa, Tennessee



Father Clunan, a Priest for All Seasons



Our Lady of Fatima Church



Easter, 1951



Paul Chapman, and Early Mentor

The Entrepreneur

*Though all men be made of one metal, yet
they be not cast all in one mold
John Lyly*

As I look back, there was not much rationale and probably little good sense in starting a business venture when we did. We had very little money, no outside resources for capital, and not much knowledge of the potential market. I only knew that the Cincinnati area was a good industrial market, and I had confidence in my ability to sell industrial goods.

SECURING A FEW GOOD ACCOUNTS

The first task at hand was to find suitable products to build up the business sufficiently to provide income to support my family's meager lifestyle. Lawrence Pumps offered a good basis for the start of the new business, but we had to expand quickly; I knew that. We canvassed the industrial periodicals, questioned other independent sales representatives around the country, and pursued every avenue that might offer an opportunity for an independent sales representative.

In addition to Lawrence Pumps, our start-up products included a line of fabricated wire cloth screens and strainers for the original equipment market. Then I got acquainted with the Fuller family of Columbus, Ohio, who were the distributors for Detecto Scales in the Cincinnati area. Since I had experience selling scales with Fairbanks, Morse & Company, I thought I could be effective with this product line.

This small expansion into a new line quickly led to broad diversity in product representation. There was not an industrial product being manufactured that I wouldn't consider adding to our line. This allowed the business to grow, but it also resulted in some misadventures.

As an example, one of the first companies to respond to my letters was actually a nonexistent business. Two enterprising individuals in the Philadelphia area had advertised for sales agents to sell chemical pump and valve packing. They used the company name Abbott and Biddle, a likely sounding Philadelphia name. Their plan was to accept orders from agents, process them through a local packing company, then apply their name to the invoices and packing slips using a bogus address in Philadelphia. I regret to say that I actually spent some time and money trying to secure sales for their products before I discovered the whole set-up was a farce.

I was desperately trying to find an additional core product that could help propel me into a solid position with the agency when Paul Chapman, my friend in east Tennessee, recommended that I contact the Labour Company of Elkhart, Indiana. Harry Labour held the original patents

on the self-priming centrifugal pump. In addition, he was a metallurgist, who had the patents for several proprietary high-nickel metal alloys, which he called Elcomet K and R 55. The Labour company operated its own foundry, producing these high alloy metals for their pumps. Paul suggested I look into this product line, as he understood they were looking for representation in Cincinnati, having just terminated their previous representative.

I wrote to the company, sending them my usual list of qualifications and asking them to send me literature about their products, which they did. It appeared that their pump line was competitive to Lawrence and that Lawrence had a broader coverage, so I typed a letter to Labour telling them that I was not interested in their line. However, this occurred about the same time as a scheduled exposition of chemical industries in Chicago, commonly referred to as the “Chem Show”. I decided to visit Labour at the Chem Show while I was seeking out additional lines, so fortunately, I did not mail the letter.

When I got to Chicago, I approached the Labour Company booth and saw a large crowd of interested customers, users and potential users of Labour Pumps, as well as manufacturers’ representatives from throughout the United States. And when I saw the display of their product lines, I immediately recognized it was one of the leading pump lines in the chemical industry. I made it a point to meet Mr. Labour to ask him about the possibility of representation in the Cincinnati area. We hit it off fairly well, and he invited me to stop by Elkhart on my way back to Cincinnati. Of course, there was no way of stopping me. I was so excited I could hardly control myself—I knew that this product line would generate the income I needed to build up the business immeasurably as long as I did not make any foolish moves.

On November 1, 1952, I became a Labour representative. High-nickel alloy pumps like the ones produced by Labour were commonly used in very corrosive conditions, so the income from repair parts alone was sufficient to sustain the business. Our sales territory now covered most of the Ohio River Valley, from Parkersburg, West Virginia to Paducah, Kentucky. This included Charleston, West Virginia, an area that is the home of one of the major chemical companies in the United States, Union Carbide, and has one of the largest concentrations of chemical industries in the country.

AN UNPLEASANT ROAD TRIP

I have always believed in personally meeting the people with whom I do business, and having the chance to see their facilities first hand. So, in January 1953, I decided to drive to the East Coast to visit some of the companies I had gotten to know through telephone and mail correspondence. This turned out to be very enlightening experience as well as a great adventure.

Since we had three small children at the time, there was no way Norma could accompany me. Both of us couldn't have afforded to make the trip in any event. So, on a Sunday in about the third week of January, I took off alone for the East Coast. I planned to make it to Lancaster, Pennsylvania on the first night, in order to see the Red Jacket Pump Company (manufacturers of a line of submersible pumps) on Monday morning. From there, I planned to drive to Philadelphia, arriving on Monday evening. Things started out smoothly enough (Remember,

there were no expressways at this time except for the Pennsylvania Turnpike). I had mapped out a route to get on the turnpike about 75 miles south and east of Pittsburgh.

My plan might have worked, but when I got onto the turnpike, there was a huge traffic back-up. Cars were stopped as far as I could see. I found out there had been a snow shower about 25 miles to the east that had resulted in backed up traffic for miles. As I sat on the turnpike waiting for traffic to move, I started to worry about running out of gas. I had about half a tank, or 10 gallons of fuel, that I thought would be enough to get me to Lancaster. But as the hours passed and I needed to run the engine to generate heat, the possibility of running short of fuel became a serious concern to me. After nearly three hours of waiting, traffic finally started to move, and I was able to make it to a gas station at the next exit.

I got into Lancaster about 8:00 PM and checked into my hotel. Lancaster is right in the heart of Amish country, and I had hoped to have a little time to look around the countryside, but the problems I had encountered on the highway prevented this. The next morning, I visited the Red Jacket Pump Company. I had hoped to work out an arrangement with them so I could sell their equipment in the Cincinnati area, but my efforts were unsuccessful. My business trip was not off to a great start.

On Monday afternoon, I drove into Philadelphia to try to run down Abbott and Biddle. This was the company that only existed on paper, so I struck out there too. I had heard about another company in Philadelphia called Philadelphia Pump. It was a business that had just recently started up. They copied designs from Lapp Pulsafeeder, subbed out manufacturing, and advertised for agents to sell their product. I bit on their ad and set up a meeting with Joe Eagan, the promoter and developer of this idea. I was impressed that he was a grandson of the founder of a leading steel manufacturer in the Philadelphia area, but he was a man with more money than ability. I did sign on to represent his company; however, this was a move that I would regret later, since we had nothing but troubles with the pumps we sold from his company.

That Tuesday afternoon, I drove to New York (my first time in the "Big Apple") and checked in at the Taft Hotel, right in the heart of Times Square. I did get to take in a show, with a ticket compliments of Joe Eagan, and I made a few phone calls then planned my next day. I intended to drive to Lawrence, Massachusetts, which I estimated to be a distance of some 125 miles. That evening, the news predicted a large snowstorm that was going to blanket the area overnight. I was not going to let a little thing like a blizzard keep me from meeting the people at Lawrence Pump and seeing their facilities, so I decided to make the drive, no matter what the weather.

It turned out exactly as the weatherman predicted, but I left the hotel about 7:00 AM to fight the heavy snow. In spite of all kinds of traffic problems, I made it to Lawrence by about 11:00 AM, only to find there were just a couple of security people around; because of the weather, the plant had closed for the day. So I headed back to New York without seeing anyone at Lawrence Pumps, my first account.

I had set up an appointment with a small pump company in Newark, New Jersey for Thursday morning. Eco Engineering was a company that started during the 1930s making

bronze faucets for the brewing industry. They had somehow come upon a small positive displacement lobe pump, made with a bronze housing and neoprene lobes. Bronze metal had limited application in the chemical industry; however, they were now talking about making the pump out of 316 stainless steel with Teflon™ lobes, which would greatly expand its application in the chemical industry. This looked like an exciting opportunity to me, because Teflon was just beginning to be used in industrial applications, and had the benefits of being a material that was very chemical resistant and could be fabricated in many forms. I spent most of the day at Eco Engineering, and made an agency deal by early afternoon.

I drove part of the way to the Pennsylvania Turnpike that same day, so the drive to Cincinnati on Friday would be easier. Norma had invited her parents over for dinner and cards on Friday evening, and I had promised to be there.

The drive home was not without incident. When I left the hotel Friday morning, it was cold, but it looked like driving conditions were passable. But after about an hour, I ran into severe icing conditions. I kept going at a slow speed to avoid sliding. I had one harrowing experience when I started to slide on a gentle slope down the highway for perhaps 200 yards. Fortunately, there was no traffic, and I was able to keep the car upright and more or less on the road, so no damage was done. Then about 30 miles east of Cincinnati, I was driving on old Route 50, which parallels the Ohio River. It was about 5:00 PM on Friday and just starting to get dark. I encountered a heavy fog, but I kept going, because it was important for me to get home for the evening with Norma's parents.

When I arrived home, I was exhausted from an almost entirely fruitless week and the nerve-racking drive home that day. Everyone asked, "How did the trip go?" I didn't have the energy to get into all the details, so I simply answered, "OK—deal the cards!"

Down river from Cincinnati, Louisville was known as Rubber Town because of the large number of synthetic rubber plants built there during World War II. About 200 miles farther down the river was another chemical complex at Calvert City, Kentucky.

In addition to all this, there was Proctor & Gamble in Cincinnati. They used a variety of acids in the production of some of their soap products. Labour Pumps were standard for unloading oleum, a concentrated sulfuric acid, using a 55 percent nickel alloy.

My only problem was the travel involved in maintaining the coverage of this large territory. It meant that I had to spend one week a month in West Virginia, one week in the Louisville area, and two weeks in Cincinnati. This was very difficult for a multitude of reasons—there was no expressway system, and I couldn't afford to fly, rent cars, or pay motel expenses. For two years I had no choice but to make the best of it while covering the entire area by car.

The Labour account was my key building block. It was a leader and other companies in the industry wanted to team up with a leader when they were looking for representation.

SETBACKS AND ACHIEVEMENTS COME WITH GROWTH

With the Labour account in hand, my next task was to expand the product base to allow me to establish offices in both Louisville and Charleston so I could reduce my travel. Further, the office in the bedroom was not working as well as I might have hoped, so it was inevitable that I make the commitment to establish a bona fide office in Cincinnati, so that the obligations of home life would be restricted to nonoffice hours.

When I opened the office, I would also need a full-time, reliable, trustworthy secretary or girl Friday. I already knew such a person in Ruth Leopold, a person with whom I had worked some five years previously at Fairbanks, Morse & Company. She started with me at the beginning of January 1953. We set up an office in the central part of Cincinnati, at 920 East McMillan Street in Walnut Hills. The location was good because it was easily accessible from nearly all parts of the city. With a base office in Cincinnati, it was now time to make a serious attempt to expand the agency's representation.

Several other Labour agents carried Mixco as a product line. They were far and away the leading manufacturer of heavy-duty fluid-mixing machinery. It was a substantial product line and fit very well with chemical pumps. Unfortunately, it was not available to me.

I heard about two men in Dayton, Ohio who were with International Mixing Machinery but who wanted to start their own company to manufacture mixing machinery. I didn't think too much about this, but I did decide to look into it the next time I was in Dayton.

A month or so later, I was in Dayton, and when I finished my calls I still had a little time left before I had to head back to Cincinnati. So I called the new start-up company, Chemineer, which was operating out of a former livery stable on West Second Street in downtown Dayton. They invited me to come see them that afternoon, and I did. We hit it off very well, particularly after they found out I had the Labour account. Ironically, they had been trying to get the account in competition with me. They intended to operate as a manufacturers' representative until they got the mixing machinery manufacturing operation going well.

They had made a verbal commitment the day before to another agent in Cincinnati, but decided to withdraw it in my favor after our conversation. Their only products were portable agitators, and they had some unconventional designs, one called the "Turbo Tube", and several others. They were also working on a side-entering design of the type widely used by Procter & Gamble. The mixing machinery industry was fragmented at that time, with just one dominant manufacturer, and there was not much opportunity available for me for this type of product anywhere else, so I decided to accept a representative agreement with Chemineer in approximately the same territory I had for the Labour account.

If I was going to be on their team, I decided to help them in every way I could. The other Labour agents who had no mixing line were as interested in the new company as I was, so I was able to provide Chemineer with the names of some strong agents in other parts of the country. After talking with my old friend Paul Chapman in Elizabethton, Tennessee, he came aboard. Then George Dean in Cleveland, Vance Bonnichson in Pensicola, Bill Mullen in Detroit, Russ

Carlson in Syracuse, and several others signed on. This helped Chemineer enormously, because it provided them with access to a large customer base. It also helped me by putting me on favorable footing with the other reps for reciprocating recommendations for other product lines in the chemical process industries. Life became a little easier.

Even with the Labour account, I found out I was not out of the woods financially. There was the matter of meeting my expense requirements. As an agent, you saw no income until the order you received was processed, shipped, and paid. Then 30 days later, if all went well, you received your money. This usually meant an elapsed time of four to six months between the time you wrote up an order and the day you actually saw the money. No banks would lend money against these commissions due; I couldn't turn to my family for capital; I could not borrow from anyone. I tried a number of banks, but to no avail.

I recall a time in early 1953 when I had run out of money. With nowhere to go for financial help, I just had to tough it out. There were no credit cards—you paid cash for your gas, groceries, everything. Many a night I lost sleep, wondering how I was going to stretch my nonexistent cash until a commission check arrived. But as I recall, I never missed a payroll; I somehow schemed through.

I never borrowed any money throughout my career from anyone except a financial institution. I never received a government check for any financial assistance, unemployment compensation, or other government aid in any form. My first check from the government was the Social Security check that I reluctantly accepted at the age of 70.

This taught me an important lesson in preserving capital, even though my goal of building up the organization sometimes outweighed my desire for preservation of capital. I was determined to build an organization, for several reasons. In addition to reducing the travel time required of me as the sole salesman, I was also always concerned with my health, having had one experience that put me on my back for some nine months. I felt that if I could create a sales organization, income would be generated even if I was incapacitated. It was important to me to achieve this comfort level for myself and my family.

I never stopped trying to expand the product line. George Dean, the Labour rep in Cleveland, recommended that I try to land the S. P. Kinney account. They made very high volume automatic backwash strainers that were used by the steel industry. Armco Steel in Middletown, Ohio and Ashland, Kentucky were Kinney customers. It was a source of rebuild business as well as new strainer sales. The account would also allow me to gain an entry into the Armco engineering and maintenance departments, where there was an opportunity to sell Labour pumps for their pickling operations. We got the Kinney account, and carried their line for eight years until they decided to sell directly out of their office in Carnegie, Pennsylvania. Incidentally, Mr. Kinney was one of the pioneers in the steel industry, and held a number of patents in blast furnace designs. He was an interesting individual.

The steel industry ultimately led me to additional product lines. In their pickling operation, they used acid-proof brick laid up with special sulfur cement. This was a constant maintenance

item, the kind of product line that gives recurring commission checks. Armco bought this cement by the carload, so while the price was low, the volume was high and the commission was worthwhile.

To provide this product line, I secured a representative agreement with Nukem Products of Buffalo, New York. In addition to acid-proof cement, the company also produced acid-proof floors that were used in the dairy industry. Here was another industry where I had no background knowledge or contacts, but one where there was a new opportunity for commissions. Nukem Products also included a subsidiary that had just started to develop fiberglass-impregnated polyester. This was a product that was being used mostly for marine applications, but it had a natural opportunity to branch out into corrosion-proof fabrications, such as hoods for pickle tanks and duct work for exhausting fumes, all used in the steel industry. The company was turning out products that were the forerunners of FRP (fiberglass-reinforced plastics), which became widely used by the 1990s.

At the end of the year 1953, I had developed a number of product lines that had the potential for being good sources of future commissions, but things still didn't look too good on paper. When I looked back at the final balance sheet for the year, I noted that there was a cash balance of only \$19.02, with commissions due on orders (contingent residuals) of just \$1279.15. We were still not in a strong financial position.

BACK ON THE HOME FRONT

In the midst of this heavy commitment to the new business venture, it was also a very exciting time for our family. As I mentioned, when we decided to move back to Cincinnati, Norma was pregnant. With the birth of our third child, we knew we had to move from the small apartment. We began looking for a new home, and decided that the best value was to build a house in Kruetzjans subdivision in Ft. Wright, Kentucky. The cost of the house was \$25,000, with a minimal down payment required.

On November 5, 1952, we experienced a real thrill with the birth of our son, whom we named David in honor of Dr. David Huesinkveld, the physician who cured me of tuberculosis. I will never forget the thought that came to me immediately when I saw David for the first time: I was going to work very hard to give him every advantage that I didn't have. Looking back now, I think I have fulfilled my pledge to myself.

David was a healthy baby. Gloria had started to school in College Hill by the time he was born, and Judy and David stayed at home with Norma, since we had only one car. I was still traveling two weeks a month, so it was a very difficult and confining period for Norma, home alone with three small children for much of the time. But she handled the situation very well, as usual. She used the time to plan how we were going to make three rooms of furniture work in a six-room house, since there was no money available for additional furniture.

In September 1953, we moved into our castle. Ft. Wright was a moderate suburban community of mostly young families. Community involvement consisted of the Civic Club and the volunteer fire department, and we quickly became involved in both groups.

One of my favorite recollections of my experience with the fire department happened not long after I had joined, when I had just completed my 12 weeks of training. I received my badge as a fireman on a Monday in the middle of January. The next Sunday, there was ice covering everything outside, and at about 10:00 PM, we were in bed doing the thing that many young married people do. Suddenly, the siren went off, sounding the fire alarm. Now, this occurred at precisely the most intimate moment in a young man's life; not the second most intimate moment, but precisely the moment. Call of duty came first, however. I responded to the alarm without delay. I jumped out of bed, ran outside to the car, fell down the steps on the ice, got up, started the car, and rushed to the firehouse—only to find it was a false alarm. So I rushed back home, hoping that fire had not gone out. But it had. This was my indoctrination into the Ft. Wright fire department.

Ft. Wright civic activities filled our social schedule. The Civic Club had baseball teams for youngsters of all ages. Dances and parties were held throughout the year on many occasions. The highlight of the year was the Civic Club covered dish party. And each year the members would put on a theme show. One year, the regular director of the show was not available for some reason, so I volunteered to be the director. Here I was again, volunteering for a job for which I had no previous experience.

Our theme that year was "Western," and we had orchestrated a finale that featured a live mule brought on stage by the lost prospector. The show and all its western characters came off well until it was time for the mule. The mule had been kept in the back of one of the neighborhood fields and had apparently developed a mild case of dysentery. As he was led on stage, the dysentery got the better of him, and the mule made a mess of the stage and everyone sitting close to it.

In about our fourth year in the Civic Club, I became president. We started a fishing tournament for the children, a sunflower growing contest, competitive ball games between men and women players, and many other events. I also managed or coached the baseball teams that David played with, and continued this involvement with David until his second year of high school, when he no longer played in Knothole leagues.

The community offered a lot of activities for all members of our family. It was a good place to live, with lots of children, recreation for the adults, and well-kept homes in the average to upper price ranges.

It was during this time that Norma and I started to get interested in golf. Some of our neighbors, the Wolnitzeks, the McCormacks, and the Lemkers, all decided to join Summit Hills Country Club with us in about 1955. For nearly 25 years, the four men played every Saturday afternoon, sometimes early Sunday morning, and on a rare occasion, late on a weekday afternoon. My handicap started at 30 and got down to nine after a few years. On Saturdays after golf, there was always a gin game that sometimes took longer than planned. This sometimes got us in trouble at home on Saturday nights.

There were also a lot of Saturday nights when we stayed out late, had breakfast at 2:00 AM, then got up in time for 7:00 AM mass followed by a tee time at 8:08 Sunday morning. We finished golf by 1:00 PM to get home and spend the rest of the day with our families.

BUSINESS EXPANSION—EAST AND WEST

Back to the business of being an entrepreneur—a word that was unknown in the 1950s when I was trying to make a success of it. In the early to mid-1950s, I was trying to build an organization that emulated the branch sales divisions of Fairbanks, Morse & Company, even though I was actually representing multiple manufacturers of chemical process equipment, along with other industrial products. There was no limit to the number of product lines or the number of sales engineers that I imagined having in my organization. I continued to explore every possibility for additional product lines and then planned on adding coverage wherever it was needed.

By early 1956, we were representing the following companies and product lines:

Labour Company	Chemical pumps
Chemineer Inc.	Fluid mixing machinery
R. P. Adams Company	Aftercoolers and filters
Illinois Water Treatment	Deionization equipment
S. P. Kinney	Strainers
Nukem Products	Corrosion-proof equipment
General Machine Company	Blenders
John L. Doré	Fabricated Teflon
Gray Company, Inc.	Pneumatic pumps
Weinman Pumps	Centrifugal water pumps
Quelcor, Inc.	Plastisol coatings
Atwood & Morrill	Special valves

It was clear to me that this was far too broad a line of products to be handled by one person traveling a territory that covered more than 500 miles of the Ohio River Valley. So, in early 1956, I ran an ad in the Louisville Courier Journal for an associate to staff a new office to handle all the product lines from Louisville to Paducah, Kentucky. I had about 20 responses to the ad, and I set up a room at the Seelbach Hotel in Louisville to do the interviewing. Again, I found myself in a situation where I had no previous experience. The hiring process was new to me, so I depended upon my intuition, which has not always served me well. In any event, I hired the first person I interviewed, one Melville C. McDermott. He was a graduate chemical engineer, working as a process engineer for the Girdler Company. He had no selling experience, but he charmed me, and that was good enough at the time. Mac qualifies as one of the most unforgettable people I ever met, and I will say more about him later.

We set up the office at 961 Baxter Avenue, just outside the downtown area in Louisville. We shared the office with another independent salesman whose product line was Bibles—he carried both the Catholic and the Saint James versions.

Mac's indoctrination into the sales business was strictly on-the-job training. It consisted of a week in the Cincinnati office, working with me on my sales calls, then on to Louisville, where I accompanied him throughout the territory, introducing him to all the accounts I had developed up to that time. Mac really proved to be an asset to the business. At the end of 1956, we had brought in \$63,980 in commissions, and my net income for the year was \$21,425. This qualified as big bucks; it was nearly four times my 1951 income.

My next project was to set up an office in Charleston, West Virginia, to eliminate the need for me to spend one week a month running up and down the Kanawah Valley. Since I was now an experienced interviewer, I was confident that I could find someone equally as qualified as Mac was in Louisville to cover the West Virginia territory. Again, I advertised the position in the local paper, and while I had some candidates to interview, no one charmed me as I had hoped.

Meanwhile, I had heard about a fellow working at Duriron in Dayton who was looking for an outside selling job. Duriron was the Labour Company's number one competitor, and if I could hire an individual from our principal competitor, it would be a real accomplishment. This was the dominant factor in my hiring tactics this time.

Dave Browne was the man from Duriron. He had four small children, but was willing to relocate to Charleston, if I paid his moving expenses, of course. I decided to let him operate out of his house, which I found out later was a grave mistake. I should have learned from my own experience working out of our apartment back in 1952—there was just too much family involvement while trying to concentrate on the business. Nevertheless, I tolerated the situation in Charleston for well over a year. Dave had no outside selling experience and he found it very difficult to make sales calls, so he never even built up enough business to cover his expenses. It was important to me to have a successful office in Charleston, and I tried very hard to make the association with Dave work. But I just could not afford the time and money to invest in him to get him up to speed.

I made the decision to replace him in the West Virginia territory and I had the very difficult task of telling him I was terminating his employment. Instead of doing this at the hotel, I went to his house, and had to tell him with his entire family present. It was a bad, bad scene, but it was also another learning experience for me.

I was trying to find a replacement for David in Charleston when I heard from someone in the engineering department at Procter & Gamble in Cincinnati who wanted to get into sales work. I thought that all P&G people had to be highly qualified engineers, so I arranged to interview Joel Bledsoe. He was Mr. Clean, with the appearance of an All-American Boy. He had two children, and had earned a degree in chemical engineering from Oklahoma University. I was very impressed with him, and I thought I had a winner. When I interviewed him, the subject of religion had never been mentioned, but after I committed to hiring Joel, we started to talk more about family values, and that was when he told me he was a Jehovah Witness. His religious beliefs included the mission of trying to convert others outside of his faith to join his church. While this notion concerned me, I was hiring Joel as a salesman, and I just hoped his religious beliefs would not interfere with his selling effort for R. A. Mueller and Associates.

I was determined to make a success of business in Charleston this time, so we opened an office on McDougall Boulevard, the main street in South Charleston. The secretary we hired for the new office failed miserably after about six months, but that is another story. Joel actually worked out fairly well, except that after he concluded each sales presentation, he would invariably put on his clergy hat and try to convert our potential customer. In spite of this, he stayed with the company for approximately four years, which was about average for our salesmen.



The Sales Territory

BALANCE SHEET
R. A. MELLER AND ASSOCIATES
December 31, 1953

<u>ASSETS</u>			
<u>CASH</u>			
On deposit		\$	19.02
<u>CONTINGENT RECEIVABLES</u>			
Unpaid Commissions Earned			1,279.15
<u>EQUIPMENT</u>			
Office Equipment	\$ 997.59		
Less: Allowance for Depreciation	<u>79.93</u>	\$	917.66
Automobile	2,685.75		
Less: Allowance for Depreciation	<u>1,072.50</u>	<u>1,613.25</u>	<u>2,530.95</u>
			<u>3,829.08</u>
<u>LIABILITIES</u>			
<u>LOANS</u>			
Bank - Secured	1,409.72		
- Unsecured	<u>1,500.00</u>		
		2,909.72	
<u>TAXES</u>			
Social Security	13.11		
Withholding Tax	<u>141.80</u>	<u>154.91</u>	3,064.63
<u>DEFERRED INCOME</u>			
Commissions			1,279.15
<u>NET WORTH</u>			
Balance, January 1, 1953		889.28	
Add: Net income for the year ended		<u>5,468.82</u>	
December 31, 1953		6,358.11	
Less: Drawings		<u>6,872.81</u>	
<u>DEFICIT</u>			- 514.70
			<u>\$ 3,829.08</u>

A 1953 Balance Sheet



The Volunteers of the Ft. Wright Fire Department—Rudy Wolking, Ray Mueller, John McCormack, Bob Lemker, and Bob Myers



A Covered Dish Party at the Ft. Wright Civic Club



The Associates

Building the Business

Being good in business is the most fascinating kind of art...Making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art.

Andy Warhol

All the while I was working to build the branch offices so that I could reduce the amount of time I had to spend traveling, I was also concentrating on shoring up the Cincinnati office. The first person I approached to work with me was my brother Charles. Now Chuck, as I called him, had no formal training or higher education. He had finished high school, then had served as a medic in a field evacuation hospital outfit overseas for nearly four years during World War II. He was working with our Dad as a domestic heating and air conditioning serviceman, and that business was not doing too well, so he decided to abandon his blue-collar job for sales work.

Chuck had a great personality but was a little reluctant to be aggressive with outside sales calls at first, and he also needed a good deal of education on the industrial product lines and the applications he would encounter in his industry calls. We started him with some of the more easily understandable products and gave him accounts he would be comfortable with in the Cincinnati area. In analyzing his sales approach, I think he was the type who preferred to have the customer as a friend rather than use an aggressive approach to get an order. His personality was somewhat different than mine in that respect, but he complemented me in many different ways. From my point of view, it was a good career move for both of us when he joined the company.

During the late 1950s, I continued to make every effort to expand and improve the product lines and build the sales organization. As a commissions-only type of manufacturers' representative, our position was very fragile, because the companies we represented had the option at any time to change their method of representation, starting their own direct sales force. In many cases, as the volume of business increased for a small start-up manufacturer, the company would often make the decision to hire their own sales people, eliminating the manufacturer's representative arrangement.

This recurring product loss could be disastrous to a company with a limited number of product lines, and even with the fairly large number of product lines we represented, I was always concerned about losing a product when a company went to direct sales. This was the reason I made every effort to diversify and expand the product lines. I tried to create a situation where no one account would represent more than 10 to 15 percent of the agency's total income.

This did not always sit well with the manufacturers, but it was something I was committed to accomplishing, and I insisted on keeping control of the number of product lines and the product mix we represented. This principle was extremely important to me; it was a facet of the business where I worked very hard.

I made it a point to be personally acquainted with the president or owner of each business whose products we handled, and I always made an effort to give these company leaders feedback from our salesmen that would be useful to them in their product development. This could take the form of competitive data, suggestions about improvements, changes in potential applications, or other information. I sometimes offered suggestions that might have been contrary to our best interests simply in the hope that they would be of value to the owner or president. This approach cemented our relationship with each man not only as his representative, but also as his source of important field data that could help his business grow. It was a method of doing business that has served us well.

The company continued to grow fairly well until the year 1958, when we experienced a rather severe recession. At that time, our commissions dropped to a level of about 40 percent of the previous year's commissions. I did show a net income, but it was very small. This recession lasted for nearly two years, and it took its toll on my expansion plans.

I remember a period when I was having a difficult time with headaches caused by sinus problems in addition to dealing with the downturn in business. I recognize now that I experienced a bout of severe depression that brought me to a point one time—the only time in my life—when I thought it might be better to take my own life. This thought was fleeting, but after all these years, I still recall it, so I know it did have a considerable impact on me.

Economic conditions bounced back in 1960, and we recorded a gross margin that was twice what it had been in the years 1958 and 1959, with a reasonably strong net income.

Another opportunity that looked too good to pass up presented itself when a leading manufacturer of hoses had a brilliant scheme to appoint "Master Distributors" of their products. They produced flexible metal, Teflon, and rubber hose, and to be one of their "Master Distributors," we would have to stock a fairly large inventory of tubing and swedged fittings, using some special dies that the company furnished. The products seemed promising: Teflon hose was used in the chemical industry; rubber hose was hydraulic hose, used on many types of machinery; and the metal hose had a variety of general purpose applications.

I bit on this opportunity, hook, line, and sinker. We put in an inventory of \$25,000 worth of hose, fittings, and machinery, and that was a lot of money at the time. We rented space next door to inventory the overflow, and since my Dad's business had deteriorated to almost nothing and he was looking for something to do, I suggested that he do the swedging in his basement at home. He liked this idea, so we set up a shop in my parents' residence in Ft. Thomas, Kentucky. This didn't work out too well, but we kept the shop operating for several years, until we moved the office and warehouse to Paddock Road. At that time, Dad was our Shop Supervisor.

Unfortunately, the whole venture with the hose manufacturer was misrepresented from the start, so eventually we got out of the business, selling the inventory for whatever we could. Dad stayed on, coming to the office until his health started to decline and he could no longer make the trip from Ft. Thomas to Bond Hill. He worked for the company for about six or seven years.

As Dad's health declined, his memory started to fail, and we had some difficult, sometimes humorous experiences. As his mind left him, he did not keep himself as clean as he should have, and he wore the same soiled clothing, day after day. On more than one occasion, he would walk in my office, interrupting me no matter what I was doing or who was there, to tell me about his problems, both business and personal. He always had a smile and a tilted cap, indicating that he had had his morning "Tonic". No matter how important the person in my office was, when Dad came in I always took the time to listen to him, respond respectfully, and then introduce my father to the visitor.

NEW HEADQUARTERS

After 10 years in the agency business, I began to believe that we would be in a stronger position if we were able to control our own inventory and operate as an industrial distributor while we continued our efforts as a sales agency. In 1962, we incorporated the business and started to operate according to my new business plan. This meant a move from the Walnut Hills address to Paddock Road in Bond Hill, where we not only had office facilities, but also about 2000 square feet of assembly and warehousing space. On October 1, 1962, we officially incorporated the business in the State of Ohio, with \$46,000 in assets, \$15,000 of which was commissions receivable. We changed the name of the company to R. A. Mueller, Inc.

Our first move to build up our inventory as I had envisioned was to purchase pumps from Eco Engineering. We mounted base plates with suitable drives, so instead of just selling the pump for commission, we were able to sell a complete pump assembly and price it according to our own profit system. We also started to inventory fiberglass-reinforced plastic pipe (FRP) that looked very promising for handling all sorts of corrosive chemicals. We were highly successful with this product line at Armco Steel (mainly through the efforts of my brother Chuck) and the Frigidaire plants in Dayton where they were anodizing aluminum to be used in their appliance manufacturing.

As the business grew, it was obvious that we needed a more professional accounting system. While we were strictly commission representatives, our bookkeeping method was simply to record the commissions, track them for payment, and prepare the payroll twice a month.

Meanwhile, at home, Norma was not quite as busy with the children any more. When David entered the third grade, Norma and her friend Norma McCormack began to play golf at Summit Hills. The dinner conversation started to revolve around the poor conditions of Summit Hills greens, or the slow foursome in front of them. I had the idea that Norma might be interested in getting involved in the business again, so I suggested she consider coming to RAM, Inc. to keep the books. She had no training as a bookkeeper, but I thought our accounting firm could teach her the fundamentals, and having her in the office would be beneficial to the business.

as well as providing her with another activity. She liked the idea, and began to come into the office after the children went to school. She always left in time to be home when they arrived back at the end of the school day. This system worked beautifully for all of us until the company grew to such a size that it needed a full-time accountant and a clerk or two. Norma worked more than 10 years for the company. She never received a salary, always working only for fringe benefits.

Gloria, Judy, and David all worked at the company for very short periods of time, some a lot shorter than others. None of them really showed a sincere interest in a career with RAM, Inc. Most of the family members had an opportunity to join the company, but only Judy's husband, Duane Larock, was really interested, and he leads the company today.

PRODUCT LINES AND SIDELINES

In the early 1960s, I tried another venture that did not result in any success. A man named Dr. Watson Pedlow had formed a company called Quelcor that applied plastisol (PVC) to metal that was heated and baked for corrosion resistance. The finished product had applications in duct work, hoods, and other corrosion-resistant fabrications.

Watson Pedlow was a Navy officer and his story is interesting. He married the widow of the first hero of World War II, Colin Kelly, the Navy pilot who dive-bombed into a Japanese ship in the Pacific, sacrificing his own life in the process. His widow was an intriguing woman, to say the least. They were our house guests on several occasions and we visited with them in Cape May, New Jersey, and at their home in Chester, Pennsylvania. From her home, Mrs. Pedlow had a morning radio show—she simply set up the microphone on a card table and then talked to the radio community on various subjects.

I am convinced that Colin Kelly's death would not have been so well publicized if he had not been married to Marion Pedlow. After Colin Kelly was killed, the government used her circumstances as a distressed widow to sell government bonds, and she played her role to the hilt.

At the time Dr. Pedlow started his company, plastisol was in its infancy and he saw the potential uses for the product, such as a plastisol coating for dishwasher racks. In the process he invented, the baskets or racks were dip-coated into a tank of plastisol on a continuous basis. We took considerable effort to try to sell the product to General Electric of Louisville, but to no avail. General Electric developed their own plastisol coating system, and as far as I know, they still use it to this day.

However, Pedlow felt that we could have a strong competitive advantage if we set up a plastisol coating operation in Cincinnati. I knew a fellow, John Kozacik, who was a plant engineer at Cincinnati Chemical. He showed some interest in the idea, so we set up a three-way partnership—Pedlow, Kozacik, and our company. We installed a large tank of plastisol, which was probably 20 feet long by 8 feet wide and 6 feet deep. The metal was heated in a furnace, then dip-coated into the tank to thicknesses of about 60 mils, and after dipping, the coated metal was allowed to cool. We sold a number of duct work systems in the area, and the product might have had a better chance for success if it hadn't been competing with the development of fiberglass-

reinforced plastics. These offered corrosion resistance and much better control in the coverage of the corrosion barrier. So our partnership company, Quelcor of Cincinnati, went out of business. We eventually sold off the plastisol and some of the equipment for whatever we could get out of it and lost our investment. This was probably my first major endeavor, and it went belly-up.

In the chemical process industry, we were always looking at all sorts of opportunities, and one that worked out fairly well was our association with Maurice A. Knight of Akron, Ohio. Mr. Knight was one of the early pioneers in the development of chemical stoneware. He developed some of the original tower packings such as Bryl saddles and other ceramic pieces that were used for the separation of one element from another when exposed to oxygen. Knight also manufactured a full product line of synthetic rubber liners for steel tanks, floor cements to be used in acid-proof brick floors, and a host of other product lines. When we began to represent Knight's company, we replaced Nukem Products with his product line.

Since we were selling cement for acid-proof floors, I had the idea that we could install brick floors ourselves by hiring the bricklayers. We bid on a job for National Lead of Ohio, and received the contract, which required us to complete the installation while the plant was shut down over the Easter weekend. We found one fellow to supervise the work, Francis Priggie, and then hired the rest of the bricklayers from the union hall. Since the work had to be done over the three-day period, we worked 24 hours a day to finish the job on time. We bid the job high enough to allow for any contingencies, but since it was our first job, the level of workmanship was not great. As a matter of fact, we did not level the floor prior to the installation of the brick, and when the floor was finished, it followed the contour of the concrete base, which wasn't too smooth. But it was acceptable for the uranium refining facility at Fernald, so our first floor installation was far from a failure. After this experience, we began to get more jobs installing acid-proof brick floors, and this venture generated fairly decent income for us.

Another product line we found to represent was the Illinois Water Treatment Company in Rockford, Illinois. Wally Morrison, the founder of the company (who is another candidate for special characters in my life), was a chemist who started selling water softeners in Illinois, then started his own company. He not only manufactured softeners, but also came up with ways to use the synthetic resins being produced by a number of chemical companies for ion exchange. He coined the word deionizers, and his product simply removed all dissolved solids from water so what was left was extremely pure water that could be controlled and used for a variety of purposes. Companies in the metal-finishing industry, such as Frigidaire and the other appliance manufacturers, used deionized water for their rinsing operations prior to anodizing, which provided a large market for this type of equipment in our area.

We had good success with the Illinois Water Treatment Company and were consistently one of the top five producers for the company. Their product line was also extensively used in the utility industry, where very pure water was needed for high-pressure boilers. When we took on this new product line, I had a difficult time personally understanding the applications of the equipment, because it was much more of a chemical process than a mechanical procedure. I

needed to understand a lot more about chemistry to understand how the equipment worked, and I spent many an evening studying and reading about the applications of the new product.

We had a contact with Frigidaire in Dayton named Bud Wise. Bud was known to enjoy an evening's entertainment, and he got along with Wally Morrison famously, so we picked up on this relationship. It worked out so well that every year we would get a sizable order from Frigidaire for ionization equipment as they continued to expand their facilities. They totally relied on us for new equipment and for service, and we began to do the replacement of the resin in the large ion exchange tanks at regular intervals. This repeat servicing of the equipment involved some outside contractors as well as our own people, but this was another fairly lucrative activity.

We got into a field that was quite a bit different from our normal lines when we began representing the R. P. Adams Company in Buffalo, New York. Ray Adams was a sales engineer with Worthington Pump prior to World War II. The company he founded manufactured aftercoolers, devices that were really heat exchangers, used with the air compressors that Worthington built. Adams also manufactured a small air-filtration unit that used ceramic elements.

Since he had started his own company prior to World War II, he was able to pick up a number of government contracts during the war. The government built a new plant for the manufacture of these items for wartime use, and after the war was over, he was able to purchase the plant at a discounted value compared to its original cost.

Ray expanded his line of ceramic filter media pressure filtration equipment for chemical applications as well as for low solids water. The Adams Company equipment did not compete with sand filters or other types of filtration equipment, but was basically used as "polish" filters. One of their units was very suitable for swimming pool filtration.

In the early 1960s, neighborhood swim clubs started to appear in all the suburban areas. A group of residents in a community would combine their resources, purchase three to five acres of property, and put in a swimming pool and clubhouse.

I developed a contact in Erlanger, Kentucky who specialized in designing these pools. I eventually sold this individual the filtration equipment and all the accessory items attendant to swimming pool operation, including ladders, lights, diving boards, ropes—a full line of pool equipment. We also assumed responsibility for starting the filtration equipment, and it was always a ritual on start-up to fill the pool and run through the filtration equipment checklist at the same time, which invariably meant 20 to 24 hours of continuous lead time to make sure everything was operating properly.

One summer in particular, we had about three or four swimming pool start-up operations. We had to teach the managers of the pools how to operate the filtration equipment as well as the chlorination equipment, to make sure that the water was not only clean but had proper amounts of chlorine to handle any residual bacteria. The pool managers were usually physical education teachers from the local high school who had little or no mechanical aptitude, so the burden of

maintaining the equipment and making sure everything worked smoothly fell to us. Norma will tell you about one summer she spent "back washing" swimming pool filters.

Despite all these interesting sidelines, the emphasis of the business continued to focus on the development of the distributor side of the business, where I had more control over my own destiny. We could control our pricing and costs for a more predictable profit. However, our capital was generated out of profits, so the capital picture was always challenging. The number of employees grew, the product lines grew, and we continued to get involved in other activities, all of which required capital, which I never had.

In the 1970s we had the opportunity for a major expansion of our distributor business in our core product lines by becoming a Viking distributor. Viking manufactured a positive displacement pump that Procter & Gamble used in abundance. We took the opportunity, and it proved to be an excellent move that led to an offer by Allis Chalmers to distribute their full line of centrifugal pumps. We were now into the pump distribution business in a major way. The replacement and parts business alone were quite substantial for both product lines.

My son-in-law, Duane Larock, came into the business in 1969, and showed an immediate interest in the company. I worked hard to encourage his interest, and asked him to go to Louisville to gain some outside selling experience away from my eyes, to give him a chance to develop on his own. He accepted the challenge and did very well at it. After several years in Louisville, he came back to Cincinnati to play a more active role in RAM, Inc.

A NEW GENERATION TAKES OVER

I have described how our product lines grew in many directions. We had no fear of taking on anything that was even remotely related to our current lines and sidelines, and we were always adding new products to our arsenal. During the 31 years the company was in business prior to the turnover of management to Duane and sales engineers Kevin Delaney, Tom McTiernan, and Dave Strader, I think we represented nearly 100 different manufacturers of goods, many of whom had multiple product lines. Each new product represented an educational process for me—not only did I have to be highly conversant with a product and to understand the potential applications for it, I also had to train each of our new sales representatives.

Our product lines generally fit into four major classifications: pumps, fluid and mixing machinery, corrosion-resistant products, and a catch-all category of other chemical process equipment. At one time, I wanted to have a manager over each one of these product line classifications, operating with coverage throughout the territory. I actually structured the company this way for a while. It was not extremely successful, but it did work.

There was always a problem of recruiting, training, and maintaining a strong sales force. Due to the nature of the business, very little capital was required for someone to start their own company, so any number of individuals came to me looking for a position as a sales engineer with the thought in mind of going out on their own after a few years. As a result, probably 12 to 14 sales agencies were spawned by my company. Some were eminently successful and others not

successful at all. I was never happy with the turnover of employees, and I was frustrated by the inability to maintain strong sales people within the organization.

The financial structure of the company did not really allow for partnership involvement, and as a matter of fact, I never felt comfortable sharing the responsibilities—both the successes and the failures—of the company with anyone else. I always believed this would put me in a difficult position, and I sidestepped the situation by avoiding partnership opportunities. Partnerships may be good for some people, but I simply did not have the temperament or the need for that kind of business involvement.

On the other hand, I always believed strongly in providing the best training for my employees. At least once every year, I organized a formal training program. We brought all the individuals in the organization to Cincinnati along with representatives from each of our suppliers, who were invited to spend time educating and updating our people. I knew that a well-informed organization was absolutely imperative to our business success. I usually handled the sales training myself, and had others handle the more technical areas of the training.

Financially, the company grew over the decades I operated the business as follows:

Revenue Compound Annual Growth by Decade

1952–1960	21%
1961–1970	10%
1971–1980	22%
1981–1983	20%

Over the same 30-year period, the average yearly increase net worth approximated 23 percent. We never had any accounts payable more than 60 days due, and we never accepted any subsidies or grants. The company was only involved in one lawsuit, and in that action, the manufacturer was the principal defendant; we participated as a second party. The suit was settled without court action. As far as I know, our representatives are still welcome to this day at every major user of our product lines in our territory. My integrity in the business was never challenged, as I did not compromise on any dealing or transaction, either with the principal or with the customer, that would taint our company's reputation in the business.

In 1983, we were fortunate to have the opportunity to arrange a buy-out of the company by Duane and Judy, along with three of the principal sales engineers. The buy-out was arranged to extend over a 10-year period, without any substantial contributions of cash. I am pleased to say that the business has operated very successfully under Duane's capable management, and has even reached a new plateau of success. My hope and prayer is that the company will continue to exist and to be a success into a third generation.

PRODUCTS



Ray Mueller



Chas. Mueller

- Fluid Agitation** — Chemineer
- Pumps** — Labour Alloy Centrifugal
- Amer. Meter Proportioning
- Eco Engineering Co.
- Sigmamator Lab.
- Grace Air Operated
- *Mixer/Blender** — Littleford "Lodge"
- *Spray Dryers** — Bowen Engineering Co.
- Fans and Blowers** — Robinson Ventilating Co.
- Acid-proof Equip.** — Maurice A. Knight Co.
- * — Corlite Reynolds Co.
- Fluid Treatment** — Illinois Water Treatment Co.
- R. P. Adams Filters
- Heat Apparatus** — Adams Exchangers
- Carbone Graphite Exchangers
- Thermal Research and Engineers
- Dean Panelcoils
- Non-Metallic Pipe** — Fibercast Epoxy — Polyester
- * — Cabot Corp., Cab-XL
- Flexible Hoses** — Titeflex Teflon and Allied Stainless
- *Butterfly Valves** — Mosites Rubber Co.
- Corrosion Resistant Floors and Acid-proof Cements**

*Indicates change or addition



John E. Shields

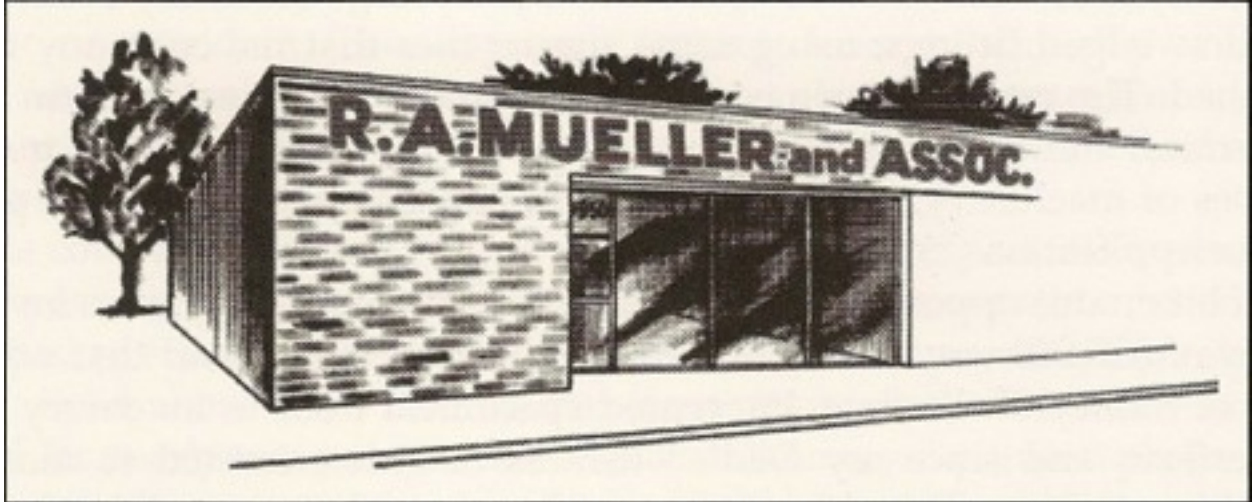


J. R. "Bob" Rooney
Louisville Representative



Joel Bledsoe
Charleston Representative

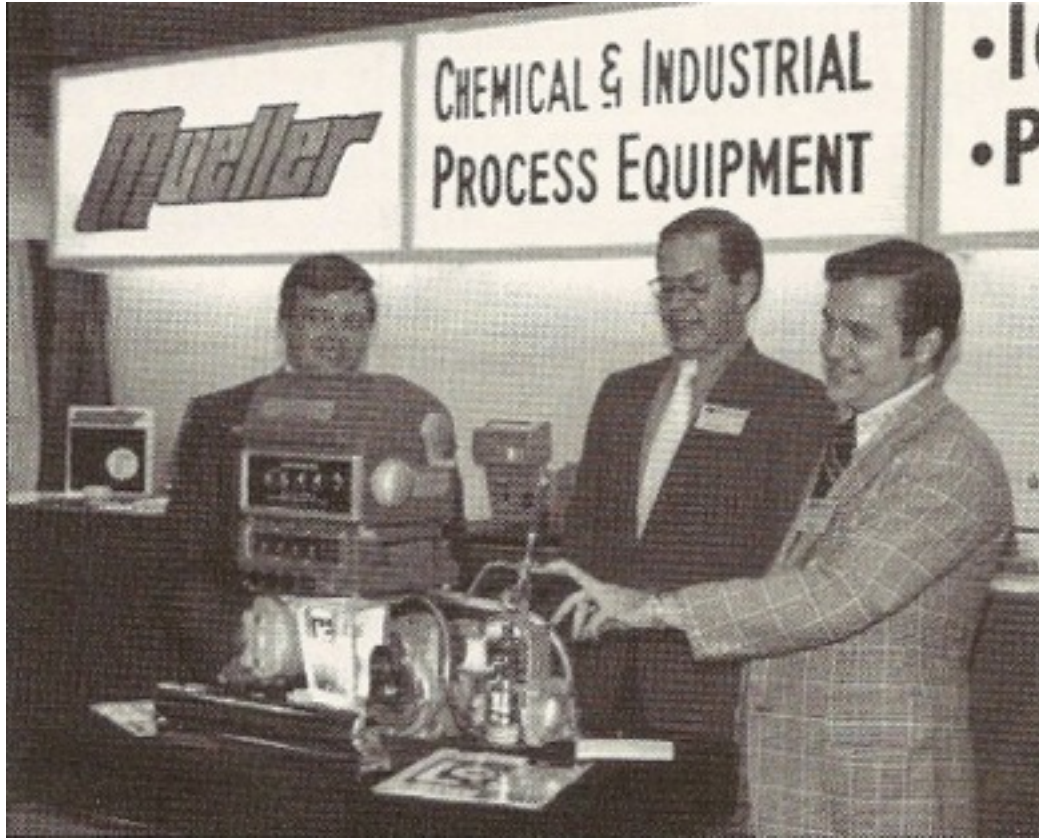
Our Associates and Products in 1960—A Good Year



New Bond Hill Headquarters for R.A. Mueller, Inc., with Office and Warehouse Space



Norma—the Accounting Department



RAM, Inc. Booth at Industrial Trade Show



Duane and His Sons Matt and Mike Investigate RAM, Inc. Inventory



R.A. Mueller, Inc. Headquarters in Blue Ash, Ohio

The Athlete?

*God gives us the nuts,
but he does not crack them.
German proverb*

My athletic ability was always what you might call “suspect”. I was interested in sports, but never pursued any one long enough to become proficient at it. On the other hand, I could usually compete in almost any kind of physical activity I decided to try.

As I said earlier, I never had the chance to play any organized sports in school. In those early years, sports teams simply were not available to me. If I had been given the opportunity, I believe I would have taken advantage of it.

ADOLESCENT AMUSEMENTS

When we were kids, we tried nearly everything on our vacant lot. We also swam in the Ohio River, but there wasn't much opportunity for any other kinds of water sports. There were no swimming pools in Bellevue, Kentucky, back then. We played baseball in the Knothole league, as I mentioned, so there was some organization, but we never had a teacher or coach to teach us the fundamentals of the game. Whatever we did, we learned on our own. However, I know I had enough exposure to the game of baseball to develop my interest as a spectator, and I have enjoyed that aspect of the game throughout my life.

Along with swimming, we also fished in the Ohio River, and that just about covered my introduction to the world of water sports. The river was only five blocks north of our O'Fallon Avenue home and we spent a good deal of the summer on the banks of the Ohio. We swam with or without clothing, depending on who was on the beach. The riverboat that made three trips a day to Coney Island, about 10 miles east of downtown Cincinnati, was always a source of excitement—and big waves. We would swim from the beach to the rear of the boat where the paddle wheel would generate waves three to four feet high. The river had a fairly strong current that sometimes carried us a few blocks downstream. The trip to “catch the waves” usually took an hour or so of continuous swimming.

The boat, the *Island Queen*, was unique. It had a capacity of perhaps a thousand people, and passengers boarded at the foot of Broadway in downtown Cincinnati. As it made its way to Coney Island, food and drink were available, as well as entertainment in the form of a calliope, dance bands on certain nights of the week, and a top deck for moonlight enjoyment.

Fishing in the river was different. We didn't have a rod and reel, so we baited hooks with worms or chicken scraps on a "throw line" that was about 100 feet long. We wheeled in the line at shore, threw it as far as we could, and hoped for the best. Once in a while we would catch a 15- to 20-inch catfish that was marginally edible. At that time, there were no sewage treatment plants in Northern Kentucky or Cincinnati; all the raw sewage was just dumped into the river. We did stay upstream of the main sewage lines whenever possible, so we didn't notice the effects of the sewage for the most part.

I talked about my early exposure to baseball in Chapter 1. The high school I attended had no organized sports, so there was no football or basketball, not even intramural volleyball or soccer. There were very few people playing tennis in Bellevue, and even fewer tennis courts, so I can't say we ever thought about that particular sport. Golf was pretty much out of the question, except for a few occasions when I had a chance to play as a caddie at the Highland Country Club. I couldn't have played anywhere else even if I had wanted to, because there were few municipal or public courses available.

BOWLING, GOLF, AND MORE FISHING

My first opportunity to think about participating in sports again after my illness didn't come until we moved to Tennessee. There we met another couple who were interested in fishing and bowling. The projects of the Tennessee Valley Authority had created a lot of lakes that provided a broad choice of great fishing. I started to fish on a regular basis with Floyd Shepherd and we always caught our share of bass and other kinds of fish. Invariably, we managed to catch enough to provide fish for several meals the following week.

As a couple, Norma and I bowled with the Shepherds at the small bowling alley in town. This led to my joining a church league in Knoxville. I got to enjoy bowling to the point that it became almost an obsession with me. Later on, when we lived in Ft. Wright, I bowled in two different leagues, finally making it to a major league where the minimum average was 180. I managed to get to this level, but it required a lot of intensive practice to maintain it. At the time, I was trying to operate a business with a heavy travel schedule, so it became too difficult to continue bowling at that level, and I had to drop out. I did continue to bowl for a number of years on a social level at the Cincinnati Club.

In about 1954, four of us living in Ft. Wright got together and started to play golf at Twin Oaks, a public course in Latonia, Kentucky. John McCormack had played golf since childhood at Twin Oaks, so he was pretty good (handicap about 8). Bob Lemker played on his high school golf team, and he was pretty good (handicap about 9 or 10). Then there was Freddie Wolnitzek, who had never played, and me, who played very little. So we started with two reasonably good golfers and two hackers. The foursome remained together, playing every week whenever our schedules and weather permitted for nearly 25 years.

I remember there were some pretty tense times when we were all strung out from our business or personal situations, and things exploded on the golf course. There were occasions when we did not speak to each other except to play golf, but the game endured. The round of

golf was always followed by several hours of cards—gin rummy—which also got us in trouble at home on occasion.

I worked hard at trying to improve my golf swing. I carried clubs with me when I traveled to West Virginia or Louisville, and in the evenings, instead of spending time at the bar, I would go to a driving range in the area. Sometimes I would get a game in the late afternoon with a customer I was trying to cultivate. This was a healthy activity and I enjoyed it very much.

In 1955, the four of us decided to join Summit Hills Country Club. The initiation fee was \$1200, payable over three years, and dues were \$600 a year. Norma started to play golf after we joined, even though she had never swung a club before. She and Norma McCormack had trouble getting games, because they were just starting. Ruth Wolnitzek played very little, but Jeanne Lemker played a lot of golf in college, so she played with the better lady golfers.

My business took up a lot of my time, but I found that golf provided physical activity along with a strong social outlet, and in some cases, it even provided a source of business contacts that paid big dividends. I used the game of golf very effectively with prime customers at RAM, Inc.

My handicap got down to 9 in the late 1960s. I was playing every chance I got, but I always kept my priorities in the proper perspective: family obligations came first, business was second, and then I made time for golf. That single-digit handicap was the lowest I could ever boast of; since then my handicap has steadily gone up, so that as this is written, I have an average handicap of 15 to 16.

Fishing is the other major physical (?) activity that has constituted a good part of my athletic prowess. I started fishing in the lakes of Tennessee in the late 1940s, but my interest didn't pick up much impetus until the early 1960s, when I met Paul Hock. Paul liked to go on fishing trips, and he and I would organize a group of guys and head to Canada for three or four days, usually in the last week of September. Most of these trips included some members of the Round Table at the Cincinnati Club.

We chartered a plane and flew to Barney's or Dutch Ackerman's, near Kenora, Ontario, which is about 100 miles east of Winnipeg, Manitoba. It was great. Our morning catch was prepared by the Indian guides for our shore lunch—all walleye, a delicious fish deep fried in lard. Add a little fish chowder made from a private Indian recipe, fresh corn on the cob, and a couple of LaBatts or Mooseheads, then a short nap. Very, very relaxing.

As our families grew, Paul and I thought it would be a good idea to take our children with us on these trips. For a number of years, my son David, Paul's two boys, Jeff and Gary, and several others accompanied us. Later, when I had the Aztec, David and I would fly the plane up on fishing trips. However, it was limited to four passengers, with David and me flying. Paul's company had a Beech King Air that could accommodate eight passengers, so on several occasions we flew it to Canada.

Paul and I also took some more exotic trips, once going to Great Bear Lake, just south of the Arctic Circle. We took a side trip to the Arctic Circle to visit a small Eskimo village run by a

missionary. The missionary was a very impressive individual; the Eskimos, however, had abandoned their dog sleds in favor of snowmobiles.

We were the first fishermen to fish Great Bear Lake after the thaw that year. The water was so clear, we could actually watch the large trout go after our bait. We caught big lake trout on that trip. The largest one weighed over 30 lbs. After the first few days, we only fished for trophy fish.

On another occasion, we went to Glacier National Park, just northwest of Juneau, Alaska. We stayed at the park lodge and fished for grayling, trout, char, and salmon. One morning, Paul and I were fishing with another angler at a small pond with a nice stream for trout. There was a small fishing boat that the other fellow and I used to get across the pond, and we left Paul with the fish he had caught lying on the rock beside him. Paul was fishing off the shore when a black bear came out of the brush. He hollered to us, "Hey, look at the big black dog!" He thought it was funny and started to swing at the bear with his fishing rod. Fortunately, the bear really wasn't interested in him as much as he was in the fish along side of him. The bear gathered up the fish and went back into the woods.

Another trip took us to the Everglades in south Florida. About 20 of our cronies from the Cincinnati Club joined Paul and me for the trip. It was the first time we saw Naples, Florida, where we later decided to jointly purchase a condo. The Everglades offered a totally different fishing experience. There were lots of small game fish, and it was very enjoyable. This trip gave us the idea to start a fishing and hunting club within the Cincinnati Club. Paul and I organized it and called it the Fin & Feather. At last count, there were over 100 men belonging to this club, and it is still going strong.

Since these trips, I've been to the Bahamas for the bill fishing tournament with David; I've gone bone fishing at Andros Island in the Bahamas; and I've enjoyed many, many fishing trips to Chokoloskee, Florida, midway between Miami and Naples.

A HUNTING TRIP

I briefly mentioned hunting when I talked about the Fin & Feather Club we started. But I never really warmed up to the idea of killing a wild animal. I had never learned to use a gun, nor did I ever own one. However, a few years ago, my son-in-law Duane invited me to join him and his brother-in-law Bill Leech on a trip to Labrador in northeastern Canada, to hunt for caribou and fish for trout and grayling. I agreed to go.

The arrangements were primitive, sleeping in a tent and carrying our own provisions. There were no showers, no water at all other than the fresh water of the lake.

We flew to Shefferville, three hours jet flying time north of Montreal, where we boarded a float plane for another hour to our camp site. The plane dropped us off there, along with our provisions for a week of fishing and hunting. We had K rations with us in case our luck was not too good hunting and fishing.

The site was on the tundra, above the tree line, so trees were very sparse. I had never used a gun, but Bill brought one along for me to use. Duane showed me how to aim and fire it.

We stalked caribou for days. We saw plenty of does, but did not bother to shoot any—we wanted a buck. Finally, on about the third day out, we returned to our campsite and saw this big buck caribou only 50 feet from our tent. Excitement took over, and both Bill and Duane fired at the animal. Duane's shot hit the target, felling the caribou.

The next step was to butcher the animal. The plan was to save the tenderloin for our next meal, keep the head to be mounted in our Michigan home, and dispose of the remains. Bill had lots of experience with this, and he and Duane handled the task like true professionals. I tried to stay out of the way as much as possible.

Bill cooked the tenderloin the next evening. To my taste, it was horrible. Very chewy, difficult to eat, and with an extremely strong flavor. I ate a little of it, but finished up with K rations.

We fished a little on that trip, too, and had luck with grayling. These were filleted and cooked over the fire, and they were delicious, much more to my taste.

Since we had no contact with the outside world for a week, I was really pleased to see the plane when it came to pick us up. It was a great trip, I enjoyed it very much, but I have no desire to live in the wilderness for a week again. The appeal of a hot shower, warm meals, and a comfortable bed is too great to give them up for a tent pitched in the middle of nowhere.

STILL “ON COURSE”

“Low-coordination days”, as I refer to my bad golf rounds, sometimes frustrate me in my attempts to continue with aggressive golf activity, but I always enjoy the fellowship on the course, so golf does dominate my athletic endeavors as I get older. Thank God—I found a game that gives me a great deal of enjoyment in many different social as well as competitive environments.

SPECTATOR SPORTS

I have always enjoyed sports as a spectator, and every morning I begin the day by looking at the sports section of the newspaper, following whatever sports are being played each season. As a youth, I was completely absorbed by the records and performances of the Cincinnati Reds. A win or a loss by that team could set the mood for the entire day. If the Reds won, my friends and I would be in a fine humor, but of course, if they lost, the opposite was true. As an adult, I had season tickets to see the Reds play for more than 40 years.

When the Cincinnati Bengals franchise was awarded in 1968, we purchased four seasons tickets, and today we have ten seasons tickets for Cincinnati games. For many years our Sunday social activity was planned around the Bengals' home games. We made an event out of the outing to watch the Bengals play, and went out to dinner afterwards at the Cincinnati Club or some other nice restaurant. We went to the two Super Bowl games in which the Bengals were participants, in Pontiac, Michigan in 1982, and in Miami, Florida in 1989. We have always been dedicated followers of the Cincinnati sports scene.



The Original Foursome: John McCormack, Ray Mueller, Bob Lemker, and Fred Wolnitzek



The Golfers, 25 Years Later



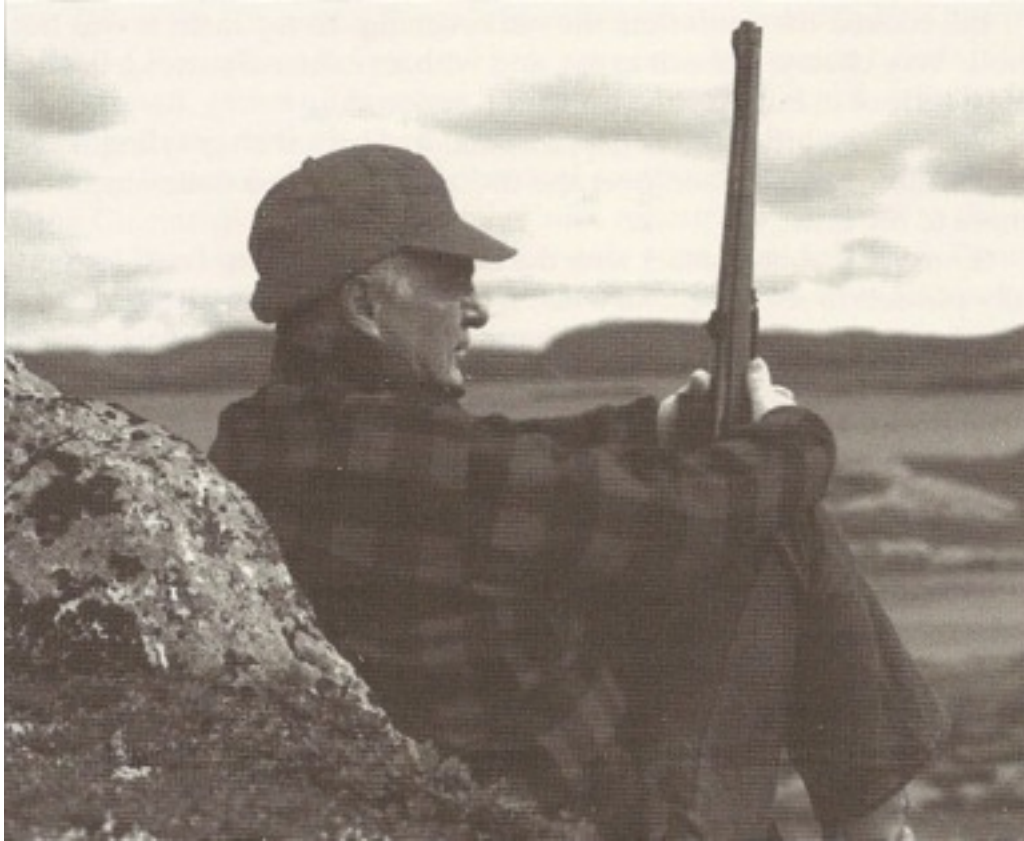
Good Swing!



Our Guides and Paul Hock, Ray Mueller, and Fred Wolnitzek with the Catch at Great Bear Lake, Canada



Fishing in Florida—Paul, Howard, Louie, Freeman, David, and Me



Ready for the Kill?



At the Super Bowl in Pontiac, Michigan, January 1982

Fly Boy

*The exhilaration of flight
fascinates humanity.
R.A.M.*

LEARNING TO FLY

It was March 1965 when I finally took the big step and first made an inquiry into learning to fly at Lunken Airport. I had things generally in order at the company, so I could get away for an hour or two on infrequent days. With weather, an instructor, and equipment all cooperating, I could find time to learn to fly. But I found out that just because you make an appointment to fly, it does not necessarily work out, because there are a lot of other variables that have to fall in place.

It took me a considerable amount of time to solo and get my license because all of the necessary conditions were not easily met, not to mention trying to work out my own schedule to accommodate flying lessons. So in March 1965, looking at my log book, I note that I flew just five hours for the entire month. The next month, April, I flew a total of six hours, so for a two-month period, I had only been in the air for 11 hours. I did solo on May 13, nearly 60 days after I started lessons, with a total flying instruction time of about 17 hours. In learning to fly, that is the first plateau, and it is not easily achievable. A little over a month later, I flew my first solo cross-country, from Cincinnati to Montgomery County, Ohio, elapsed flying time of approximately 45 minutes, none of which were totally confident and without white knuckles.

For the next month or so, I did nothing but fly solo cross-country. Most of the flights were two hours or less in length. By the middle of July, I had approximately 40 hours of flight time built up, when travel with my family and other commitments caused me to lay off flying for about two months. I did not fly again until the middle of September.

My log book recalls one very interesting flight that I made to Columbus, Ohio. I had a business appointment at a manufacturing plant in Columbus, so I thought I could get a little time in on the airplane while making the business call, since that was why I had taken up flying in the first place. I left Lunken Airport at about eight in the morning, for a scheduled one-hour flight. I was not using the radio for navigation, but instead used the charts as I was taught, without the aid of any radio navigation. I thought I knew every square foot of southern Ohio, so there was little or no chance of my getting lost or having any navigation problems. How wrong I was. There was a wind from the northwest at about 20 miles per hour that I did not correct for. After about 20 or

30 minutes in the air, the terrain was unfamiliar. That didn't bother me until it continued for another 15 or 20 minutes. I was in typical southern Ohio smog and very unfamiliar surroundings now.

I started to challenge my instruments, finally got to the point where I was a little nervous, and called in to the Columbus radio. They had me identify myself and perform a few maneuvers to be sure it was my plane they were looking at on radar. When they were sure they had identified me, they gave me a heading and said if I held that for three minutes and then looked down, I would see some stacks that could be identified as the Anchor Hocking Glass Company in Lancaster, Ohio. Sure enough, I saw the stacks, and was greatly relieved. Then they gave me an additional heading to the Columbus Airport. As I approached the airport with its many different runways and taxi strips, I was somewhat disoriented and asked the tower to give me a heading for the active runway assigned to me. The tower was very cooperative, and assured me that the runway where I was headed was suitable for landing and I was cleared to land.

When I got down to the ground and taxied to the transit hanger, I was somewhat shaken but glad to know I had completed the flight. The next matter I had to take care of was the business call, which I'm sure now was very unproductive. As a matter of fact, I couldn't wait to climb back into the cockpit to head for Cincinnati and get this cross country behind me. When I did call the tower for take-off instructions, they immediately recognized me as a rookie and took special precautions to make sure that I cleared out of the Columbus area without incident. They gave me altitudes and ground navigation aids, which at that time was identified as Route I-71 to Cincinnati. They pointed out that after a few minutes I should see I-71, and to keep that highway in view and give them a call at the end of their radio range. They warned me that I should not leave Columbus until I had established contact with Cincinnati radio. They wanted to be sure that if I was going to have any problems, it was not going to be on their watch. I was able to follow the instructions they gave me, and made radio contact with Cincinnati. I completed the trip back to Lunken Airport without incident, but with a whole lot more respect for changing conditions when flying.

When I first suggested to Norma that I learn to fly, she told me to go ahead and enjoy flying, but to remember one thing: "Don't expect *me* to fly with you in one of those small airplanes!" She had watched me dress in the morning and do many other things, and she knew that my coordination and faculties were not always as sharp as they ought to be if she was to trust her life to them at a few thousand feet removed from the surface of the earth.

During 1966 and 1967, circumstances were such that I took a furlough on most of my flying activities, and really did not get back into flying of any consequence until March 1969, nearly four years after I first started taking lessons. But the bug hit again pretty hard that March, when Dr. Glenn Overley of Mariemont approached me about sharing ownership of a Beechcraft Debonair identified as 7993 Mike. He and I bought the airplane together, and at that point, I started to fly on a regular basis. I began to really apply time, and used it to fly to a number of areas including Elkhart, Indiana, where the Labour Pump Company was located; Rockford, Illinois, the location of Illinois Water Treatment Company; North Branch, New Jersey, the home

of Bowen Engineering; and many other areas such as the distant points in our normal sales territory, from the chemical complexes near Parkersburg, West Virginia, to the industrial district around Calvert City, Kentucky.

I also realized that if I was going to get full utility out of the craft, I needed to get an instrument rating. In November 1970, I started to work very hard to upgrade my license to include instrument flying conditions. While David was at flight school at Opa-Locka, Florida, I spent about three days at Ft. Lauderdale in a Link trainer getting additional instrument time. Throughout the spring of 1971, I built up a lot of time flying instruments.

My instructor at that time was J. P. Uihlein, a strong disciplinarian of German ancestry who really wore me down, usually on Sunday mornings, shooting approaches under the hood. However, I had the persistence to stay with it, and on February 28, 1973, with about 180 hours of instrument time with an instructor out of a total of 360 hours of flying time, I received my instrument rating. It was nearly eight years to the day after I had taken my first flying lesson, but I was now a 50 percent owner of a Debonair and fully qualified to fly as a private pilot with an instrument rating. Perhaps one of the motivations for the work required in learning to fly was to pursue an activity that resulted in a certificate of accomplishment.

At that point, I started to think more in terms of flying a multi-engine aircraft. I sold Dr. Overly my interest in the Debonair and purchased a used Aztec that was a business asset owned by R.A. Mueller, Inc. This meant that I now had to start the learning process over again and learn to fly a twin-engine aircraft. On July 11, 1973, I received my multi engine rating.

FLYING FOR FUN

I had a great deal of fun with the Aztec, flying whenever the opportunity was available. My log book shows regular flights to the Charleston office; to Rockford, Illinois; Elkhart, Indiana; Duke Medical Center at Durham, North Carolina; Birmingham, Alabama; and many, many other cities where I had business interests. Sometime during this period, I was able to convince Norma to make a trip with me. Later, I heard her mention at a cocktail party how much she enjoyed the weekend when we flew to Cape Cod in our own aircraft. We also flew the plane to Naples, Florida on two different occasions.

We used the plane for a variety of reasons. A group of six of us flew to Kenora, Canada on a fishing trip as I mentioned earlier, and we flew it on several golfing trips, one to Callaway Gardens, and several times to Boyne Mountain in Michigan, where we became acquainted with the Harbor Springs area.

Flying an aircraft is a great confidence booster. It builds discipline, and you must have mechanical aptitude, be sensitive to weather conditions, understand communications, and generally learn to keep your wits about you at all times when you are flying.

Probably my most outstanding story about flying involves a time in 1976, when Judy and Duane and their sons Matt and Mike flew to Cape Cod for a few days with Norma and me. Our first stop for refueling was in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, where the airport is at an altitude of

about 3000 feet. As I approached the airport, the controller kept me up at an altitude of about 8000 feet, and because of traffic conditions, would not let me descend to a lower altitude. We passed over the airport when we finally got clearance to land, and the controller asked for a rapid descent rate. I put the nose down and took the aircraft in as fast as allowable, which meant that the passengers in the back seat of the aircraft, who happened to be Norma and Matthew (age about five years), had their weight shifted forward so they were pretty much held into the seat by their seat belts. As we went down to about 1500 feet above the landing strip, Matt remarked to his grandmother, "Grandma, this tickles my penis."

Norma said to me, "Now I have a better appreciation of why you like to fly the airplane." I'm not sure that was true, but it was probably one of the more humorous things that happened to me while flying the aircraft.

REFLECTIONS ON FLYING

My greatest satisfaction in flying my own aircraft was the feeling of accomplishment. There were so many other things I started but never completed. Flying represented a departure for me, and a change of pace from my business as well as from golf and the other recreational hobbies I had tried previously.

Flying an airplane requires intense concentration and focus. Because of this, I found that flying my own plane was not useful to me as a business tool. When I had to work all day and then fly home, I was often much too tired to take the responsibility of piloting a plane, particularly in marginal weather; which there was always a lot of in the Ohio River Valley.

For recreation, however, it was great. It was just that combining the recreation of flying with business simply did not work in my case. But flying proved to be very beneficial to David when he was in his late teens. After he got his pilot's license, he was able to build time in the Aztec and help me in a variety of ways. His early experiences flying that plane marked the start of his own career, which eventually led to the formation of Comair.

For myself, piloting a small plane gave me an appreciation of the airline industry, and a small insight in to the problems of maintaining a rigid flight schedule and serving the demands of commercial aviation. Dependability and reliability, on-time service and comfortable flying conditions, are all expected by the paying passenger. Forget the problems and the excuses, I learned; just deliver quality air transportation.

Flying has also given me respect for the elements of nature, the mechanical designs of aircraft, and the need for constant surveillance in all aspects of commercial aviation. My training as a pilot was very useful to me when I began to consider investing in Comair and when we were getting the airline established. Some say a little knowledge can be dangerous, but in this case, my experience gave me the background I needed to be a founder of Comair so it served a very worthwhile purpose.



I Passed the Test!



David and Me Flying the Aztec 100 RM

Comair and a New Career

*When we build...let it not be for personal
delights or glory nor for present use alone.
Let it be such work as our descendants
will thank us for, and let us think...
that a time is to come when these stones will
be held sacred because our hands have
touched them, and that men will say as they
look upon our labor, 'See!
This our fathers did for us!'
John Ruskin*

It was the fall of 1976. Norma and I had designed our “dream house,” a California ranch on 10 acres with a lake in a very nice suburban community of Northern Kentucky, and were in the process of finishing construction on our new home. We had a great condo on the beach in Naples, Florida, where we had also joined a new country club. We were both 55 years old, and had started positioning ourselves for our later years. Naples was very appealing as a retirement area.

Our children had settled into their own lives, and they appeared to me to be in good shape. They were all married with children, living in nice homes, struggling as we had, raising their children, and pursuing the kinds of activities that young people did during the 1970s. Our oldest daughter, Gloria, lived in Haddenfield, New Jersey, where her spouse worked with an advertising firm. Judy lived in Cincinnati, and her husband Duane had come into the business with me. Our son David lived in Northern Kentucky and he worked as a corporate pilot for a local bank.

RAM, Inc. was nearly 25 years old. It was a stable company with reasonably predictable business, affected by the cyclical curve of the process industries. It was performing profitably and Duane was interested in a management position. The company was structured in such a way that I now had considerable freedom to travel, and it provided Norma and me with the financial resources to support the kind of lifestyle we had come to enjoy.

RECOGNIZING A MARKET NICHE

As a corporate pilot, David spent a lot of time in the FBO (Fixed-Base Operation) at Greater Cincinnati Airport. He and the other pilots, along with the usual group of “wannabes,” discussed the changes taking place in the airline industry (along with every other subject, I’m sure). At that

time, all commercial airline schedules were under the control of the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB). The activities of the airlines were strictly regulated by the federal government.

However, in the early 1970s, there was a lot of talk about deregulation, which would allow airlines to operate in any domestic market they wanted. By the mid-1970s, most of the major airlines had converted their fleets to all jet aircraft, each capable of carrying 100 passengers or more. Jet planes had been designed when fuel prices were low, in the range of 25¢ a gallon, and jet engines were not as fuel-efficient as turbo-prop models. Now fuel prices were steadily rising. Meanwhile, inflation had caused the cost of capital to skyrocket into double digits. Since the government controlled airline ticket prices and agreed to increases to allow for wage escalation, labor costs were also among the highest in any industry.

If you take into account these four major factors affecting the industry in the 1970s—inefficient fuel economy, large-capacity aircraft, rising fuel prices, and high labor costs— it became obvious that the major airlines in the country would deploy their equipment in the most potentially profitable routes if the government decided to allow deregulation.

Even though deregulation had not yet been approved, several of the airlines had started to abandon the short-haul, medium-sized markets, such as Cincinnati to Akron, Cincinnati to Evansville, and Cincinnati to Cleveland routes. This movement by the established air carriers created a market niche that gave a small airline a chance to get started by providing service for the shorter, less-traveled routes. The CAB did not control any carrier with equipment that carried less than 19 passengers. A small start-up airline did need to get a certificate of worthiness based on financial standing, qualifications of management, Federal Aviation Administration and CAB restrictions, and a host of other considerations, but most of these could be approved by the local office of the FAA.

David and his friends at the airport figured out how they could get the certificate, and they put together some financial data that showed a projected profit. But they could not come up with a plan for capitalization or find a financial “angel.” Of course, David talked to me about it, showed me the plans, and pursued the subject with me whenever he had the chance. None of his group of associates had any business experience; they were all in their mid-twenties.

I listened, because I certainly wanted to encourage my son in any endeavor that had a reasonable chance for success, but I resisted his “pitch” for several months. However, the more I looked at it, the better the opportunity appeared, and finally it caught my interest. There was just one problem. At age 55, I was looking for less work rather than more. And while we had sufficient money to support our retirement, we did not have the money to invest in a new business, so it seemed like a rather foolish move for me to get involved in such a venture.

Still, the entrepreneurial spirit had surfaced, and I started to talk with my banker about the feasibility of financing several used Navajo planes. At three points over prime, with RAM, Inc. credit on the line, the banker was happy to have the business. He did insist on a personal guarantee on any loans, so we would have to pledge our new home, the Florida apartment, and other personal resources to secure the loan.

My interest grew as I met with the group of pilots. On March 17, 1977, the first meeting of the officers of the new company was held in our home. The officers were Pat Sowers, President; David Mueller, Vice President; and Bob Tranter, Secretary-Treasurer. I was named chairman. The original capitalization included 75 shares each, with \$15,000 from me, \$10,000 from David, \$10,000 from Bob Tranter, and \$9,000 from Pat Sowers. Pat never paid for his stock with cash, so the company's starting cash came to about \$35,000.

We began operations with two Navajos, #N6642L and #N6732L, with my own plane, the Aztec #100 RM, as a back-up. The Navajos were purchased with the bank financing I had previously arranged.

My lawyer, Joseph Summe, became our corporate attorney, and I called upon other business associates to supply the services that the new airline required. Bob Barnes and Bill Cloppert provided our accounting services, and Paul Fielding spent many hours getting insurance coverage for the operation. All of these gentlemen did the work required for deferred fees or discounted charges to ease the cash flow.

Our first month's gross revenue was \$14,884.42, with an operating loss of \$7,862.18. The second month's revenue was \$30,725.25, with an operating income of \$111.77. The third month's revenue was \$35,767.77, with an operating profit of \$1142.19. We were on our way. We continued to operate the company on a cash-flow basis.

During the rest of 1977, we built up revenue as well as operating profit. Our gross revenue for the nine months of 1977 we were in operation was \$364,694.05, with an operating profit of \$26,396.83.

COPING WITH CHANGE AND LOSS

With this kind of financial performance, it was clear the market niche for a small commuter airline was truly there. It was also apparent that if we were to continue to grow, we needed strong leadership. In a meeting in January 1978, I suggested to the three officers of the company that one of them should assume the role of CEO and the other two should then recognize that individual as the final authority, since there had been considerable bickering among the principals.

At the board meeting in March 1978, it was evident they could not agree on one person to act with final authority, so I proposed that I become president and CEO, with David as general manager. There was no way I could work full time at Comair, as I still needed to run RAM, Inc., but I knew I could communicate with David closely and I trusted his commitment to the job.

The other principals read this as a power play on my part. They thought I was trying to reduce the scope of their own positions and eventually remove them from the company. This certainly was not the case, but the morning after the board meeting, I had letters of resignation from both men, Bob Tranter and Pat Sowers. Since one controlled all the accounting, the finances, ticket pricing and collections, and the procedures for handling tickets through the

clearing house, we had a real problem. The other individual took care of all the station work, the airline's marketing, and the handling of the passengers and baggage.

I tried desperately to talk them out of resigning, which I thought was an emotional reaction on their part. But they would not agree to stay, so we had to move fast to keep the operation going. Since Norma had accounting experience at RAM, Inc., we asked her to help out. We also asked our outside accountant, Bob Barnes, for any help he could give us, knowing full well it was peak tax season. He delegated his associate, Bill Cloppert, to work with us and try to get an understanding of the work at hand. We hired temporary help from Kelly Services. The entire new "accounting group" worked 10 to 12 hours a day for the entire month of March, after which we started to see daylight and we had the chance to hire another full-time accountant.

Our attorney, Joe Summe, recommended we buy out the stock of the two men who had left the company for \$35,000 each, payable over three years interest-free, to clear any obligation of the company to them. Fortunately, we did do this, even though it was a painful decision.

When we came home from the office on Good Friday, March 26, 1978, Norma had a phone call from her sister-in-law Betty in Norwood telling her to come to the house right away because Norma's mother was very ill. We went immediately, and the doctor met us there. The doctor said she probably had a stomach condition that caused excessive bleeding the night before, but when we saw her, we knew it was more serious. We called the emergency life squad for an ambulance to get her to the hospital. She died on the way to the hospital. March 1978 was a terrible time in our lives, except for one bright spot—our third grandson, Christopher, was born on March 30, 1978.

Revenue and profits at Comair continued to build throughout 1978 as we added more Navajos, all financed through my banker. By the end of 1978, we had about nine aircraft in our fleet, and we expanded our route system to include Nashville and Knoxville, Tennessee, and Charleston, West Virginia. In the six-month period from April to November 1978, our revenue grew to \$570,169.73, with profits of \$71,553.61.

The Navajo was not a long-term solution for our operation. We needed a larger aircraft designed for heavy-duty commuter-type service (averaging 10 flights a day). Even though forecasters in the industry were predicting a need for approximately 2,000 small-capacity turbo-prop aircraft in the near future, no American manufacturer recognized this market. We had to look to foreign companies for a suitable plane. Companies in the business included Focker, Embrear, Shorts, and Saab-Fairchild.

DEALING WITH DISASTER

Early in the morning on October 8, 1979 I got a phone call at RAM, Inc. from David, who asked that I come to the airport immediately. One of our planes had gone down with seven passengers and the pilot aboard. Navajo 42L had lost power in one engine on take-off, and instead of aborting the take-off, the pilot had decided to continue to climb out, hoping the engine would kick in and he could continue the flight. When he had gained approximately 200 feet of altitude, he made the fatal mistake of deciding to go back to the airport. He had turned into the

bad engine, which caused the plane to lose control and fall to the ground. There were no survivors.

The local media descended, leveling all sorts of vindictive charges against us. Attorney Joe Summe was a God-send during this time. He made sure that every word spoken to the press was carefully chosen to keep our position as clear as possible. One individual, a television newscaster, seemed to want to make it his personal crusade to indict the Mueller family and to do it in any way he could. The media camped on our doorstep with TV cameras, and they wrote endless articles in the papers, bringing up any flaw or weakness they could find inside the company and elsewhere. They did in-depth interviews with the two employees who had left in March 1978, and one of those men accused us of inadequate maintenance procedures. I felt so bad that I did not leave the house for a month to avoid the finger-pointing.

One of the first people on the scene was our insurance adjustor. For some reason that I don't recall now, the insurance company considered not honoring our coverage. This was brutal. A special team was brought in from Chicago, and after several days of interrogating David and me, they decided they would handle our legal defense and hired a local attorney with some experience to represent us in the lawsuits filed against us.

Because of the adverse publicity, our passenger loads in Cincinnati fell to practically zero. Nobody would ride with us. We began to wonder if we could survive in the business. Our total equity was \$153,253, while our operating costs for a full month's schedule were approximately \$200,000. FAA officials were scrutinizing every maintenance procedure we performed, since they were being accused of negligence in inspection. They had installed a full-time resident inspector in our maintenance facility.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) sent out a team from Washington to determine the cause of the accident, and their representatives held daily press conferences.

David and I decided to continue to operate the airline by eliminating many of our flights from Cincinnati and emphasizing flights out of Dayton and other cities. We also had to operate the company on a cash-flow basis, because there was no capital available to us from any source.

In December, our accountant made a mistake while I was out of town—he withdrew funds from a reserve account to make the payroll. This caused my banker of some 20 years to act in a ballistic manner. He came to our office to tell us that he was calling in all our loans, giving us just 30 days to refinance our aircraft and satisfy any other financial arrangements we had with the bank. Our cash had dwindled to the point that we had to get additional funds immediately or discontinue doing business. We talked to a number of banks and to individuals whom we thought might help, but to no avail. Two close friends agreed to put \$50,000 each into the business in exchange for 50 percent equity, but upon further advice from their attorneys, they decided against it.

Early in January 1980, Norma and I were walking along the beach, discussing our options for Comair. We decided that the market niche was still there for someone, that the accident was not caused by anything we were doing wrong, and that if there was some way to keep the business

going, we should do it. There was no debt on our apartment in Florida, so we decided to mortgage the apartment for an additional \$50,000 to invest in Comair. If we continued to operate the company in a way that would maximize our cash flow, we felt we would have enough cash to get us through another three months of operation. We were also able to refinance the aircraft through a high-risk capital firm, paying some five points over the prime rate. Our revenue for the fiscal year ending March 1980 was \$2,657,483, with a loss of \$218,987.

As we anticipated, traffic did begin to build back up as news of the accident waned. By watching every detail, we were able to survive the cash crunch. We still had the problem of dealing with the FAA and the NTSB, however. We spent many hours meeting with lawyers, insurance claim adjusters, and financial people. The FAA finally resolved their issues with us by fining us \$50,000, payable over three years with no interest. The judgement was based on poor record keeping. The insurance company covered all our claims.

BRIGHTER SKIES AHEAD

Throughout 1980, we saw a continued increase in traffic, even though several major companies in the area, notably Procter & Gamble and General Electric, would not allow their employees to fly on the type of planes we used. We knew we had to have better aircraft, and the only suitable plane being manufactured for our kind of service was the Embreair 110, made by Embreair of Brazil. It was an 18-seat, non-pressurized turbo-prop aircraft. We could arrange financing for the new planes through the Banco de Brazil or through private investors. We placed an order for six of the aircraft for delivery in late 1980 and early 1981. It was a courageous move, but we believed in ourselves and the opportunity ahead of us.

In order for us to continue to grow, we needed additional capital. Now that we had survived the accident and the company was again profitable, there were a few interested investors. However, we decided our best opportunity for permanent financing was in the public arena.

Recalling a firm we represented at RAM, Inc., I remembered that when the Chemineer company had gone public for the first time, an individual named Jeff Brausch had been instrumental in the arrangement. I called Jeff, and he told us that first we needed a successful year of operation behind us, so the earliest we could consider “going public” was after the current fiscal year ended on April 1, 1981.

We didn't hesitate, and shortly after the first of April, Jeff did a company profile abstract that he took to Wall Street to find an interested underwriter. The following July, we sold 40 percent of the company for \$3 million, or \$5.00 per share. My stake in the company was \$65,000 and David invested \$10,000, so the family had made a total cash contribution to the company of \$75,000.

Even though the terms of that first offering were very expensive in hindsight, it helped us tremendously to know there were outside investors who supported our endeavor. Now the company had solid financing, planes that were designed for the kind of service we were providing, and an organization that was beginning to attract more qualified people. We were offering an essential transportation service to the traveling public and our image as a potential growth investment opportunity was improving.

On our fifth anniversary, we did an evaluation of the company's progress for our employees and our shareholders. In the 1982 fiscal year, we had an average of 190 employees and a 12-plane schedule. Our fleet consisted of a mix of Metros, Shorts, and Embreair 110s. We flew 138,946 passengers with a flight completion rate of 96 percent and a total RPM (Revenue Passenger Miles) of 23 million. We contracted with the Greater Cincinnati Airport for land and started to build our own hangar for equipment storage and maintenance. The company's paper flow was almost entirely computerized, we sent 25 of our mechanics to Embreair for training, and we began an intensive training program for all employees.

During the rest of the year 1982, we worked to build and solidify the airline. I found myself spending more and more time at Comair and less time at my first business, RAM, Inc. The fiscal year 1982 at RAM, Inc. ended with a loss, and it was the only year in its history that the company had recorded a loss. My brother Charlie suffered artery blockage at about the same time, and had to have bypass surgery in Houston. I began to think that the point had come for me to devote all my time to Comair, and to spin off RAM, Inc. to someone who had the ability and the commitment that company needed.

With the help of Bob Barnes, we set up a 10-year buy-out of RAM, Inc. Our son-in-law Duane and our daughter Judy were the principal shareholders in the buy-out, with three other key employees at RAM, Inc. as minority shareholders. I was free to apply myself to guiding Comair through an exciting period of growth.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE AIRLINE

It was obvious to us that if we were to become a significant airline, we had to ally ourselves with a major carrier, much the same as the U. S. Air program at that time. Since Delta was the prime carrier at the Cincinnati airport, and since we all felt Delta was a premier airline, they were our natural choice. On February 16, 1983, Dave Phillips from our accounting firm, Arthur Andersen, invited me to attend a dinner at the Queen City Club where David Garrett was giving an address at a meeting of the Commonwealth Club. He was the chairman of Delta, and naturally, I jumped at the chance to meet him.

After his speech, I went to the podium to introduce myself. I asked if we could meet with him at his office to discuss working with Delta in areas where they had marginal business and we had much lower operating costs. With a number of well-wishers standing around the podium, it was difficult for him to turn me down. He suggested that I write him with my request, and I saw this as a great opportunity.

I wrote to Mr. Garrett and suggested three different dates for a meeting, thinking it would be hard for him to deny all three possibilities. Meanwhile, David and our marketing department prepared a report that covered all the ways we could work with Delta to our mutual benefit. We had a meeting with the airline on March 15, 1983, at their offices. The chairman was impressed with our presentation, but Delta was not willing to accept the idea of having anyone else handle their passengers. However, after a lot of follow-up conversations, they finally agreed to enter into a marketing plan that allowed us to collaborate and feed Delta traffic.

We made another public offering of stock in June 1983, raising \$15 million. At that time, David asked for the title of CEO, which was fine with me. I retained the position of chairman.

Delta had plans to greatly expand their position in Cincinnati and our marketing plan with them was working well. Then, in August 1984, we got a phone call from Mr. Garrett asking if we would come to see him about the future of our relationship. We had an indication of what the call was about, because Delta had recently purchased a 20 percent interest in a feeder airline in Atlanta called ASA. We knew the price and we set a goal of offering our stock at a 40 percent premium. Comair stock was trading at about \$9.00 per share at the time. Our pitch was to no avail, however. Mr. Garrett said they were prepared to pay market price at sale date and if we were not agreeable, he would understand. In hindsight, I know it was a good deal for the stockholders even at the market value Delta offered for the stock. We accepted their offer, and our arrangement with Delta Airlines was formalized in September 1984.

When we were beginning our negotiations with Delta, we were also looking at new aircraft models again. We were seriously considering a plane being developed by Saab-Fairchild, and in the spring of 1983, the board of directors of Comair visited the Saab-Scania plant in Linköping, Sweden, before making a final decision. After our trip to Sweden, we decided to purchase our new SF 340 planes, which had been designed with GE engines. We committed to these Swedish-built planes in part because of the local connection, since the GE aircraft engine division was located in Cincinnati, and also because of the distinguished reputation of Saab-Fairchild. We were the launch customer for their new aircraft in the United States, and we took our first delivery of the SF 340 planes in the fall of 1984, at about the same time we were entering into our partnership with Delta.

Being a launch customer for a new product has pluses and minuses. The pluses include getting a jump on the competition, as well as the additional support that can be expected from the manufacturer on performance warranties. The minuses include the high risk that actual operation performance may not equal the design criteria.

Our first SF 340 was put into service in April 1984, with two more added the following September. The new aircraft seemed to be operating satisfactorily at first, but then a typical Cincinnati winter settled in, and with the bad weather, we began to have problems. The problems increased until the FAA shut us down during the busy Thanksgiving week, and we stayed shut down until we were able to get our problems resolved. The FAA allowed us to resume operations as soon as we completed replacement of a faulty component. However, with icing and severe weather, we continued to have shut-downs. Each shut-down was expensive and damaging to our reputation for reliability. The problems with the new aircraft were affecting our passenger appeal.

We were not able to get any cooperation from the U.S. office of Saab-Scania, and our problems continued to get worse. Finally, in February 1985 David called me, and I suggested that he set up a time for us to meet with all the top people from Saab-Scania. We would bring our entire management group from Cincinnati to Sweden to discuss solutions to our problems. We made it clear to the manufacturer that we wanted their decision-makers at the meeting, and that

unless we could get satisfactory answers before we left their headquarters in Linköping, we would cancel our remaining order for their planes. This got their attention.

On February 13, 1985, David and I went to the Saab-Scania factory, taking along our maintenance chief, our operations manager, our financial director, and our marketing manager. We arrived at their plant early in the morning, and they began to offer us alibis and excuses for the problems, but we were having none of it. We insisted that unless they offered us a satisfactory agreement that would resolve all of our problems before we left that evening, we were not going to accept delivery of any additional aircraft, and we would also file a claim for damages to date.

Later that same day, we were invited to a large dinner party with plenty of drinks (mostly consumed by the Swedes, who seemed to drink a lot). At about two o'clock in the morning, they agreed to reimburse us for all our expenses to date, provide us with a stand-by aircraft, and send a crew of engineers to spend time in our shop to repair or replace any defective components until the aircraft achieved a reliability factor of 98 percent or better over a complete weather cycle. The agreement was handwritten and was signed by their chairman and me.

MORE STORMS AT THE AIRPORT AND THE AIRLINE

While we were negotiating with the aircraft manufacturer, we had also committed to building a new hangar, with space for operations, flight control, and maintenance. It was a facility that Comair needed urgently. We moved into this new facility in August 1985, but our tenure there was not long. The following March, a tornado hit the airport and completely wiped out the new building and all its contents. We were fortunate that no one was injured in the disaster. In tribute to our employees, who worked long hours to clean up the debris, we were back in operation in temporary buildings within a few days.

We immediately hired an architect (the son of my life-long friend and golfing partner, Fred Wolnitzek) on a flat retainer to design and build a bigger and better replacement facility. We moved into this new facility in April 1987.

David continued to show the strength of his leadership in the company, and my role began to diminish. This certainly was by design on my part, as I was approaching retirement age. However, I did not feel that I should retire completely at this point, since the business needed the experienced hand of a more seasoned individual to look after the concerns of the shareholders as well as to help interpret confrontational issues that often plague strong growth companies.

In April 1987, profits had been flat for about five quarters. Comair reported a loss for the first time since going public. The previous fiscal year, our profits had declined 30 percent from the prior year. Some of Delta's projections did not materialize, and the result was that our traffic did not match our own projections. It looked like the company was going to have to take another approach if traffic did not pick up quickly.

On my return from Florida that year, David proposed that I retire on my 65th birthday, allowing him to become chairman and CEO and making another individual president and chief operating officer of the company. I declined to accept the idea of retirement for the reasons I

mentioned above. This set off a major confrontation that eventually involved the entire Comair board.

A special meeting of the company's board of directors was called for Good Friday in April 1987 specifically to address this issue. I did not want to attend the meeting, but after a phone call from one of the outside directors, I agreed to be there. It was a disturbing experience, and the meeting continued into the evening without resolution. There were six board members and they were evenly split on the issue, so no decision was reached. One of the original directors and the Delta-designated member sided with David. The other two original directors agreed with me. This split left scars that took a long time to heal.

Throughout the rest of 1987 and well into 1988, my relationship with David remained strained. He was not interested in compromising; he still wanted me to retire as chairman, while I still believed that my presence in the company was effective. I did not intend to allow such a difficult situation to continue indefinitely, but I was determined to maintain my position.

I decided it was time to bring in new directors, people who were not a part of the company's polarization. So I suggested to David that he recommend two new board members and I would also propose two new directors. We would each interview the other person's candidates before nominating them to our shareholders. This meant the original outside group would not be nominated for re-election. I felt bad about this, but in the interest of rebuilding harmony in the company, I felt it had to be done.

In these negotiations, I emphasized shareholder awareness and the need for long-range planning with a broad outlook for the future of the business. In late 1987, Ollie Waddell of the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce called to offer the Businessman of the Year award to David and me as a shared award, but I declined and suggested the award be given to David alone, and that is what they did.

For quite a while, all contact I had with my son and his family was at arm's length. This affected birthday celebrations, Christmas, and other family activities, but gradually, we worked through our differences, and by 1989, we were on better terms again. At that point, we even bought a thoroughbred together.

EXPANSION FOR COMAIR, RETIREMENT FOR THE CHAIRMAN

Late in 1987, Delta offered us the opportunity to open a Florida market in Orlando. They planned to build up their traffic there, and were looking to us or another of their connectors to feed into the expanded hub. This looked like a great opportunity and we took advantage of it. In the following years, our 30-seat aircraft were performing to design while Delta continuing to expand in Cincinnati and to develop the market in Orlando, so our passenger loads increased dramatically, with a corresponding increase in profits.

In the spring of 1990, I felt that conditions had improved so much since early 1987 that my role with the company was complete. I had confidence in the management staff at Comair, the three original outside directors had retired, and the board had been expanded to nine people.

The company's finances were in excellent shape, our revenue had exceeded \$150 million, and we now had over 1000 shareholders. It was time for me to resign. "Old fly boys never die," the saying goes, "they just lose their wings."

When I reflect on the exciting years that surrounded the founding and rapid growth of Comair, I know that God was very good to us. I sometimes think the bumblebee theory was at work. We were determined to make the airline successful, and we were fortunate to have the rare combination of timing and motivated talent to make the venture work. The father-son drive for accomplishment played a big part in our achievement.

The remarkable success of Comair improved our family's lifestyle substantially, and the company also provides employment for more than 2,000 families. Comair has been like a magnet, attracting many talented people to the community, and through the ripple effect, it has added to the well-being of the economy of the area.

BANKING, A NEW INTEREST

In 1992, my daughter Gloria's husband, John Webber, approached me in participating in a banking venture in northern Kentucky. John has spent most of his career in the banking business. He had a friend with similar experience who had worked for one of the northern Kentucky banks.

At the time, the banking industry was a little like the airline industry in the 1970s—it was heavily regulated, but there were considerable changes taking place that represented unusual opportunities for small neighborhood banks. I agreed to be an early investor. As a result, John and his colleague Rick Thomas began the task of developing a local bank, which opened on February 1, 1993. It is doing very well, and as this is written, they are issuing more stock for additional investors. So, my interests now include the banking industry, and I find myself on the board of a new bank.



Comair's First Board of Directors, Howard Maue, Bob Barnes, David Mueller, Ray Mueller, and Bob Bates



Comair Board Members and Their Spouses at Saab-Scania in Linköping, Sweden



Launch Airline for the SF 340 Aircraft



Our New Hangar, Destroyed by Tornado, March 1986



New Comair Terminal, May 1995

Memorable Business Colleagues

*Old birds are hard to pluck.
German proverb*

As a manufacturers' representative, you had to be a savvy, knowledgeable individual who understood the industry in an assigned territory. You also needed to know the applications of all the product lines you represented, the individual idiosyncrasies of the users of the products, and the best opportunities for growth and development for each company. For this, you were paid a commission, sometimes negotiable, on any order you received. The commission was only paid after the product was shipped, invoiced, and paid for by the customer, and you could often wait 30 days or more after the manufacturer was paid to receive your commission check.

It takes a courageous, independent, confident soul with a lot of faith in his own ability to fill this role. There are some basic qualifications needed to succeed in such a career. Most of all, a manufacturers' representative needs to have a complete understanding of human nature. You need to ask and find answers for a variety of questions: What motivates an individual to purchase products from you as opposed to your competitors? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the potential users of the product lines? How can you introduce a product that has no history of successful performance?

Most manufacturers who use independent representatives are not interested in maintaining the status quo. Each year, they want to see an increase in the volume of business you are bringing them, independent of the economy. The pressure is intense, whether you lead the producers or are an "also ran."

To be a successful manufacturers' representative, it is imperative to keep the principals of your client companies apprised of any new developments in your assigned territory. It is also necessary to keep these principals fully informed about the competition. It was always a top priority for me to keep an open line of communication with the heads of the companies I represented, and to help the principals in any way I could, even if it worked to my detriment.

For the most part, the manufacturers' representatives in the chemical process industries represented companies with annual sales of \$50 million or less. Most of the companies who used independent reps had a sales volume of less than that amount, because when the volume approached the \$50 million level, the manufacturer usually began to think about creating an in-house sales force, which would allow the company to have more control over the selling process.

So most of the companies that R. A. Mueller and Associates represented were relatively small companies, and I encountered many interesting people in these small businesses during my career in sales. I want to briefly comment about some of these unique individuals. In my business, I also dealt with people who provided professional services for smaller companies, accountants, attorneys, and the like, who were small businessmen themselves. I think that they represent the nucleus of American business—the small businessmen.

INFLUENTIAL COMPANY PRINCIPALS IN MY EARLY CAREER

Paul Chapman

I was fortunate enough to meet Paul Chapman in about 1950. He was the chief engineer for American Viscose Corporation in Elizabethton, Tennessee. In early 1951, he decided to leave his corporate position to start a business as a manufacturers' representative. Paul had chemical process plant engineering experience, but he had no sales experience.

Paul and I hit it off from the beginning. He was about 10 to 15 years older than me, and served as a kind of mentor in my early sales career. It was from him that I first got the idea to become a manufacturers' representative in the Cincinnati area. Paul was most helpful when I made this decision. He arranged contacts for me and gave me much of the information I needed about potential product lines available in Cincinnati. He was instrumental in helping me get the Lawrence Pump and Labour accounts, and they were the core line when I started RAM, Inc.

During the early years of the company, Paul and I often shared knowledge of product lines and were able to work out several reciprocal representation deals. I got him accounts with Chemineer, Illinois Water Treatment, Eco Pumps, and several other lines. We also discussed all sorts of problems we had that were common to our businesses.

Harry Labour

Mr. Labour was the inventor of the self-priming centrifugal pump, and he held the original patents on his invention. He was a chemical engineer who had worked for a plant where centrifugal pumps with self-priming characteristics were required, and he had developed the necessary equipment. His patents were granted in the late 1930s, so they expired just prior to the time I began to represent his company. Until that time, he received a royalty on every centrifugal pump that had a self-priming capability, regardless of its method.

He was more interested in metallurgy than mechanical devices, and he developed several proprietary metal alloys that were forerunners of some of the later stainless steels. He alloyed nickel, chrome, and other metals to make a highly corrosive-resistant metal that was used in a broad range of chemical processes. Sulfuric acid was a commonly used component in the chemical industries, employed for a variety of purposes. Prior to Elcomet K (Mr. Labour's designation for his 18-8 chrome/nickel alloy), the standard metal used in applications that involved sulfuric acid was a very fragile iron made by Duriron.

He later developed R 55, an alloy that had 10 times more corrosion resistance to sulfuric acid than his earlier 18-8 alloys, and it became the primary metal used for this type of applications. Later, he added more alloys to Labour's standard pump lines.

Mr. Labour did most of his research and development in his own lab, with a chemist and a metallurgist as assistants. He was a very determined man, stubborn about his designs and would accept no suggestions from the marketplace about changes.

This was his undoing in the 1960s, when the pump industry began to become standardized. I was privileged to be a part of the standardization process, as the individuals responsible for the movement were located in the Charleston, West Virginia area, part of the territory that I covered from Cincinnati before I had a Charleston office.

Don Ullock was a mechanical engineer with Union Carbide. He was concerned about the costs of maintaining chemical pumps, particularly in the replacement of packing due to shaft deflection. Bill Canham was a chemical engineer with Monsanto in Nitro, West Virginia, and Bill Dolman was with Dupont from Wilmington, Delaware. The three of them met regularly to devise a system to standardize the external dimensions and the shaft diameters of centrifugal pumps.

Some of Labour's competitors picked up on the market potential of standardization, but Mr. Labour would have no part of it. As a consequence, Labour began to lose market share and Duriron and Gould became the dominant players providing the pump requirements of the chemical process industries.

This hurt Labour, but with the company's proprietary alloys and domination of the self-priming pump field, along with the vast population of Labour pumps in service (a source of replacement part sales), it still represented a very lucrative product line for a manufacturer's representative.

It was always a great treat to talk to Mr. Labour. He had a brilliant, but controversial mind, and like so many others of his type, he had no patience for complacency. He had strong opinions about many different subjects. He deplored the liberal government, the labor movement, and the social reforms of the decades when I knew him.

Bob Bates

In October 1952, I was just beginning to put together my own sales agency, and it was obvious to me that a fluid mixing line would be a great supplemental product line to the chemical process pump lines I was representing. Mixing equipment was a product line that fit reasonably well with the other products I was selling, and there was a substantial market for mixers in the chemical process industries. But there was only one dominant manufacturer—Mixco Equipment of Rochester, New York. They probably had 80 percent of the business. Mixco was represented around the country by the leading sales agencies, and they were a tight-knit group. The account was not available to me.

While I was making a sales call to a Cincinnati customer who had heard that I was a start-up representative, the customer suggested that I call a new mixing equipment company in Dayton, Ohio. Three men there had left a small mixing machinery company in Dayton (which produced both fluid and solid mixing equipment) and had started their own business.

I put the suggestion in the back of my mind, thinking that on my next trip to Dayton, I would give them a call. About a month later, I did visit Dayton, and after I had taken care of my business, I found I had a little time left. So I called the new company, which was called Chemineer, and spoke to Bob Bates. When I told him I had the Labour account, it hit his hot button. He suggested that I come to see him that same evening. I did, and we got along very well.

It was ironic that the day before, they had decided on another representative in the Cincinnati area, but they had not finalized the sales agreement with him. They immediately got on the phone to the other representative and canceled the agreement in favor of me.

Coincidentally, the Chemineer people were also soliciting the Labour account at the same time as I was, thinking they would operate as manufacturers' representatives while they were starting their mixing machinery business. Labour decided in my favor.

The only potential problem with my representation of Chemineer was that they intended to hire only graduate engineers, preferably Ohio State University alumni. I qualified in neither category. They knew I wasn't an Ohio State graduate, but they did not know I wasn't a graduate engineer. I never volunteered my complete credentials, so they identified me as a mechanical engineer from the University of Cincinnati.

Chemineer was a start-up company with limited financial resources, manufacturing out of an abandoned livery stable, with only about three mixer designs, one of which was a side-entering, propeller type that Procter & Gamble used in abundance. My job was to secure some of this business for Chemineer and to introduce the new company and its limited product line to my Labour accounts. I was able to accomplish both goals over a period of a year or two.

I also gave Chemineer the names of Labour sales representatives who did not represent the competition, Mixing Equipment Company, or Lightning, their trade name. This resulted in a significant group of reps for Chemineer to build into a substantial sales force. I was directly responsible for six reps joining Chemineer.

The company continued to have financial challenges. Many times their commission checks would be 60 days or more coming. On one occasion, they asked their agents to purchase debentures to help keep the company financially afloat. But the engineering was sound, they were fun to represent, and we grew together. After 40 years, RAM, Inc. is still one of the top five sales offices in the country for Chemineer.

Bob Bates and one of the original partners, Bob Schaeffer, split after a few years. I tried to stay neutral in the split, so that my position as the company's sales representative would not be jeopardized. Bob Bates was the stronger personality and he was a more motivated individual. He wanted to be a leader in the industry, a successful businessman, and a well-respected individual in the community.

Bob Schaeffer accused him of being somewhat eccentric, because he grew a beard when beards were thought of as somewhat leftist. It never bothered me, as I was more interested in the development of the company than I was in any individual eccentricities of the company's partners.

We continued to get along very well, and when it came time to assemble a board of directors for Comair in 1981, Bob Bates was my first candidate. He helped Comair considerably, serving as our Compensation Chairman, handling the compensation for David and the other officers.

It was unfortunate, however, that when David and I disagreed about my continuing as the chairman of Comair in 1987, Bob polarized the board to a stalemate. He once described himself as a surrogate father to David, which I could not tolerate. As a result, he did not seek reelection to Comair's board as a director when his term expired.

Wally Morrison

When I was looking for products to sell in 1952, I sent out letters to various manufacturers who advertised in the trade journals. One of the letters went to the Illinois Water Treatment Company of Rockford, Illinois. At the time, I got a letter back from them that said they were represented in Cincinnati by George Oberklein, but that if an opening became available, they would keep me in mind. It was the usual kind of "no interest" reply.

In May 1955, I heard George Oberklein was in poor health, so I again contacted the Illinois Water Treatment Company to ask them to consider me for their agent in the Cincinnati area. That letter was perfectly timed, because they were looking for a representative. The company's sales manager, A. W. Michaelson, came to Cincinnati to interview me. We got along very well and Mike offered me a sales contract for RAM, Inc.'s entire territory, except West Virginia, which was covered by Fred Hoover from Pittsburgh.

Mike was a highly qualified sales manager and a pleasure to work with. He arranged regular sales meetings in Rockford, and they were always more like educational sessions than regular sales meetings. He spent a lot of time on chemistry and the field of ion exchange. Illinois Water Treatment was one of the first companies applying synthetic resins for total ion exchange of dissolved solids. They coined the word deionizer.

Wally Morrison was the founder of the company. He was a chemist by education, but he had very little patience with the laboratory side of chemistry. He was more interested in the business applications of ion exchange. So Wally spent a lot of time with potential customers and suppliers, a role that he relished. He had a full head of snow white hair and a deep tan complexion. He was tall and trim, with a deep, resonant voice that drew the attention of anyone within hearing distance. He was attracted to women, and they were attracted to him. He had a gleam in his eye and a great smile that served him well.

Wally had one problem. He loved to drink. He always liked Cincinnati, especially the Netherland Plaza (now the Omni Hotel), the bar across the street, Wiggins, and the general ambiance Cincinnati had to offer. He managed to close Wiggins on many occasions, staggering across the street to the hotel to sleep.

Wally liked to invite his clients to lunch, then he would proceed to have two or three martinis and send his clients on their way in a happy frame of mind.

When he came to visit me, I never knew exactly what time he would arrive because he was always indefinite about flights and flight times. I usually scheduled meetings in the late morning or early afternoon to give him the maximum amount of time to get ready. One time I recall, we were to visit Cincinnati Gas & Electric, the Cincinnati public utility, to discuss their needs for water treatment equipment at the new Zimmer generating plant. It probably represented at least a million dollar order for Wally's company, and RAM, Inc., would also see a big commission from the deal.

As the founder of Illinois Water Treatment Company, Wally was to be my technical brains when we met with CG&E. They had a team of engineers we were supposed to work with, and I set up a meeting with them for 10:30 AM. I planned to pick up Wally at the hotel at about 9:30 AM so we would have time to discuss our strategy. Along about nine o'clock, the phone rang. It was Wally. He said he was in deep trouble and wanted me to pick him up in front of the Metropole Hotel (his second choice for accommodations when he couldn't get a room at the Netherland).

I rushed downtown and there he was, standing in front of the hotel, waiting for me. He told me that he had spent the night in jail. He had come to town a little early, went over to Wiggins, and sometime late that night, a fellow had stolen his wallet. He had accused the bartender of stealing the wallet, which led to a fight. The police were called, and they took Wally to Station X to sober up. He could not find his briefcase or his travel bag, and he had no money or identification for cashing a check, even if he had one to cash.

At this point, we still had time to make the meeting, but without his files, Wally had to rely on me to carry the meeting, only getting him involved in the talks minimally. Fortunately, the engineers from CG&E were apparently charitable in their acceptance of Wally, because we eventually got the order.

I remember another time when Wally and I made a trip to Dayton. Frigidaire in Dayton was a prime user of equipment manufactured by Illinois Water Treatment. They used it to treat the rinse water in their metal finishing operation, during which metal was painted, coated, or porcelainized, and the metal had to be clean and free of dissolved solids for the finishing processes. Bud Wise was the process engineer with Frigidaire, and he was responsible for purchasing and maintaining all the metal finishing equipment. He and Wally were a natural pair, because Bud enjoyed a drink, too. A trip to Dayton was always an experience, but this particular occasion was unforgettable.

We had scheduled an appointment for 2:00 PM. Wally and I visited with Bud for about an hour, got the requirements for the additional equipment he needed all buttoned up, then invited Bud and his wife to the hotel where we were staying for dinner. This was a mistake, because it gave Wally too much drinking time before they were to meet us.

Bud arrived with his voluptuous wife at about 6:30 PM, ready for a few drinks and a nice meal. It was a fine restaurant with flowers and linen tablecloths, candles and all the amenities. By this time, Wally was well on his way, but I tried to keep things under control and get the food ordered quickly so as not to cause any embarrassing moments. But Bud and his wife wanted a few drinks first, so we had to accommodate them.

As you might suspect, things got out of hand very fast. As the salads were served, Wally got sick and lost control, vomiting all over himself, the table, and Bud's wife. I thought sure Mrs. Wise would be indignant, but she sympathized with Wally and took him out to the car to clean up both of them. They didn't come back for what seemed like an eternity, but it didn't bother Bud. He and I kept on drinking and eating and talking about his equipment. Finally, I got a little nervous and went to the car to see if everything was all right. There was Wally, sound asleep with his head on Mrs. Wise's lap. They were holding hands and trying to sober up.

I remember many, many stories like that about Wally Morrison. It was even worse when he and my first sales associate, Mac McDermott, would get together, because Mac had no control over his drinking. I believe that both Wally and Mac died before their time as a result of their excesses.

RAM, INC. BUSINESS ASSOCIATES

Melville C. McDermott

I have mentioned Mac earlier—he was the first associate I ever hired. When I started the sales agency R. A. Mueller & Associates in 1952, I intended to build an organization to sell multiple product lines in the chemical process industries in a defined territory. The Labour account initially established the total marketing area I represented, and I followed the same geographic limitations on subsequent sales contracts.

This meant that I had to do extensive traveling during the first few years, when I operated as a one-man sales force. I spent one week in the Louisville and western Kentucky area, then one week in the Charleston, West Virginia region, followed by two weeks in Cincinnati. The next month, the rotation would start all over again. This meant I was home for only 50 percent of the time, and it was an unsatisfactory arrangement.

I decided to concentrate more on the western Kentucky portion of the territory to build the business there to the point that I could afford to hire a sales associate and open an office in Louisville. My plan worked well, and I was ready to hire someone to cover the western Kentucky territory in 1954.

I placed an ad in the Louisville Courier Journal for Sunday interviews at the Seelbach Hotel. I received more than 20 replies to the ad, and interviewed nearly 20 candidates. Mac was the first in line, and he caught my interest right away, even though he had no prior selling experience. He seemed to have a natural affinity for people, and he had a chemical engineering degree (that satisfied Chemineer's requirements for sales agents). Mac had a friendly smile, and most importantly, he was available to start work immediately—so I hired him.

He came to the Cincinnati office for a month first, and I tried to teach him about the products. Then he and I traveled the entire Louisville territory for a couple of weeks so I could introduce him to our customers. He had about a month and a half of on-the-job training. I knew it was insufficient, but it was the best I could do, with all the other areas I had to handle.

Mac quickly endeared himself to our customers and he built up our sales volume on a consistent basis. One account told me, "Mac can sell us anything he has in the bag." The manufacturers we represented were also very fond of him. I was very pleased with how well he did for us, and I left him on his own most of the time, just telephoning him twice a week or so.

Later I decided to have him move to Cincinnati so he could help me more. At that point, I decided he could handle the more technical lines and I would stay with the pump lines. I hired Gene Campbell, who had been an electric motor salesman with Louis Allis, to replace Mac in Louisville. Things were shaping up well for RAM, Inc. I also hired my brother at the same time to assist with sales in Cincinnati, because I was busy adding additional product lines as our reputation grew.

When he came to Cincinnati, I began to see for myself that Mac had a drinking problem. On some occasions, he would come into the office beaming. His eyes were glassy, his nose was bright red, and his demeanor was buoyant. He was still showing the effects of the night before. As time went on and his confidence in his place with the company grew, this happened more frequently.

I could handle this until it really began to affect our business. There was one time when Mac and a visitor from the R. P. Adams Company were scheduled to meet with a group of engineers at Chemical & Industrial Engineering Company, an engineering design firm in Cincinnati, to talk to them about filtration equipment. When Mac and Murtaugh, the man from R. P. Adams, were late for the meeting, I received a phone call from the engineering firm, asking if we knew where they were.

I soon learned that they had both been out the night before, and Mac had not gone home. His wife thought he was out of town. I did not want to continue to have to deal with situations like that one, so I set in motion a plan to get Mac transferred to his hometown of Birmingham, Alabama, to start his own business there. Wally Morrison at Illinois Water Treatment helped me arrange this, and I also managed to get Mac several additional lines, so that he would have sufficient income to justify the move. He had four beautiful children and a wife to support.

There are plenty of other stories about Mac, but most of them end the same way—with too much booze. He had a lot of things going for him, but he simply could not control his drinking, and it controlled his life. It was a tragic story.

Joe Summe

Joe Summe was my first and most cherished attorney. I met Joe at the Ft. Wright Civic Club, where he was the city attorney. Joe came from a very prominent Northern Kentucky family who had been in the dairy business since the turn of the century. He was a well educated man, not only in his legal profession, but also in the ways of the world. He reminded me to some extent of a country lawyer, deeply involved in the affairs of the community. Joe also concerned himself

with the welfare of the individuals who were his clients. He had an impeccable reputation, was very religious, and could often be outspoken on matters of morality as well as civic issues. He had the knack of being able to break down a complex issue into more simple terms that any layman could understand. He could explain legal jargon in such a way that it was easily understood by the least initiated.

Joe helped me make the move from sole proprietorship to a corporation, handling the incorporation of RAM, Inc. in 1961. For the most part, he took care of the few legal problems RAM, Inc. encountered, and when Norma and I wanted to draw up our initial will, we turned to Joe.

His real value to me was most evident when I started to become involved in Comair. Prior to incorporation, he provided me with guidance in dealing with the prospective partners, the government requirements, and other business details of the new venture.

When the airline incorporated, he handled the stock purchase agreements, filed the incorporation papers with the state, and even suggested the name Comair, a derivative of "Commuter Air Line." He provided a sounding board for problems we faced during the initial crisis when the two other partners walked out. It was on his recommendation that we made the immediate buy-out of stock from the departing partners.

When the accident occurred in 1979, Joe sheltered David and me from the press as much as possible. He was our legal counsel when we dealt with all the government agencies that were investigating the accident. His calm and composure were a source of great strength to us when we needed it most.

Joe had a weak heart, which none of us knew about, and he died in his sleep in 1980, about the time we were considering going public with Comair.

Bob Barnes

In the early 1960s, I began to have some problems communicating with John Brennan, who had been my accountant from the beginning of RAM, Inc. John was a heavy smoker, and he looked forward each day to lunch time, when he could have a drink or two. He was also hypertensive and somewhat unreliable. I decided it was time to make a change.

Since I knew nothing about Cincinnati accounting firms, I asked the advice of our banker at the time, Don Hagensecker. He recommended three firms and I interviewed each of them. Bob Barnes won hands down. He was my kind of guy.

Bob was extremely conscientious and hard working, a no-nonsense kind of guy. He had a great wit, and always had a new joke to tell me or anyone else who would listen. I came to rely on him for advice on financial matters.

When we started Comair, he was responsible for setting up the books, and he assisted in any way he could with the financial side of the business. He was with us through the accident of 1979, and when we decided to go public, it was difficult for us to have to leave him for a larger firm, one that had experience dealing with public companies. Bob was one of my first candidates

for the board of directors of Comair, and I was very pleased to have him accept. He served as Audit Chairman on the board.

Bob had a fine family of seven children. He served two terms as a board member. Bob was a big part of the success of Comair, and his company, under the very capable tutelage of Bill Cloppert, still handles financial matters for RAM, Inc., as well as our family's personal accounting needs.

Paul Fielding

Paul was our first insurance agent in Ft. Wright, and he was the most trustworthy insurance man I've known. He wrote the insurance on our house and the first insurance for RAM, Inc. His company has been involved in our family insurance since 1952. Paul worked hard to research the best deal for us and provided us with excellent service when we made a claim. He handled several small but difficult personal problems as the children grew.

When we started Comair, I called upon Paul to get us coverage for our aircraft, as well as the liability insurance we needed as a carrier. There were minimum insurance requirements necessary to get certified as a carrier. Paul had no prior experience in this area, but he found out what we needed and managed to get us coverage to satisfy the requirements. He worked very hard. I did not have the time or the inclination to research our insurance needs at that time, and there was no one else in the company who could do it, either. We just turned him loose and he did the job.

Paul was a fun-loving guy. He played poker every Monday night with the volunteer firemen after "practice." Paul retired at age 65, but tragically contracted a fatal disease only a few months later. He died within a year of his retirement.

DEDICATED AND LOYAL EMPLOYEES

My attitude toward hiring employees was always to get the very best people available, individuals whose ability would challenge me as a leader of the business. I had very high ideals and expectations; money was a secondary consideration. I was fortunate to have a number of highly qualified individuals work for me over the years. As a matter of fact, R. A. Mueller and Associates spawned some twelve other businesses operating as manufacturers' representatives around the country. I actively participated in helping to secure product lines for several of the businesses started by former employees.

When my first administrative assistant left after 15 years with me, I was able to replace her immediately with another very competent individual, Doris Heffron. Doris understood my modus operandi, and she worked very closely with me. She was a productive employee who also served as the gatekeeper of my office and assisted with personnel problems.

In the buy-out of R.A. Mueller, Inc. in 1983, there were three investors in addition to Duane and Judy. Of the original three, one has left to start his own agency, under the terms of a predetermined buy-out agreement. The other two stockholders are very strong sales engineers, who remained actively involved in RAM, Inc.

Kevin Delaney is perhaps the strongest pure sales strategist of all the associates in the 43-year history of the company. He also complements Duane very well.

Dave Strader adds another strong dimension to RAM, Inc. He operates the West Virginia area of the organization, and he has a thorough understanding of all the product lines as well as the chemical complexes of the Kanawha Valley. He is dedicated to his customers, his principals, and the company, and is a great asset to R. A. Mueller, Inc.

COMAIR EMPLOYEES

My attitude toward personnel carried over into the Comair organization. From the beginning, David and I worked hard to get the best individuals we could find to fill the important executive positions. Comair has a wealth of talent, and they are young, motivated, loyal, and dedicated. I have found that, for some reason, the airline industry is a lot more attractive for young, career-minded individuals than the chemical process industries. Some of the very first people hired at Comair have moved up into executive positions with the company during the years since the airline began.

There are many other intriguing business personalities whom I have encountered during more than 40 years of experience in several businesses, but perhaps I will tell their stories another time.



Christmas Party at R.A. Mueller and Associates, 1962

A Struggle for Good Health

*Health and good estate of body
are above all gold, and a strong body
above infinite wealth.
Apocrypha*

When I recall the time in my life when I battled tuberculosis, I remember the feeling of being helpless, having people feed me, bathe me, and handle my waste, as a devastating experience. To be totally incapacitated at age 19 influenced the way I thought about physical well-being for the rest of my life. The year I spent recovering from tuberculosis made an indelible impression on me. It taught me the value of taking care of yourself, not necessarily to build a muscular physical specimen, but to maintain a body that would be able to provide the energy, the stamina, and the intellect needed to lead a useful life.

LEARNING TO APPRECIATE GOOD HEALTH

Until I became ill in 1942, my physical problems had been minor, those of any growing young man. When I was much younger, I had a problem with my ear that was resolved through medication. Then when I was in the sixth grade at school, at about age 12, I rode my bicycle through an alley into a moving automobile and wound up on crutches for six weeks with a broken fibula. These were the normal bumps and bruises experienced by a young, active boy.

Although I was not aware of it in my early years, I always had problems with my sinuses. The family sometimes described my condition as catarrh or a “wet nose.” Later in my life, doctors at the Medical Center at Duke University diagnosed the underlying problem—a deviated septum, which has plagued me throughout my life. Any irritants in the air, such as smoke or other impurities, become trapped in the deviated septum, where they attract bacteria that remain until the area has a chance to clean itself out.

I began working outdoors at age 16, riding a bicycle for eight hours a day, and I built up a decent amount of physical stamina. But later, when I worked as a heating system installer with my father and then as a lathe operator at American Tool Works, I think I lost a lot of the physical conditioning I had developed. In addition to carousing after work, somewhere along the line, I was exposed to the tuberculosis germ. I have often wondered if I had some genetic predilection that contributed to my being infected by the disease, because I know I had an uncle and an aunt who lived with us in our early years, both of whom died from tuberculosis.

Dr. Huesinkveld treated my tuberculosis by collapsing my lung to allow it to heal. This process, called pneumothorax, was completed by 1947, when I had one lung fully operable, and the second lung functioning at about 60 percent of full capacity. I was again in reasonably good physical condition. This was at the time we left Cincinnati for Tennessee, when I was about 25 years old. At that point, I was not a fanatic about eating, resting, exercise, and general good health habits, but I was always health conscious after my experience with a life-threatening disease. I had enough sense to know that if working too hard began to cause hypertension, I needed to back off and get the proper amount of rest. I think this may be one reason we always tried to travel as much as possible, to provide diversion and activities that contributed to a more restful lifestyle.

For nearly 25 years, I did not have regular medical check-ups but only saw the internist with specific complaints such as colds or other minor illnesses. It was a period in my life when, overall, I was in reasonably good health.

LOOKING FOR A CURE AGAIN

At age 50, my health again began to change dramatically. Perhaps because of the good health I experienced in the preceding years, I was not paying as much attention to my daily routines as I should have, and I began to fall into bad habits regarding eating, drinking, work, and rest. As a result, my blood chemistry became totally out of balance. I was not initially aware that my condition was due to poor blood chemistry, but in about 1971, as I approached age 50, I felt terrible.

My main complaint at the time was what I thought was an orthopedic problem with my legs. They ached and were not very mobile, and I had the same trouble with my arms—I could barely lift my arms over my head. I remember driving from Cincinnati to Louisville, a distance of 100 miles. It is only about a two-hour trip, but I had to stop the car frequently to get out and stretch my legs to get some relief to the pain that was caused by sitting in one position for any length of time.

My internist, Dr. Virgil Plessinger, recommended that I see an orthopedic specialist, Dr. Kruger. Dr. Kruger examined me and gave me a series of exercises. I was supposed to rotate both arms in one direction for 25 rotations, and then in the opposite direction for the same number of rotations. He prescribed a similar type of exercise for my legs. After seeing him for about three months without much improvement, he told me there was nothing more he could do for me, and recommended that I return to my internist.

At this point, my internist decided my problem might be caused by rheumatism and he sent me to another physician, Dr. Ball, a leading arthritic specialist from the Mayo Clinic who had recently relocated to Cincinnati. Dr. Ball examined me, and while he could not confirm positively that I had some form of rheumatoid arthritis, he felt sure that my symptoms pointed to that diagnosis, and he was confident that this was my problem. He recommended some medicine, and I took it for several months, but the medication made no marked improvement in my condition, either.

After this experience, Dr. Plessinger suggested that I consult a physical therapist. He recommended Dr. Emily Hess at Good Samaritan Hospital, and she gave me a series of treatments, but none of them helped me. Finally, Dr. Hess sent me to a neurologist, thinking that my problem might be psychosomatic, and that part of my nervous system was causing the problem. Dr. John Campbell, who was a neurologist practicing in Cincinnati, examined me and said that I had no neurological problems. He assured me that my condition was due to something physically wrong; it was not a psychosomatic illness.

In all, I spent more than six months visiting various specialists around Cincinnati, but my condition had not improved at all since I first started talking to Dr. Plessinger about it. There seemed to be no solution to my problem.

THE DUKE MEDICAL CENTER

About this time, Rubin Raskin, an associate from Dean Products (a company we represented at RAM, Inc.), was in the office telling me about his experience at Duke University. He had a weight control problem and was a compulsive eater. He had gone to Duke Medical Center to learn how to control his weight problem. While I was talking to him about his experience, he told me if I was sincere about wanting to solve my problem, he would make some arrangements at Duke to get the help I needed. At that point, I was becoming desperate, and agreed that I did need help. He picked up the phone in my office and called Dr. Kempner at Duke Medical Center in Durham, North Carolina, to arrange an appointment for a physical examination for me just a few weeks later. So, in April 1972, Norma and I made a trip to Dr. Kempner's clinic, and that was the beginning of an entirely new and different experience in our lives.

After a complete examination by Dr. Kempner that took three days, he told me that he could help me, but it would mean that I would have to stay at Duke for 30 days or more, following a special diet under his control. Since I was not prepared to stay for 30 days at that point, I told him that I would go back to Cincinnati, take care of my business, and call him for another appointment. At that point, he thought he had seen the last of me.

When I got back to Cincinnati, however, I took a couple of weeks to get my work load under control so I could leave the office for three or four weeks. I made an appointment for early May in 1972 to undergo my first experience at Kempner's clinic. The program began with a rice diet that entailed eating only two small bowls of boiled rice and perhaps two pieces of fruit each day for the first couple of weeks.

This diet allowed the body's blood chemistry to neutralize. It reduced the protein input to 25 grams per day (the minimum amount required to prevent starvation), reduced the sodium residual in the urine to less than 10 grams, and eliminated all fat from the diet. As a result of this kind of diet, you lose a pound a day. Your blood pressure also drops and many other changes occur that require a doctor's attention. The only other therapy while on the diet is walking, which we started to do on a small scale, but we progressed until we were walking nearly 10 miles a day. While Norma did not undergo the physical examination at the clinic, she did go on a diet and physical exercise program with me, and she had a dramatic weight loss, much the same as I did.

I want to say a few words about Dr. Kempner, who qualifies as one of the most unforgettable men I have met in my life. He was a scientist who was educated in Germany, and he came to Duke University in the mid-1930s to head up the medical program there. He was put in charge of the entire medical center and was instrumental in building it into one of the finest hospitals in the United States today.

His basic guiding principle was that if you cleared up any problems in the blood stream, the body would provide many of its own cures. He developed his Rice Diet and made breakthroughs in many other areas of treatment for the organic system of the human body. Many other doctors thought that the diet and blood purification program were too harsh, and were reluctant to recommend it to their patients.

Dr. Kempner wrote about the pitfalls of cholesterol back when the word was scarcely even recognized outside of the medical community. He presented his findings to the American Medical Association and his studies were subsequently picked up and expanded to identify cholesterol as a constituent in heart problems much later.

After being on the Duke Rice Diet for about two weeks, a patient is allowed one skinless, boiled chicken breast weighing three or four ounces. You can imagine what a treat this is. That particular chicken breast was not just eaten, it was picked clean, and the bones were polished by the attempt to get every little morsel of meat from it. If there was the smallest particle of meat left on the breast, someone else at the table would probably snatch it for themselves.

The diet worked well for me, and I had about a 30-pound weight loss, dropping from about 192 lbs. down to 162 lbs. I looked emaciated because there was not too much liquid in my body, and my appearance was somewhat drawn. But my looks were deceiving, because my general physical condition had improved dramatically. All the problems in my legs and arms disappeared and I had total movement of all my limbs again. The headaches I was having disappeared, a problem with fluids in my knee that had to be removed also cleared up, and it proved to me beyond a doubt that medical problems are often the result of poor physical condition, and can be remedied through a good, nutritious diet, exercise, and rest.

We had a lot of interesting experiences with the other patients at Duke. One fellow patient I remember in particular was a federal judge from Tennessee who weighed about 450 lbs. when he showed up at Dr. Kempner's clinic. His weight problem was so bad that he was told if he didn't do something quickly, his heart would not be able to sustain his life much longer. If he had to stop for a traffic light while driving, the momentary wait at the light sometimes resulted in his falling asleep because the amount of fat in his body restricted the flow of blood to his brain. He started on Dr. Kempner's program at Duke and lost weight at the rate of one pound a day. When I went back to Duke one year later for my first follow-up visit, the judge was still at the clinic and had lost over 300 pounds. He looked like a totally different person, and he really was a new man, full of energy and stamina, walking 25 miles a day for his exercise. His physical condition stabilized and he was able to go back to Tennessee and continue his work in the judicial system.

I remember hearing many stories of people who were diabetic and had lost their eyesight. Dr. Kempner was able to restore their vision through diet alone. There were numerous cases of people who had limbs amputated or suffered from a heart condition due to poor diet or obesity, and Dr. Kempner was able to help many of them. His program is truly unique, but it requires tremendous discipline and dedication on the part of the patient. The program cannot help you if you are not totally committed to regaining good physical condition.

Dr. Kempner was strong disciplinarian, and probably 50 percent of the people who begin the program don't finish it, because they don't have the wherewithal to handle it. I was one who did finish the program, and it has been very effective for me. After I completed Dr. Kempner's program, I continued to return to the Duke Medical Center for three days every year to undergo a complete physical examination. This routine allowed me to maintain the energy and stamina I had built up again while in the program.

LATER MEDICAL PROBLEMS

I enjoyed good health again for quite some time, but about seven years after my stay at Duke, I started having trouble with my urinary track. Apparently, the prostate gland had enlarged, as it does to so many middle-aged men. Mine had continued to swell to a point where it greatly restricted my ability to void. At first I refused to recognize that I had a problem—I thought that most of my concerns and the lack of ability to urinate properly were just in my mind. Of course, this was false, and I was to find out later that there were physical reasons for the problems I was experiencing.

But until I had a correct diagnosis and treatment, I dealt with the problems on my own, and this occasionally led to some humorous situations. The first story I recall concerns a trip from Cincinnati to Dayton for a luncheon meeting with Bob Bates, the chairman of Chemineer. I didn't want to be embarrassed and excuse myself to go to the men's room while I was with Bob, so I made sure I visited the facilities before telling the receptionist that I had arrived for my appointment. After taking care of this, I met with Bob and we talked for awhile, then went to the Banker's Club in downtown Dayton for lunch. As soon as I got to the restaurant, I went to the men's room. During lunch, the build-up started again, and I could hardly wait until I was finished eating so I could visit the rest room again. Bob thought it was a little strange that I had to make two visits in such a short period of time, but I certainly didn't want to let on to him that I had any kind of a problem.

We drove back to his office, which was maybe 20 minutes away, and since we had finished discussing business, he suggested that I get my own car from the parking lot and get on my way. What he did not realize was that I had to use the facilities again, and I did not want to admit it to him, so I used a convenient shrub adjacent to the office building. The landscaping didn't offer quite enough coverage, so I was moderately exposed to traffic. I hope the people who were in the cars that passed by at the time and saw what was taking place understood my predicament. After leaving Chemineer, the first rest stop was 45 minutes down the expressway, and when I got there I

made a mad dash, beating out truckers and anyone else in my hurry to get to the men's room in time to relieve some of the pressure that had built up during the drive.

Another time, we were on a vacation trip with Joanne and Paul Hock (my old fishing buddy). We traveled to the West Coast to visit San Francisco, then drove down the coast to Los Angeles, and then over to Las Vegas. I recall the drive down the California coast very clearly because I had to make frequent rest stops, often behind whatever trees or shrubs were available. This was a great source of fun for everyone in the car except me. In fact, it took a lot of the enjoyment out of the trip around the Monterey Peninsula, but I still refused to admit I had a problem.

The drive from Los Angeles to Las Vegas through the desert was something else to remember. Since it was the desert, there were no trees or shrubs of any size, and there were no rest stops and no facilities. It was a drive of several hours, and I was in extreme difficulty a lot of the time. On at least on one occasion, we just stopped along the road, and there was no cover, nothing to duck behind. In Las Vegas, we stayed in a hotel where they had hot water springs that were supposed to offer soothing therapy for tired muscles and other problems. I spent a lot of time enjoying those springs, and they did help to some extent in relieving the tension and the urgency.

On our plane ride from Las Vegas to Cincinnati, I'm not sure I sat down during the entire trip. As soon as I would void, I needed to go again. I just paced the aisle of the plane all the way from Las Vegas to St. Louis, where we had to change planes. I immediately got off the plane at the St. Louis airport to rush to the men's room, but wouldn't you know it, I ran into an old friend that I hadn't seen in five years, and of course, he wanted to visit. After a few words, I had to explain to him that I was in a big hurry, but I would be back to talk to him a little later.

At that point, I realized I had a problem. I called my internist, Dr. Charles Perry, in Erlanger, and he met me at our house as soon as we arrived from the airport. He recommended that I go to the hospital at once to have a catheter installed, but I thought I could get relief by bathing in a hot tub. But at about three o'clock in the morning, I was convinced that he was right, and made the trip to the hospital. It was probably one of the great moments of my life when they hooked up the catheter to give me relief.

I had heard about a good urologist in Cincinnati, Dr. Arthur Evans, who did such a marvelous job that he allowed you to produce a stream that would "bore a hole in a porcelain urinal." He used a couple of gimmicks to test my flow and determined that what I really needed was an operation that would reduce the size of the prostate gland. The operation would open up the urethra tract and essentially scour the inside of the prostate gland to clear the tube and once again provide easy urination. Dr. Evans performed the operation and it provided me with relief, but he didn't tell me that it wasn't a permanent solution. The blockage would grow back over a period of time, and I would have a recurrence of the same problem. They eventually did a biopsy and removed a portion of the prostate gland. The biopsy proved benign, which was also a relief.

About four years later, during a routine examination by Dr. Perry in Erlanger, he recommended that I have the prostate checked again, because it felt strange to him. I told him I

was scheduled for a complete physical in about three months at Duke University and I would tell them about it and have the prostate checked. As it turned out, I didn't make it down to Duke Medical Center for a physical until about six or seven months later, and at that point, the doctors at Duke suggested that I immediately undergo an exploratory biopsy of the prostate gland, because it felt suspicious. The biopsy came back positive, so they scheduled a radical prostatectomy the next morning. The surgeon, Dr. Culley Carson, recommended radical surgery followed by radiation, not only to clear the malignancy from the prostate area, but also to eliminate any cancerous cells from the surrounding area.

The complete removal of the prostate gland can affect continence as well as potency. It is a major operation and I had to spend several weeks at the hospital recovering, plus another couple of weeks at home recuperating, with limited mobility. I underwent the radiation treatment in two sessions since we had scheduled a trip to Europe with Paul and Joanne Hock. I took radiation for three weeks, then spent two weeks in Europe. When we got back, I had three more weeks of radiation therapy. Except for tiring rather easily, and using up stamina and energy quickly, the radiation treatment really had no other effect on my ability to enjoy the vacation.

In another routine examination at Duke about three years later, my PSA (prostate-specific antigen) levels were elevated. Upon further examination, it was found that the malignancy had recurred. Dr. Carson put me on chemotherapy, which involved a very potent drug that was taken orally each day. The chemotherapy drained my energy and I tired very easily. However, after a year on the medication, the PSA test was normal again, so the chemotherapy apparently accomplished its purpose and cleared out any remaining malignancy.

For several years, my health and physical condition remained good, but in the early 1990s, I started to have problems with incontinence which necessitated another trip back to Duke Medical Center for corrective surgery. A mechanical device was implanted to help gain more control, and the device worked fine for about a year. Then a part failed and needed to be replaced, which meant another operation. As this is written, the problems have been resolved and the implant is operating the way it was intended.

In addition to the prosthesis to remedy the incontinence, commonly called an artificial sphincter, I also had a prosthesis for treating impotency implanted, so I now have two pump-activated devices to alleviate the consequences of prostate cancer. Neither apparatus is 100 percent efficient, but they provide adequate solutions to difficult problems.

Since I refer to myself as "an old pump man," it's ironic that I will probably go to my grave with two additional pumps implanted in my body. And I thank God for the advances in medical technology that made such devices available.

Throughout all these medical problems, I hesitated to discuss my condition with my family or friends. Only a few of our most intimate friends are aware of the surgery and other treatments I required. I tried not to let any of it interfere with a normal lifestyle, and I never allowed my physical condition to be a source of discussion with our social contacts. It may surprise many people who know us well to hear about some of these things for the first time.

I need to salute Norma for her understanding and patience during my medical treatment. She was inspirational in helping me treat these diseases and other problems as minor troubles that could and would be overcome. In the 50 years and more that Norma and I have been together, she has enjoyed excellent health. I can only remember one time she was sick at all, when she was in bed with a case of the flu for about three days. I consider myself fortunate to have such a healthy and strong person as my spouse and lifelong companion.

STILL STRIVING FOR GOOD HEALTH

In the 1940s, I dealt with the ravages of tuberculosis. The 1960s were reasonably good years for me in terms of my health, but they were emotional and mentally stressful years, with the problems caused by the cultural revolution. During the 1970s I had the problems with my blood chemistry and the beginning of the prostate problems. The 1980s saw the prostate problems developing into prostate cancer.

With these physical difficulties behind me, I thought that God had allotted me my share of medical ailments to endure and allowed me to survive for His own reasons. But my problems were not quite over yet. In the early 1990s, I began to experience considerable shortness of breath, which I blamed on a lack of physical conditioning.

I had regular check-ups for any heart conditions and the examinations had shown no problems. But the shortness of breath persisted, despite the fact that I exercised regularly. The problem got worse when we were traveling in Europe with our grandson Christopher. When we returned from that trip in July 1994, just prior to the celebration of our 50th wedding anniversary, I had an angiogram in Cincinnati. The test did not show any problems, but another examination, by Dr. Mark Moots in Naples, found that my heart was out of rhythm, a condition known as atrial fibrillation.

This diagnosis led to electric impulse therapy, administered by Dr. Charles Abbot Smith of Cincinnati. The electrical treatment worked, but the remedial medication caused severe swelling and skin irritation. My heart condition and the attendant problems caused by the medication seem to have stabilized as this is written. I hope to treat this affliction the same way I have dealt with the other physical problems I have encountered, by giving it the attention it needs, and being confident it will be remedied.

My children sometimes think that I am a fanatic when I preach about the evils of bad habits and how they can affect your health. But I know about smoking and its effects on the lungs, the heart, and other vital organs of the body. I have personally witnessed the consequences of excessive alcohol use in our families; my grandfather and several uncles died as a result of alcoholism. I have seen the problems caused by overeating; at Duke, I ate with compulsive eaters who were killing themselves with their lack of control and poor eating habits. Then there is anorexia, a problem that surfaced in our immediate family. My experiences and observations of people who have brought illness on themselves through a lack of control and disinterest in their own health has led me to become an ardent supporter of moderation and healthy habits as the key to maintaining good physical condition.

I have been blessed with the opportunity to meet superior medical doctors who have helped me immeasurably throughout my life. The first physician I had the good fortune to encounter was Dr. Huesinkveld, who pulled me through the debilitating disease tuberculosis. His dedication to the well-being of mankind, and to my health in particular, earns him my greatest gratitude.

Then there is Dr. Walter Kempner, that strong disciplinarian, who convinced me of his basic belief that the body can cure itself, if given the chance. His research and accomplishments make him one of the great medical men of his generation.

Later in my life, I met Dr. Mark Moots, who shows great compassion, dedication, and persistence in treating his patients. His thoroughness and attention to detail is beyond reproach. While he does not operate in an arena as large as some of the other practitioners I have mentioned, his level of commitment is certainly equal to any of the fine physicians I have known.

REFLECTIONS ON “GOLDEN YEARS”

In our later years, it is sheer joy to have friends such as those in our social group in Naples, where we can see such vitality in the senior citizens. These are people who have taken care of themselves, who, for the most part, have had the benefit of healthy bodies all of their lives. We play golf regularly, attend gourmet dinners with dance bands, play bridge, and enjoy many other activities with a whole host of friends who are in their 70s and early 80s. Many of them are planning trips and events a year or two in advance. No such platitudes for them as “not buying green bananas.” They have confidence that they will be around to enjoy life for quite some time to come.

Shooting your age on the golf course is almost commonplace in our group of friends. Many of the couples have already celebrated 50 years of marriage or more, and some are looking to their 60th wedding anniversary, certain that they will be around for the celebration.

Good health and physical fitness is so important for a great lifestyle. It's worth all the effort it takes as a young person to attain and maintain a good physical condition. I wish that everyone could appreciate the warmth, the fun, and the enjoyment of a full life such as it has been our privilege to experience.



Recovering, Summer 1942



Naples Friends, 1995

Family Portraits

*The family, God's plan for the
preservation of humanity, is the most
potent source of motivation in the world.*

R.A.M.

NORMA

I have been married for over fifty years, and when I talk about my family I must begin with the most important person in my life, my wife Norma. Her reception of my actions and her reaction to my ideas mean more to me than anyone else's opinions. All my life, I have never tried to do anything to cause her discomfort; on the contrary, I have always had her best interests in mind in everything I do.

Norma has often been described as a very giving person. Her first thought in any situation is always to help someone else, whether it is me, our children, her family, my family, her friends, or our friends. She is quite frugal, constantly concerned with the family purse strings. She worries about the cost of clothing for herself (but only herself). Her hair has occupied a very high priority in her life. If her hair looks good, her self confidence, her swagger, and her disposition, all improve dramatically. In our early life together, a hairdresser was out of the question, so there were many dramatic moments when she was combing her hair for a social event. Today, a lot of our social planning revolves around the availability of a professional hairdresser.

When we first married, her role was as the homemaker, while my role was as the breadwinner. There is no question that our lives were motivated by the way we saw our own roles in the family. We were always involved in each other's responsibilities, but our respect for each other's commitment to the success of our individual roles was paramount. The pillow talk mostly centered around seeking each other's opinion about significant events of our life, in both our home life and the business. I provided the means for living, Norma made living worthwhile.

Sometimes, Norma was a little reluctant to participate in a new venture that I proposed, or that someone else suggested to us. She usually took the role of the devil's advocate in such discussion, trying to make sure that the venture was sound, workable, and something we both wanted to do. But once she made a commitment, she supported it with all her vigor. This cautious consideration, followed by unbridled enthusiasm, applied to all major steps in our lives—raising the family, being uprooted from comfortable surroundings to move to Tennessee, the

start-up of our businesses, forms of recreation we took up as novices, and her concern for good health for me and all the family.

Norma has a great immune system. I have dealt with many physical problems, but nothing has ever affected her. Tuberculosis was a highly communicable disease, and even though we were very close at the time I contracted the affliction, she was never afflicted by it. In the fifty-one years I have been with Norma, I can only recall her being confined to bed one time (other than during childbirth). That one time she was sick for three days, and the doctor diagnosed her condition as, “devil’s flu.” I can’t recall the last time she even had a common cold, but I know it’s been over ten years. Her weight, while always a concern to her, has varied less than 15% at any time in her life.

I could write much more about Norma and the influence she has on my life. She certainly qualifies as the dominant driving force in any accomplishments we have achieved in our lives.

GLORIA

I have mentioned previously that God blessed us with three children. Gloria was born on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1945, and her birth was truly a memorable experience. Since she was the first grandchild on both sides of our family, she received more than her fair share of attention. I could write many wonderful stories I remember about her life, but I believe it is better to reserve those stories for her to narrate, or not, according to her own judgement.

As our first-born child, she was the trail blazer in many ways, and all of our ideas about child development were tried out on her first. As she grew, we discussed every activity that was available for her to be appropriately trained for proper womanhood. For example, we were living in Alcoa, Tennessee, when Gloria was six years old, and we drove her fifteen miles every Saturday morning to study ballet. This long-distance commute went on for several years until we realized she showed little talent for this exercise.

When she was old enough, we signed her up for two weeks of summer camp. I believe it was her second year at the camp, when she wrote to tell us she had her first period. We thought this was rather interesting and took the letter with us to show to friends when we traveled to Chester, Pennsylvania. It so happened that the woman we were visiting, Marian Pedlow, had a morning radio show that she broadcast from her home. She talked about a wide range of topics of human interests. She thought Gloria’s letter was hilarious and read it to her audience over the radio.

As a teenager in the mid-1950s, Gloria naturally followed the new music that started to sweep the country. Like many girls her age, she was taken by Elvis Presley, referred to in later years as “The King”. In October 1956, Elvis was invited by Ed Sullivan to appear on his Sunday night television variety show, which introduced up-and-coming new entertainment. Our whole family watched that much ballyhooed show, to see how good he really was. After watching his performance, I told Gloria that Elvis would not last three months, since most of his act consisted merely of gyrations to accompany his music. After nearly forty years, Gloria has not let me forget this prediction.

At Villa Madonna, the private girls' high school in northern Kentucky that Gloria attended, she became interested in drama, and won the leading part in the school's best play of the year, Saint Joan.

When she was ready for college, we researched all the leading girls' schools in the country. We visited Stanford, St. Mary's, and several eastern schools, certain that she would have no trouble being accepted at any school she chose.

With considerable persuasion on our part, she selected St. Mary's in South Bend Indiana. At the end of her sophomore year of college, she married Charles Wills, just after his own graduation from Notre Dame. They moved to Brooklyn, New York, where our first granddaughter, Tansy, was born a year later. Gloria gave birth to our second granddaughter, Caitlin, three years later in Haddenfield, New Jersey.

Gloria moved back to the Cincinnati area and married John Webber. She came to work for Comair in 1981, and now serves as the director of corporate communications managing public and investor relations for the company. In 1986, the Louisville Courier Journal ran a story about family involvement in business that profiled Gloria, David, and me in our roles at Comair.

JUDY

Judy was born in Knoxville, Tennessee on June 22, 1948. She was a bundle of joy from the day she was born. She was four years old before we left Tennessee, so her first words were spoken with an eastern Tennessee accent. Judy is one of those people who gets along well with everyone. She has made friends easily from the time she was young, and this gift for making friends has stayed with her throughout her life.

She studied ballroom, tap, and ballet dancing as extracurricular activities in her youth. She swam very well, and earned a number of ribbons competing with the local swim team.

In her last two years in high school, the boys started to "hang around" and she had plenty of dates. Friday night was the teenage bash at the girl's high school, and it was extremely difficult to keep Judy from one of these sessions. She was very good about the curfew—she always arrived home promptly on time or had a good reason why she was late.

I sometimes thought that Judy did not apply herself to academic studies as well as Gloria, and I thought that she would have difficulty getting into the college of her choice, but in fact she was the first of our children to graduate from college. After her sophomore year of college, she signed up for a summer job as a pastry chef at one of the seaside resorts in Ogunquit, Maine. Since we were not about to send our daughter off to a new job without checking it out first, we drove her to Maine.

We arrived a few days before the resort opened for the summer season. The place was a mess. It was dirty, cold and very old. The help had separate sleeping quarters in a concrete block building adjacent to the main building. We immediately told Judy that this was no place for her and suggested she could find another job in better surroundings. She pleaded with us to let her stay for a few days, and as usual, she won. We stayed down the road at a more attractive hotel.

Each day got a little better, so after a few days, she insisting on staying, and we agreed. I am sure our decision was guided by Divine Providence, because shortly thereafter she met Duane Larock, fresh from the Marine Corps and a tour of duty in Vietnam. They hit it off immediately and they were married the next summer. The newlyweds moved to Vermont, where Judy received her degree while Duane was finishing up his. She and Duane have given us two outstanding Grandsons, Matt and Mike.

DAVID

Just about six months after I started R.A.Mueller & Associates, while the country was electing General Dwight D. Eisenhower as President, our first and only Son, David was born in Cincinnati, Ohio. Even though I did not openly express it at the time, I wanted to raise a son in the worst way, to offer him the many things that I did not have when I was growing up.

While Norma assumed total control of the girls development (since she was the same gender and had the experiences of a young girl's likes and dislikes), I was involved in every move David made, outside of the normal care of food, shelter and cleanliness. I wanted him to have all the advantages that I didn't have, and like all fathers, I hoped for success in all of his endeavors.

As soon as he was old enough, I got him involved in sports. I wanted him exposed to every kind of athletic endeavor available, so he could find one sport that would interest him as a favorite hobby. I helped organize, manage and coach his Knothole baseball teams. Through the Ft. Wright Civic Club, we organized a "pee-wee" football league that competed with other community teams. Jack Konersman and I promoted a community Swim Club so that our families could enjoy the benefits of a private swim club. David spent a lot of time at that pool, as well as at Summit Hill Country, where he swam and also caddied for me during my Sunday golf games.

His exposure to music was through a set of drums that helped vent some of his energy when outside activities were not available.

We worked hard with David to help him with his studies; we always felt it was imperative that he receive a sound education. For his secondary education, I thought he had to attend St. Xavier, the leading Jesuit high school in the Greater Cincinnati area. It meant that his mother had to drive him twelve to fifteen miles each day for the first two years, in a car pool with other students from Northern Kentucky. In his third year, he was able to drive, and that relived some of the burden on Norma.

David did fairly well academically, as well as making the GCL All-City football team as offensive guard, an honor that earned him a football scholarship. Several schools offered him athletic scholarships, but education was foremost in my mind, so I would not settle for anything less than a credible academically recognized school. David talked to me about his choices, but I wasn't happy with any of them. I called Tom Balaban, his football coach to see if there were any other alternatives. Tom told me that the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs would be pleased to offer David a full scholarship if they thought he would be interested. This really hit my hot button, and I was thrilled with the offer. David liked the idea too, so we made arrangements to have David attend the Air Force Academy. It meant six weeks of basic military training, so a

few weeks after his graduation from high school, I bought him a one-way airline ticket to San Antonio, Texas, for his boot camp. In retrospect, it was a good decision, because the physical training, the discipline, and the emphasis on personal development he learned in the service all contributed to David's later successes.

There is a great deal more I could write about the experiences I have shared with my son, but they should be left for David to tell in his own words. David and his wife have provided us with two beautiful grandchildren, Jessica and Christopher.

So our family is complete at the time this is being written, and it includes two daughters and their husbands, one son, three grandsons, three granddaughters, and one great-granddaughter.

MY MOTHER

While I only lived with my parents for twenty-two years of my life, the strong lessons my mother taught me have stayed with me all my life. As I have written earlier, I was a child during the Depression. My father had difficulty providing steady income for the family from the time I was seven years old until I started to work full time at age sixteen. The theme in our house that I remember clearly was, "Pray for steady work for Daddy." My Dad was a hard, willing worker but it was difficult to find work as a sheet metal worker during the Depression. The demand in the building trade simply wasn't there, so he had to rely on other mechanical skills to provide income for the family. He tried an assortment of jobs, none of which he could handle very well.

Mom liked to socialize. She was a "people person." Having people around her was what she liked most. If people were not available, she would keep in contact with her friends and relatives by telephone. When we were children, we would come home from school around 3:00 PM, and there would usually be a neighbor or cousin visiting. Mom didn't get out of the house much, but that didn't stop her from socializing. I think she was an extrovert in every sense of the word.

We were a blue-collar family. We didn't go in for "highbrow" activities such as music, the arts, or even reading good books, and higher education was for more affluent families. No one in my father or mother's family graduated from high school, let alone college. College was never really considered as an option for anyone in our family.

But this didn't keep me from getting some wonderful motivational lessons about life in the family environment. Mom's religious training was intense, and she would not compromise when it came to her religion. We attended whatever services the parish church had to offer, and she insisted on prayer at meals and at bedtime every day.

Over and over again, she would tell us, "Whatever you do for others comes back to you tenfold." I always thought this sounded like a good deal, but I did question the high rate of return—could we really expect tenfold? Nevertheless, this saying has stayed with me throughout my life.

Since she was of German heritage, to my mother, "cleanliness was next to Godliness." The food served in our house was always wholesome, although sometimes not abundant. I remember lots of rutabaga and turnips, though. It is a dish I abhor to this day as the result of having been

served so much of it while growing up. When my mother said, "Finish your plate," it meant there were to be no scraps on the plate. I am not sure it was the right policy; it certainly wouldn't fit too well in today's weight- and health-conscious world.

My mother had a lot to do with my recovery from tuberculosis, there is no doubt about that. She was totally committed to my recovery. She fed me, bathed me, handled my toilet, and, perhaps more importantly, always offered words of encouragement. All these things, as well as her sense of humor during these depressing times, contributed to my complete recovery.

MY FATHER

Dad had the misfortune to marry the oldest daughter in a family that included five older sons. Everything he did was measured against the performance of the Schmidt brothers. He handled the situation well, though, except when it came to employment. While he was somewhat smaller in stature than the Schmidt brothers, he weighed much less than any of them, he could always compete in strength exhibitions, and there were many of these, particularly when they were drinking home brew.

Dad was always very conscientious, and fastidious in his demeanor, until his later years, when his mind began to slip. He always tried hard to provide top quality workmanship to his customers when he was in business. He kept informed about politics, and being a working man, he was a strong supporter of Franklin Roosevelt and a lifelong Democrat. I doubt that he or my mother ever voted for a Republican, they were both so fond of President Roosevelt.

Dad was always upset that my mothers enjoyed going out in the evening for cards with her friends, or meeting with the Ladies Sodality of our parish. He thought she should spend evenings at home with him and their children. Dad was very dedicated to the family and his world revolved around it, and he had few interests outside the house.

In the early 1960s, his business started to level off. More and more competition began to appear, with younger, hard-working individuals. The business gradually went so far downhill that it was no longer a going concern, and Dad decided to give it to his son-in-law. There was little or no value left in it except for the good name.

They did not have much in the way of savings, and even with Social Security, there was not enough money for them to continue to enjoy a comfortable lifestyle, so I asked Dad to help me out by working ten hours a week or so in our shop, fabricating fittings on metal and rubber hose. He had no regular hours and only worked when he felt like it. It was simple, easy work, but it allowed him to "get out of the house" and helped him preserve his dignity by being productive.

Once, when I had an important individual in the office (although I don't recall now whether I was buying or selling), Dad looked in to say, "Boss, I'll say hello to mother for you, see you later." I didn't mind this, even though others may have felt somewhat embarrassed. He was my Dad.

MY BROTHER & SISTERS

Chuck, as I called my brother, was my role model when I was young. I followed his activities; I wanted to do everything he did. We were very close. We slept together until I became bedridden with tuberculosis when I was nineteen years old. As a sleeping partner, we shared a good deal of conversation, some spontaneous, “excuse me’s,” boyhood experiences, and on occasions, some competitive disagreements.

My first realization that his world might be different than mine occurred when I was in about the seventh grade. He started to make friends that were his friends alone—the group did not include me. It forced me to go out and develop my own friendships. This was not easy for me, but I soon learned to cope with it. Maybe I even became a little competitive, learning to make friends just to prove I was self-sufficient and could accept my brother’s rebuff.

Through our high school years, Chuck generally had his own interests, and they did not include me. He shared our mother’s concern for other people. And he also seemed to pay attention to the opposite sex much earlier than I did.

In early 1942, he was drafted into the Army, and was sent to western Kentucky for his basic military training. He was assigned to the 95th Evacuation Hospital. He went overseas in April 1942 and was discharged in September 1945. He received the Purple Heart for being wounded in action.

After his discharge, he joined our Dad in the family heating and air conditioning business, then in 1954 he joined me at R.A. Mueller & Associates. Except for a brief time when he took a stab at starting his own business, he stayed with me until his retirement.

At RAM, Inc., he cultivated many of our customers into his friends. His style of selling involved pleasing his customers, and he enjoyed making sure they were satisfied. He loved to play golf and cards, and to entertain at Cincinnati Reds or Bengals games. His ability to cultivate customers was a source of a good deal of business for the company.

Our families were similar; Chuck also had two daughters, then a son. In our later life together, we became very close. He truly was a great part of my life.

We had two sisters, Loraine and Thelma, who completed our family. Both my sisters married, had children, and led lives that did not have an impact on my career in any substantial way. Both loved their families and we all stayed in contact by telephone and visited each other on a regular basis.

NORMA'S FAMILY

In addition to Norma’s parents, who were a big part of our lives, Norma’s brother, Bob was very close to our family. Bob was an outstanding athlete, and played Major League baseball. After his active days as a player, Bob coached, managed, and was a scout for the rest of his life.

At his internment services, I spoke about his compassion for his fellow man. He was especially sensitive to the feelings of young people, the handicapped, the less fortunate, and the

underprivileged. He touched our lives in many ways. The neighbors were very fond of Bob; the young children called him “The Teddy Bear”. In sports at Purcell high school, Bob was a great athlete— he was “All Everything”.

His final hour on this earth was a moving experience. His wife Betty, his son Joe, Norma, and I all held hands, while Father Hartman led us in prayer. About the time Father Hartman finished the prayers, Bob took his last breath.

Much more could and should be written about Bob and his career. He had a great life and one that would be a privilege for any of us to emulate.

MY THOUGHTS ABOUT OUR FAMILY AFTER FIFTY YEARS

The journey of life provides for many interesting observations. It is a sheer joy to observe the development of those who are close to you, and whose growth and progress you have had a hand in guiding. When I look at our immediate family, I believe that Norma and I have been reasonably successful in fulfilling our goals. We wanted our children to be self-sustaining, educated, exposed to the many opportunities available for self-expression, God-fearing, committed to the development of their own families, and at peace with themselves and their families.

I am very glad that the industrial distribution business appealed to Judy’s husband, Duane, so that he chose to make his career in the business. It pleases me to see that he is aggressively developing the company that was the foundation for all our subsequent business activities and successes. I was also happy to have the chance to support Gloria’s husband, John, when he became interested in a banking venture that led to the formation of the First National Bank of Northern Kentucky.

I was fortunate to recognize the opportunity David presented to me when he began to talk about starting a commuter airline. It was also fortunate that I had the mental, physical, and financial resource at age 55 to pursue the idea, which became a very demanding challenge. It would have been easy to dismiss the opportunity due to age and the disinclination to give up the comfort level we had attained at that period of our lives, as we approached retirement.

Throughout my career I always tried to be sensitive to the needs of our family. I provided assistance in any way I could if the needs were truly valid. This applied to all our relatives, not just our immediate family.

There is a warmth that pervades our family gatherings, and this was demonstrated most explicitly when Norma and I celebrated our fiftieth anniversary. At the party, the intimacy of the family, and my realization of what it meant to me, caused me to lose control of my emotions, something I had never done before in my adult life.



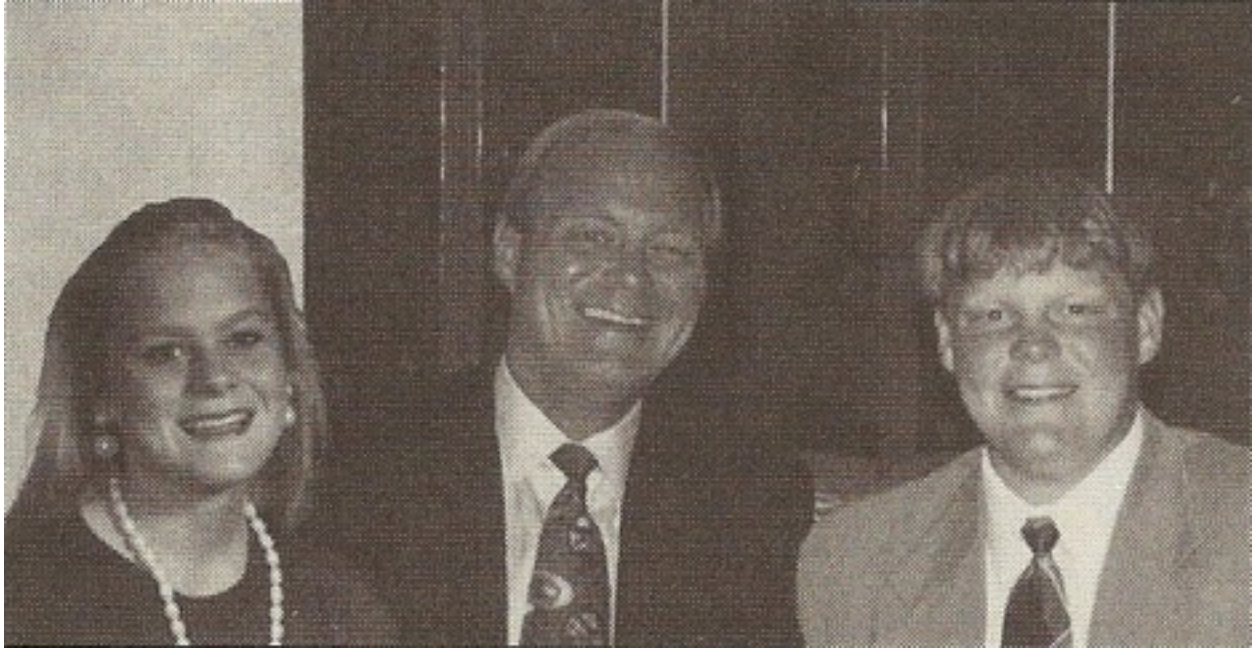
Norma



Gloria and Family



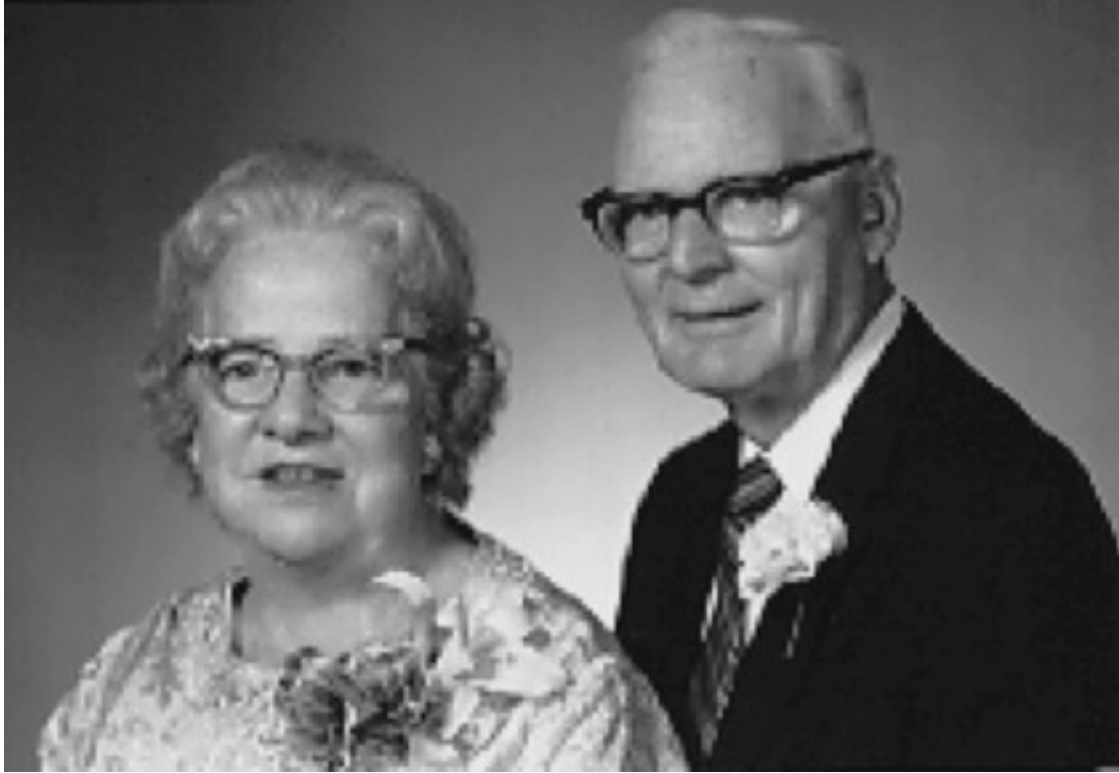
Judy and Family



David and Family



Our Children at Norma's 70th Birthday



Mom and Dad



Brother and Sisters in 1991



Norma's Mom and Dad



Bob and Betty



The Family Gathered for our 50th Anniversary, July 1994

Business Trips and Family Travel

*Travel replaces imagination with
reality—instead of thinking or assuming
conditions, they are seen and experienced.*

R.A.M.

I started to travel on business in 1947 without the family, and my experiences led me to believe that it would benefit the children's education if we could also travel as a family, and give them the opportunity to visit different parts of the United States.

FIRST FAMILY VACATIONS AND WINTER EXCURSIONS

In December 1953, when David was just 13 months old, we took a family vacation to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. We left the day after Christmas, and stayed for 10 days. David was still in diapers, and there were no disposables back then, so all of his diapers had to be washed at a laundry. We stayed right on the beach at a spot called Casa Luna, where we walked out the apartment door and were in the sand on the beach. This was an excellent arrangement, because the children could come and go to the beach as they pleased. Norma and I had the opportunity to enjoy the time in Ft. Lauderdale without having to be at the beach every moment.

We continued these winter vacations to Florida until Gloria was approximately 15 years old, Judy was 12 and David was 8 years old. By then, the children did not want to spend time away from their friends over the holidays.

Norma and I, along with our friends the Hocks, started to visit Jamaica during the winter about the time we discontinued the family vacations to Florida. We stayed at the Royal Caribbean at Montego Bay. It was a nice break in the winter season and certainly one we looked forward to every year. Over the years, the trip grew to include a number of our Cincinnati friends.

Our first trip to Jamaica was a hilarious experience. We weren't staying at the Royal Caribbean then, but at another resort whose name I can't recall. It was located at Ocho Rios, about 50 miles east of Montego Bay on the Queen's Highway. It was a two-hour trip under the best of circumstances; four hours was the norm.

We left Cincinnati on the Delta Airlines midnight special to Miami, the lowest fare available. We arrived in Miami at about 4:00 AM, and our connecting flight to Montego Bay left at about 8:00 AM, so we had a four-hour layover.

After clearing customs, not an easy task in those days, we started the trip to Ocho Rios. We stopped for lunch, and arrived at our destination about 3:00 PM, only to find that our hotel had been closed by the government the day before for failure to pay taxes. We were real rookies, out of the country for the first time. We didn't have a lot of extra cash with us, credit cards were not established methods of payment yet, and we had nowhere to stay. Fortunately, the driver suggested that we go to the next hotel on the beach. We did, and they had rooms that were probably even better than the ones at our original destination. The hotel was the Marikeesh, which later was taken over as a Playboy Club. With sunken tubs, Jamaican steel bands, beautiful weather, music, and dancing under the stars every night, it was just what the doctor ordered for a couple of winter-weary, hard-working parents.

SEEING AMERICA

I thought it would be a great idea to take a three- to four-week trip with the children each summer to see the different areas of our country. I divided up the United States into five sections—the Northeast, the upper Midwest, California and the West Coast, then the Southeast, and the Southwest. My plan was that we would make one of these areas our destination for a summer vacation each year.

Our first excursion, in 1956, was to the Northeast. We visited Boston, then went to Maine, continued over to Montreal, drove down to Toronto, and then back to Cincinnati. It was our family's first exposure to New England and the historical sights in Boston.

The following year (1957), I laid out a trip leaving Cincinnati and traveling to the upper Midwest. We started in Sioux Falls, South Dakota; took in Mt. Rushmore National Memorial Park, the Badlands National Park, and Custer State Park; then went down to Cheyenne, Wyoming.

From Cheyenne, we went to Estes Park and Rocky Mountains National Park. Then we continued on to Colorado Springs and stayed for a week in Woodland Park, at a working dude ranch called the Triple B. When we left the ranch, I remember that both girls were crying. They did not want to leave because they enjoyed the horses so much.

After Woodland Park, we drove westbound over Independence Pass, and there was not a paved road at that time. Driving on a gravel road at an altitude of 10,000 to 12,000 feet above sea level provided considerable anxiety for everyone in the car as I wound my way through the Rocky Mountains. Of course, this was before the expressway system had been created, and the best roads were second-class by today's standards. Grand Junction, Colorado, was our western turnaround. We came back to Cincinnati by way of U.S. Route 50, and that took us through a big part of Kansas to Jefferson City, Missouri, where we visited the home of Harry Truman, then through southern Illinois, and back to Cincinnati. The trip took about four weeks and we all had a wonderful experience.

In 1959, we really got ambitious and decided to take the family to California. We planned to take the southern route, which at that time was U.S. Route 66. We left Cincinnati and went to

Chapel, Missouri; then continued on down to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Amarillo, Texas; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and on into Flagstaff, Arizona.

From Flagstaff, we took a trip up to the Hopi Indian Reservation. We intended to stay overnight, but after seeing the facilities at the reservation, we decided it might be better to move on to the city outside the reservation. We also visited the Grand Canyon, and then headed west to Las Vegas, where we stayed for several days, enduring temperatures of more than 100 degrees Fahrenheit. We saw a couple of shows, Gloria got caught playing the slot machines, and then we drove into Southern California, to Los Angeles. We went down the coast to Long Beach, where we checked into a hotel for four or five days. We also drove down to San Diego and over into Tijuana, Mexico, an interesting experience.

When we left Southern California, we drove inland up to Fresno, and then stayed in San Francisco for a few days, enjoying all the tourist attractions. On the way back from San Francisco, our first stop was in Lake Tahoe, where we once again stayed on a dude ranch for several days. From Reno, we drove to Salt Lake City to visit the Mormon Tabernacle, and then we started the eastbound trip home through Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana, finally making it to Cincinnati and across the bridge to home.

Motels at that time were not nearly as abundant as they are today, nor were the roads anything like the network of superhighways we have today. We were also staying in motels each night with three small children. Norma and I had the jobs of handling all the luggage, keeping suitcases full of clothing in good condition, and generally trying to keep everyone in a happy mood to enjoy all this travel.

After our trip to the West Coast, Norma and I determined that the children were getting to the ages where having five people confined to a car for long periods of time was beginning to get unmanageable. The children all had different interests and attention levels, and with long periods of confinement in the car, people inevitably became irritable, which detracted from the pleasantness of the trip for everyone. So, at this point, we decided that future family travel was not going to be by car, for the most part. Gloria was 15, Judy was 12, and David was 8 years old when we decided these cross-country car trips were no longer worth the effort.

In 1964, after Gloria's first year at St. Mary's College, we helped her get a summer job with the Cherry County Playhouse in Traverse City, Michigan. Since she would be working (?) there all summer, I thought it would be nice if Judy, David, Norma, and I took in the World's Fair in New York, then took a train to Washington, D. C., where we would rent a car and drive to Williamsburg, Virginia.

In New York City, we booked into the Drake Hotel in Manhattan. The 1964 World's Fair was educational as well as interesting. There was a problem with Judy, who was at an awkward stage and had trouble with all the stairs at the various pavilions.

The train ride to Washington was different, much faster than the trains we were used to in the Midwest. In Washington, however, Judy and David were not interested in visiting the various government buildings. They stayed at the hotel and used the swimming pool or sat in the car

while Norma and I visited the points of interest in the nation's capital. It became very clear to us on that trip that travel with their parents was no longer attractive to Judy and David.

WORLD TRAVELERS

Coincidentally with the children getting older, I became more involved with the Cincinnati Club and was elected to the Board of Directors. We also began to join some of the club trips that they promoted each summer. The first trip was to the Orient, including Tokyo and Kyoto, Japan, and Hong Kong, then down to the South Island of New Zealand. It was a fast two-week trip, staying three or four days at each stop. There were about 40 or 50 people on the trip, mostly our own age and with shared interests, which made it a very enjoyable vacation.

In Tokyo, we visited temples and other sites of interest. We then took a high-speed bullet train to Kyoto, which is one of Japan's most historic cities. In addition to trying to understand the development of the country and its culture, there were some very interesting activities available—people have often heard me talk about the opportunity I had to enjoy my first wax job.

Our tour leader arranged for a group of about eight or ten of the men on the trip to visit a Japanese health club, which was staffed by geisha girls. Upon arriving at the club, you were greeted by your assigned staff girl, who asked you to disrobe. She took you to the bath, which was heated and as big as a swimming pool, with various colored neon lights for effect. The water temperature was probably about 102 or 104 degrees, so the bath was very soothing, much like you might enjoy today in a hot tub or whirlpool. After about 10 or 15 minutes in the pool, the girl would proceed to shave you, clean your nails, trim your toenails as well as your fingernails, and brush your teeth. At that point, you went to another room where there were masseuse tables, and she gave you a full massage. In addition to all the usual massage moves, the geisha girl would walk on your back.

When this was all finished, she escorted you to another room and asked, “Is there anything else, sir?” The reply, at least in my case, was, “What else is there?” Her answer was a wax job. Well, I had to find out what that was, so I said yes. Much to my dismay, the wax job consisted of moving to another table where, with your private parts exposed, the geisha girl took a wooden mallet, and struck you right where you might imagine. Thereupon, the wax would pop out of both ears.

From Kyoto, we went to Hong Kong to experience that vast shopping mecca. We saw shops that sold every electronic gadget you can imagine, along with the tailors located right in the hotel who custom-made shoes, shirts, suits, trousers, and all sorts of ladies' garments. A girl there wanted to sell me a vicuna coat. It was a beautiful coat, but I was sure it was well out of my price range. Bargaining is the order of the day in Hong Kong, however, and her first price on the vicuna coat was \$400 US. At this time in my life, there was no way I was going to spend that kind of money on a topcoat, so I left. But in our hotel room later in the day, I told Norma that if I could get the price down to \$150, I would probably buy it. Well, I was able to get the price down to \$125, so I purchased my first vicuna topcoat. It was a beautiful coat and lasted nearly 10 years. It probably would have sold in the United States at the time for somewhere between

\$1,000 and \$1,200. Both Norma and I had very good success with the fit and the quality of the workmanship in the clothes we had tailored in Hong Kong, and we continued to purchase clothing from the same tailor for about 25 years or more.

Our next Cincinnati Club sponsored trip was a South American cruise. We flew to Montevideo, Uruguay, where we boarded a German-staffed cruise vessel called the Hanseatic. We sailed up the east coast of South America, visiting all the major cities, including Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Brasilia, and probably several other smaller cities. We had a great time aboard the ship, enjoying the fun, good food, and new experiences with people with whom we regularly socialized in Cincinnati.

The following year, we did a Scandinavian trip, which included Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, and a stopover at what was then called Leningrad (now St. Petersburg again) in Russia.

COMBINING BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE

All these trips with the Cincinnati Club were in the month of June, so they pretty much took care of our summer travel each year. During the rest of the year, every three months or so we made it a point to take long weekends to New York City—business trips that allowed me to see some of the companies we represented in the New York area, while also enjoying my free time to have nice dinners and keep up with the latest Broadway shows, and still be back in Cincinnati for the Monday workday. This always was a pleasant reprieve and one that Norma and I used to our advantage on a regular basis for many years.

My first opportunity to visit Europe came when Paul Hock suggested that we attend the Chem Show, an industrial trade show held in Frankfurt, Germany, which made it a business trip, of course. We went to the exposition by ourselves the first time, and spent three or four days in Frankfurt looking over all the products that were being manufactured in Europe for potential sales representation in the United States. He was interested in seeing new developments in the manufacture of stainless steel vessels, and I was looking for a product line or two to represent as an agency or distributor, something that would fit with our existing products .

After the Chem Show, Paul and I took a side trip south and east of Frankfurt down through Rothenburg-on-the-Tauber. We stayed there at a very small hotel with a nice dining room. Since Paul could speak a little German, we drove ourselves from Frankfurt and planned on being at the hotel by 6 PM, but we were delayed for some reason and didn't get to the hotel until 9 PM that evening. The owner held our reservation, but he assumed that since the two of us were traveling together, we should occupy the sweetheart room in the hotel, furnished with one double bed with posters and appropriate canopy. He made an assumption that, of course, was in no way correct, but we laughed about it and made the most of it. It was probably the only time in my entire life that I ever slept with another guy except when I was a child. From Rothenburg, we drove to Munich and southern Germany to take in the sights there.

The Chem Show in Europe was held every three years, and the next time it was scheduled, we took our wives along. After seeing the trade show, we went to southern France, and stayed in Nice, directly on the beach. We spent about a week visiting Monte Carlo and other places along

the Riviera. Then we hired a car with a driver in Milan, Italy, to take us into Florence, Rome, and then Venice for three days. We thought that Venice was a real tourist trap, and were not impressed by the city's features that apparently make it intriguing to other visitors.

GOLF OUTINGS

The earliest golf trips I remember were stag trips with fellow golfers from the Summit Hills Country Club. A group of 8 to 12 of us would frequently go to Otter Creek in southern Indiana, as often as two or three times during a summer season. Later, as Norma got more involved in golf, we took couples' golf trips to Innisbrook outside of Tampa, Florida. Again, the trips included other Summit Hills members, with a group of about 20. These trips usually each lasted about a week each.

On another occasion, we traveled to Callaway Gardens in Georgia with the same group. Later, we took trips with the Great Lakes Seniors to Bermuda and to Homestead, Virginia. Usually these couples' golf trips included John and Norma McCormack, Bob and Jean Lemker, Freddie and Ruth Wolnitzek, and Jack and Wanda Heckman. On one of the trips to Callaway Gardens, I flew the Aztec plane with six of us aboard. John and Norma McCormack drove their car and met us at the resort. There was only one problem on the trip—I landed the plane at the wrong airport. I thought I was at Callaway, when in fact I was at an airport adjacent to Callaway. So we all had to board the plane again to fly another 20 or 30 miles to the landing strip that was actually at Callaway Gardens.

On vacation with the Heckmans, we flew to Boyne Mountain in Michigan for a week's stay to play golf there. We later visited Boyne Mountain on a number of other occasions with Paul and Joanne Hock, principally to play golf and to enjoy the cooler temperature in northern Michigan. We came to enjoy the area so much that we eventually bought a lot on Burt Lake and built a home there.

Once, a group of Chemineer representatives got together for a trip to Tides Inn, outside Richmond, Virginia, for a week of golf. Tides Inn is a beautiful facility right on Chesapeake Bay. Another time, the same group went to Destin, Florida, where we played on a couple of nice golf courses in that area.

Most recently, we had the opportunity to visit Crans-Montana, Switzerland about 100 miles east of Geneva, after our granddaughter Tansy's wedding. We stayed at a hotel on a beautiful golf course where Judy and Duane and Norma and I played golf three or four times, high in the Swiss Alps.

In addition to all these golf trips, there were numerous other golf events and outings that were more or less one day events, sometimes out of town. Golf outings were always a big part of our recreation activity.

One golf trip that I will remember forever started out as a "business trip" to California in 1968. There was a company called U. S. Filter that we represented which made large horizontal

leaf filters, principally for the brewing industry. They had scheduled a sales meeting in the Los Angeles area.

Bud Bierne, the golf pro at Summit Hills, had a friend at the Bel Air Country Club, the course where the movie stars played. So, he talked me into taking him along on the trip. Bud was a real character, and he took advantage of every chance he could to use members. After a couple of business sessions and dinners, the people at U. S. Filter organized a golf event, and I was able to arrange for Bud to play in it with me. Then Bud arranged for the two of us to play at Bel Air.

It was a beautiful course, built in the Hollywood Hills. There was an elevator to take you from the ninth green to the tenth tee. A number of movie stars were playing the day we were there, including Edgar Bergen, who had one of the most well-known ventriloquist acts around with Charlie McCarthy, and was also the father of present-day star Candace Bergen. In the locker room, we had drinks with Ray Milland, Fred McMurray, Robert Goulet, and several other Hollywood personalities whose names I can't recall.

There was only one problem, the weather did not cooperate. The southern California smog was out in force. It was so bad, we could hardly see the greens for our approach shots. It affected my sinuses, my eyes, and my nose, so that it was all I could do to finish our round of golf. So much for beautiful, sunny California.

AIR SHOWS

In about 1980, shortly after Comair got off the ground, David and I decided to visit various manufacturers who produced commuter-type aircraft. We were trying to make a decision about which way to go from the small Navajos, which would not be suitable for the airline for long. We needed to find a more suitable, larger plane for our operations.

Taking our wives along for the trip, we visited the Fockler plant in Amsterdam, Holland and then went on over to Northern Ireland to see the Shorts factory in Belfast. After Ireland, we went to Sweden to talk to the people responsible for developing the new SF 340, the plane that we eventually purchased. We got along very well with the people at Saab-Scania, and since the SF 340 was designed with General Electric engines from GE's Cincinnati division, we made a decision to go with the new Saab-Fairchild aircraft. When we left Sweden after making this decision, we took in the Paris Air Show.

It was quite an exciting experience in Paris, seeing all the types of commercial and military aircraft, along with all the component manufacturers. The word was out that we were interested in purchasing aircraft, and so we were wined and dined in Paris. Each day at the air show they would have a fly-by, so observers could see the military planes as well as commercial aircraft as they went through their maneuvers. We saw the Harrier, along with the latest Swedish-built fighter plane, the Vigder, and several American-built F-16 planes, also.

In association with Comair business, we visited air shows in London and Paris several more times, in subsequent years.

OTHER FAMILY TRIPS

I recall two other enjoyable family trips, taken with our daughters and their families. The first was with Gloria and her family. We joined them in Haddonfield, New Jersey, where they were living, and drove from there to Maine, then continued on to Canada, where we visited Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. On the return trip, we also made a stop in Philadelphia to see the historic sights of that city.

On another occasion we flew to Vancouver, British Columbia with Judy, Duane, and their boys to take in the 1986 World's Fair there. From Vancouver, we took a cruise ship, the Rotterdam, up the coast to Juno, Alaska and stayed at the lodge in Glacier Park, where our grandson Michael caught a halibut that weighed over a hundred pounds. From Juno, we flew to Anchorage, where we rented a car and toured the southern part of Alaska.

SHARING THE WORLD WITH OUR GRANDCHILDREN

As Tansy, our oldest grandchild, approached the age of 16, Norma and I decided that it would be a delightful experience for us, and for our grandchildren, we hoped, to take each one of them by themselves on a significant trip to a destination of their choice.

A Trip to China with Tansy

Tansy, being the adventurous type, liked the idea immediately, and she decided the place she wanted to go was the Orient. I arranged a trip that started in Hong Kong, followed by a train ride into Canton, then into the interior cities of China, finishing up in Beijing, with a final train trip over to Tianjin. The year was about 1984, and since China had only been opened for travel since about 1980, the hotels and travel accommodations were not first class. As a matter of fact, most of the hotels we stayed in had been there since the 1920s, before Mao Tse-Tung had come to power. His regime had not allowed any new facilities to be built, since such amenities would represent cultural advantages, while he felt that everyone in China should be of the working class regardless of their profession or education. Travel was still restricted, and the type of facilities we take for granted in the United States were nowhere to be found. Some of the hotels we stayed in were true "flea bags."

Despite the less than perfect accommodations, the trip was still quite interesting. We traveled in a party of 11, which consisted of the three of us, two school teachers from Canada, and six members of a family from Columbia, South America, including the parents and four boys who ranged in age from 13 to 22. Tansy and the boys got along well, and they were friendly with the school teachers, too. It was a small but interesting group and we enjoyed the two weeks we spent with them.

In China at that time, no one had refrigeration, and they heated their homes and cooked with wood or coal-fired stoves. There was always heavy smoke and dust from the stoves, particularly over high-density population areas such as the big cities. Nobody had automobiles, but everybody rode bicycles. There were no other appliances as we know them today. Without refrigeration, each family had to get their own food every day, cook it, and eat it, since it was impossible to keep

food from one day to the next. The population of China was then more than 1 billion people, or approximately five times the population of the United States. At the time, I made the observation that, technologically, China was like the United States during the period before and during World War I, about 1910 to 1920, and quite a distance behind the United States of the 1980s.

We had a lot of eating adventures during the trip. None of the food we ate was Chinese food as we know it in the United States; it was truly native, with fish as the main ingredient in their cooking. We drank nothing but bottled water and washed all the vegetables carefully before consuming them. Fortunately, none of us got ill during the trip, due to these precautions, and it was simply a great experience, and something that Tansy as well as her grandparents will remember for the rest of our lives.

The trip enriched the grandparent-grandchild relationship we had with Tansy because we spent so much time together. At the end of the trip, we believed that Tansy thought of her grandparents as genuine people, not stuffy old folks. When we left China, rather than fly all the way from Beijing to the United States, we decided to take a side trip to Hawaii to rest before continuing the journey home. The trip was so successful that we looked forward to similar experiences with the rest of our grandchildren.

On Tour with Caitlin to the Middle East and Ireland

When Kate got to be 16, she chose a trip to the Greek Islands, a visit to the Middle East and the Holy Lands, and a final stop in Ireland. However, the year that she was 16, conditions were in more turmoil than usual in the Middle East, so we decided to defer her trip until the following year, hoping things would settle down to allow safer travel in the area.

Conditions had improved in the course of a year, so when Kate was 17, her trip started with a one-week cruise on the Mediterranean, visiting the ancient ruins in the eastern Greek Islands, which were exceptionally interesting.

At the end of the cruise, we left from Athens, Greece to fly to Jerusalem, where we stayed in the King David Hotel. When we checked into the hotel in Jerusalem, there was a huge banner above the desk that read, "Welcome Home." I was fairly sure the banner was not meant for me, since it was a Jewish hotel; it was intended for Jewish people coming from the United States and elsewhere to return to their homeland.

We had a Jewish guide in Jerusalem, and I reminded him that we were Christian and that we were interested in seeing the Christian points of interest as well as the Jewish sights of the city. He did an excellent job, and took us to all the Biblical places, including a trip to Masada, an ancient fortress located on the top of a mountain nearly 100 miles south of Jerusalem, where so many Jewish people perished in a massacre around the year 72-73 AD. Along the way back, we stopped at the Dead Sea and Kate and I bathed in the salty water.

We stayed for a week in Israel, and then left from Tel Aviv for Ireland. We flew into Shannon Airport, and went from there to the Ring of Kerry in southwest Ireland, staying at some very unique and interesting Irish inns. Kate's paternal grandmother's family was from Ireland, so Kate appreciated the opportunity to visit the country.

Back to the Orient with Matt

Next on our schedule was a trip with Matthew, who decided he would also like to go to the Orient. We did a little something different with Matt, including a one-week cruise on a river boat down the Yangtze River. This trip was arranged through a California travel agency, Travcoa, and the group of about 20 people on the river cruise were mostly California physicians from the Los Angeles area. Matt got along famously with the group and was designated their chief negotiator when bartering with the street merchants.

China had changed significantly in the few years since we had been there with Tansy. The hotels were newer and better, even though in some cases they were not totally finished. The trip was considerably easier than our earlier experience. As with Tansy, on the way back from China, we stopped in Hawaii where we relaxed for three or four days before finishing the trip to the United States.

With Michael in the South Pacific

Two years later, it was Michael's turn, and we arranged another fascinating trip that included the South Island of New Zealand, Australia, and New Guinea. After a beautiful week in south New Zealand, observing the countryside and counting sheep, we flew to Sydney, then went into the Outback of Australia and stayed at a ranch that encompassed about 100 square miles of land. We stayed at the ranch for four days with a very interesting young couple who claimed some relationship to the Royal Family of England. From the Outback, we went up to see the Great Barrier Reef at Cairns, and from there took a one-week boat trip into the interior of New Guinea.

The New Guinea portion of the trip was extremely adventurous. We visited Maori villages where the inhabitants were out of touch with the rest of the world and lived very primitively, as their ancestors had for generations. The river boat that we were on accommodated about 30 people, and the boat navigated through areas of New Guinea that were nearly inaccessible except by river. It was often difficult to get to the villages, but it was an extraordinary experience for the three of us.

On Safari with Jessica

Two years after our trip with Mike, it was Jessica's turn to accompany us anywhere in the world. She chose a safari trip to Africa, then a week-long trip on the Nile River, with a final stop in Spain.

The safari was approximately two weeks in length, during which we visited seven different areas of Kenya and stayed at four different campsites, some of which were quite primitive. We had the opportunity to see wild animals in their natural habitats throughout the safari.

The trip along the Nile was interesting, too. We saw all the ancient Egyptian monuments, and had the chance to appreciate one of the cradles of civilization. I could write much more about this trip, and about all our trips with our grandchildren, but I'll save that for another time.

To Asia Minor and Russia with Christopher

Christopher decided he would like to see Turkey, Russia, and several of the former Eastern Bloc countries that were controlled by Russia before the fall of the Iron Curtain.

We flew to Izmir, Turkey, where we picked up a car and drove to Kusadasi (near Ephesus). We saw the ruins there, then drove to Bergama, to see the ruins of the ancient city of Pergamum. From there, we drove north to the site of Troy (and the legendary Trojan Horse). We crossed the Strait of Dardanelles at Çanakkale and drove to Istanbul.

From Istanbul, we flew to Moscow, where we spent three nights. While we were in Moscow, we had the opportunity to see the Kremlin and other historic sights we had heard so much about in the past. Then we went on to St. Petersburg, where we visited the world famous museum and former palace, The Hermitage. We enjoyed St. Petersburg very much.

After St. Petersburg, we flew to Copenhagen, then to Germany, the Czech Republic, Austria, and finally back to Munich, Germany. Christopher really enjoyed himself, and some of the experiences he had on that trip we know will stay with him for a long while.

When I think back on the trips we took with our grandchildren, I don't think we could have given a better gift to them, or to ourselves. It was a worthwhile commitment of time, money, and resources just for the enjoyment and education we got out of each trip, but the relationship we built with each one of the grandchildren as we traveled and had new experiences is simply priceless. Each one of our grandchildren is a unique person, and we learned about their individual personalities and temperaments, the way they each display emotions, affection, concerns, and passions. They are all different, and each one experienced the trip they took with us in a different way. It gave us a deeper appreciation of our grandchildren and their own lives.

In looking back over all our travels, it is obvious that we have always had a natural curiosity about how other cultures live. Norma and I have felt a sense of fulfillment to learn by experience the ways of the world. It has given us a deeper appreciation for the problems of the world, as well as an appreciation of the positive features of the many nations we have seen. Our travels have certainly provided us with a background for understanding many of the world events that appear in the news each day. When the news involves China, the Middle East, Russia, and Europe, as it so often does these days, we have a better sense of the impact and importance of the stories because we have seen the places described.

When we traveled with our children and grandchildren, there was the added benefit of developing a special relationship with each of them beyond the normal parent/child and grandparent/grandchild connection. There is a special bond that develops when people share experiences, and the experiences we shared in our travels have helped to solidify and enhance our relationships with each of our children and grandchildren. That has made our family travels even more worthwhile.



The Family in Ft. Lauderdale in the 1950s



The Dude Ranch



Bon Voyage in California



Cincinnati Club Tour of Japan



Fun on the *Hanseatic!*



A Typical Golf Outing



With the Aztec and Friends at Callaway Gardens



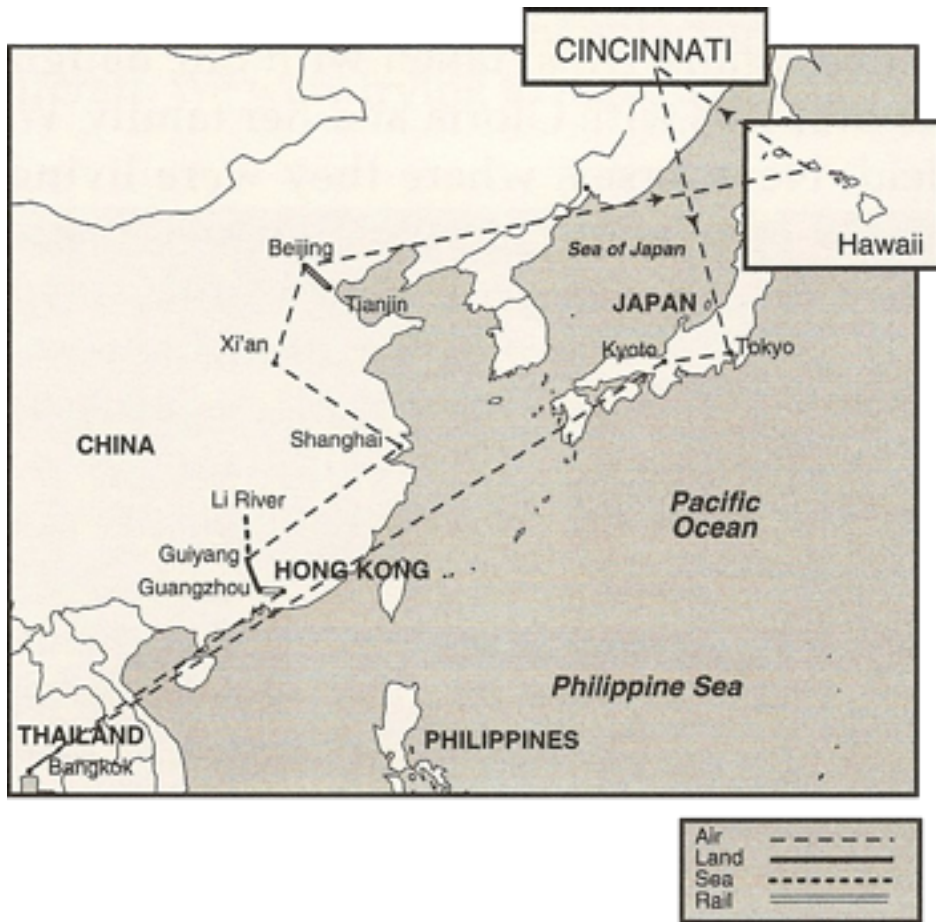
At the Paris Air Show



A trip "Up East" with Gloria and her Family



With Judy and Family Aboard Ship to Alaska



Tansy's Trip



Tansy in China



Caitlin's Trip



Caitlin at the Temple of Ephesus



Matt in China



Matt's Trip



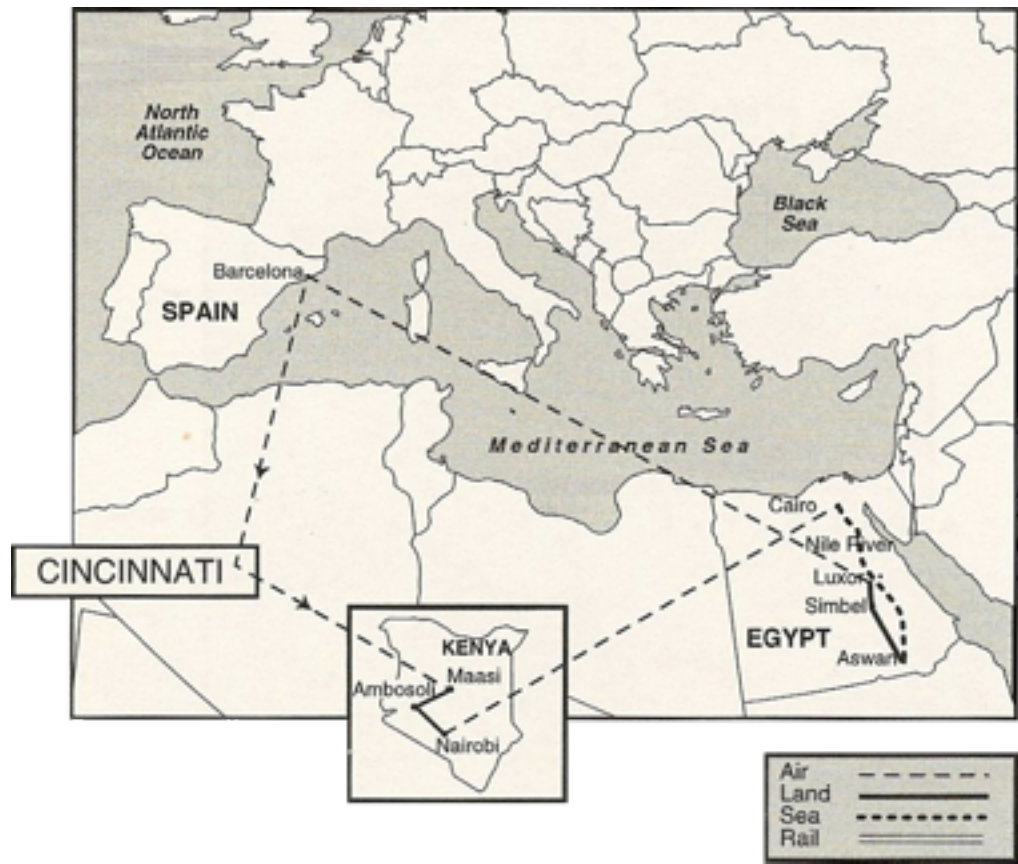
Michael in New Guinea



Mike's Trip



Jessica on Safari



Jessica's Trip



Christopher at the Kremlin



Christopher's Trip

Thoroughbred Horses—The Kentucky Influence

*The urge to breed and race thoroughbred horses
may be a trait inherent to the Kentucky natives.*

R.A.M.

As I approached retirement, I began to think more about other interests and activities that appealed to me. Since I am from Northern Kentucky, and have always gotten a little teary-eyed when they play “My Old Kentucky Home” at the Kentucky Derby, I thought it might be fun to own a few racehorses.

I also realized that as I began to spend less time involved with the day-to-day business at Comair, there would be fewer reasons for me to talk to David on a regular basis. I knew that he had some interest in horses as well, and I saw this as an opportunity for us to become involved in something together again.

We had a friend in Naples, Freeman Hayward, who had been active for many years in the field of thoroughbreds. He owned several horses, and had a farm outside Naples. I mentioned to Freeman one day that I was thinking about buying a horse, and told him that if he heard about a trainer who could help me get started, he should give me a call.

Well, it didn’t take long. Within a few days, the phone rang, and it was Greg Sanders, a trainer from Davie, Florida. He knew about a good horse that could be claimed for \$20,000.

I called David to see if he would be interested in owning half of a race horse. Things were going pretty well for David, so he agreed. We claimed the horse Quality Lass, a three-year-old filly. The first time it raced under our ownership, it finished second. The next time it ran, Norma and I were at the racetrack, along with David and several of his friends, and Norma’s brother Bob. Wouldn’t you know, our horse won the race.

As we all crowded around for our picture with the winning horse, I heard one railbird say, “Christ, you would think the horse was Citation who just won the Kentucky Derby.” The race was not important, and the purse was not big, but from the actions of our entourage, you certainly would have thought it was one of horse racing’s biggest events.

One win and we were on our way. A single horse just wasn’t enough for us now. A few months later, in March 1990, we went to the two-year-old in-training sale at Calder Racetrack.

We purchased three more horses at the sale, all moderately priced, affordable with two of us sharing the cost.

When you buy these two-year-olds in training, they are supposed to be ready to race. But that isn't the way it really works. Most two-year-olds don't race until well into the latter part of the year. This meant an additional three months of training at the track. We had moderate success with a few wins and some "in the money" finishes, enough to pay most of our training bills. None of our horses looked outstanding, but they all were performing reasonably well. But Greg, the eternal optimist, phoned us nearly every day, telling us how well we were doing.

At Calder, they have the Florida Stallion Stakes, a race restricted to Florida-bred horses. All of our horses were Florida-bred, so they would qualify for these stake races, if they had the ability. The first of these races occurs in August, but none of our horses were ready to enter. The second leg of the Florida Stallion Stakes is run in September, and the final race, at a distance of a mile and a sixteenth, is in October.

One of our horses was called Pro Flight (it always sounded more like a golf ball than a horse to me). He hadn't won any of his first few races, all at distances of six or seven furlongs. Greg thought he could run the distance in the final leg of the Stallion Stakes, so he suggested we enter him, at a cost of \$7,000. The stake race had a value of \$400,000, and 60 percent of the purse went to the winner. We had to decide if we were willing to gamble \$7,000 on the chance that horse might finish in the money, so we would at least get our entry fee back. We decided to support Greg and we entered Pro Flight in the race.

The odds on our horse at post time were 58 to 1. I think we were the only ones at the track that day that bet on Pro Flight. Norma never bets more than \$2.00, but that day, she bet \$10 across the board. I went all out and bet \$50 across the board. David made a \$50 bet across the board, too. If we didn't show a little confidence in our own horse, who would?

As the horses came into the final stretch, they were all in a pack. We lost track of where Pro Flight was, but we knew he was somewhere close. As they approached the finish line, one horse broke through. No one except David recognized it as our horse, and Pro Flight won the race by a length or so. What a thrill!

David and I each collected \$4,000 on our bets, Norma collected \$700, plus our share of the purse, about \$250,000, less the jockey and trainer fees of 10 percent each. With this big win, we were hooked on ownership of thoroughbreds.

In Greg's stable, there was a great sprinter that was owned by a group of four people, including Greg and his dad. Greg asked if we would be interested in buying a percentage of the horse. We agreed to purchase 20 percent. It turned out to be a great investment. The horse was called Glitterman. He held a record for 5½ furlongs, and could really run.

He won several stakes, so Greg decided to put him in the Breeders' Cup, a race for world-class sprinters. The race turned out to be a real momentous event. Down the back stretch, one of the horses took a spill. Another toppled over the top of the first. Both of the injured horses had to

be humanely destroyed right at the track. Glitterman cracked a shin bone in the stretch, but he finished the race.

Glitterman was retired to stud after the race, and he has become a leading sire of juveniles. We have great hopes for his progeny. He serviced 83 mares during the past season. From this type of performance, you can expect a return of approximately 80 percent, or about 65 live foals, some of which are expected to do quite well.

We had a number of disappointments when we purchased another group of two-year-old in-training horses. None excelled, and several did no good at all. Generating income from horses at the track seems to be a losing proposition. So, we decided to get into the breeding business.

At this writing, David and I have 21 brood mares, most of whom are bred to quality sires, seven with Glitterman. We have 17 weanlings at the track, and we are bringing along two three-year-olds and seven two-year-olds. We are now breeding our own horses for the track as well as for the market. I guess you could say we are in the horse business in a big way. It's fun, and it is an interesting hobby, with new things happening all the time. It can also be frustrating when a horse really looks good, but does not perform up to your expectations.



Our First Horse



Norma with Quality Lass



Norma, Greg, and Me at the Barn



Pro Flight Winning the Florida Stallion Stakes in 1990



In the Winner's Circle



Glitterman Winning at Tamarac



David's Horse Farm and Our Verona, Kentucky Residence

Special Friends

*Years and years of happiness only make
us realize how lucky we are to have
friends who have shared that happiness
and made it a reality.*

R.A.M.

In my life, I have been fortunate to have some very special friends whom I would like to briefly mention here.

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Dr. David Huesinkveld

While I was a patient of Dr. Huesinkveld for only five years, the impression he made on me has lasted a lifetime. He was an extremely dedicated physician, totally immersed in the battle against tuberculosis, one of the leading killers of mankind at the time. He was a Dutch immigrant who studied medicine in the United States and settled in Cincinnati, becoming associated with the offices of Dr. Henry Kennon Dunham, who was himself one of the leading researchers of lung diseases in the country.

Tuberculosis was called “the great white plague,” and it killed more people each year than either cancer or heart disease throughout the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century. I don’t understand why cancer was not so prevalent at that time, but you simply did not hear too much about it. This may have been because the heavy use of cigarettes did not start until the mid-1920s.

Dr. Huesinkveld had a twinkle in his eye that captured your attention immediately. His bedside manners were excellent. He had great sensitivity and compassion for his patients. He talked to me at great length about almost any subject I wanted to discuss, and he always took the time to totally cover any subject I was interested in. I could rely on his words of encouragement and wisdom to help me in many ways.

When my son David was born, I wanted to name him for one of the most important people in our lives. Norma and I agreed that the name “David,” in honor of Dr. Huesinkveld, was most appropriate name we could choose for our son.

Reverend Paul Clunan

When Norma and I left our sheltered nest of family and friends in the Cincinnati area for the new job assignment in east Tennessee, we had no idea what experiences and people we would meet in our new venture. We quickly learned that our basic lifestyle was compatible with east Tennessee as well as the Cincinnati area, and the new friendships we formed would help sustain us during our stay there.

There was no Catholic church in the town where we lived, Alcoa, which was 15 miles south of Knoxville. So, every Sunday, we drove to St. Mary's Church in Knoxville for Mass. The assistant pastor at St. Mary's was Father Clunan. When we first attended the church, we had not yet met him. We listened to his homilies, and wondered why he could not speak the day following a University of Tennessee football game (he lost his voice cheering so hard). We heard he was the chaplain of the football team and knew that many parishioners idolized him.

As I stated earlier, we quickly became involved in the development of a new parish in Alcoa, and this brought us into intimate contact with Father Clunan. He was probably about our own age, and while we were just starting a family, he was just starting his priestly ministry. He was a God-fearing, deeply religious individual who had a great perspective on the meaning and purpose of life. His charm was irresistible, and he truly had a lasting influence on our lives.

Money for his own needs was inconsequential to him, but money for the church's needs was profoundly important to him. He smoked cigarettes, but rarely bought or carried his own. He loved UT athletic events, but he never purchased a ticket—he relied on the school or his friends for his seats. Food was purely incidental to him, except for coffee, which he consumed by the gallon. In the time I knew him, I never saw him drink a beer or hard liquor.

He spent hours at our home, planning the next fund-raising event or parishioner activity for the church. I was the president of the Men's Group at the church, and Norma headed up the Ladies' Group. We used the sessions with Father Clunan to educate ourselves in the matters concerning the Catholic Church as well as many other subjects that were close to us and Father Clunan.

As a clergyman, he was very understanding of the weaknesses of man. He always showed compassion for the less fortunate, and sought out ways to help those in distress. He taught me a lot.

FRIENDS IN FT. WRIGHT

Bob & Jean Lemker, John & Norma McCormack, Fred & Ruth Wolnitzek

In the early 1950s, in our new home in Ft. Wright, Kentucky, we became very involved in the community. It was a "must" to join the volunteer fire department, and that led to membership in the Civic Club and a whole host of social activities. After the regular Monday night "training" session at the fire department, there was always a social hour, complete with proper libation.

There were four of us who would get together on these occasions, and invariably, the subject would turn to golf. Now, I played very little, but I was interested. Fred Wolnitzek didn't play

much, either. Bob Lemker, on the other hand, had been the captain of his high school golf team, and John McCormack grew up near a golf course, Twin Oaks in Latonia, Kentucky. John played a lot and had a single-digit handicap!

In early 1954, we started to play golf on a regular basis at Twin Oaks. I couldn't break 85, and Fred was worse. After golf, we played horseshoes or gin rummy, or some of each, always with a few beers. Our sporting friendship led to our wives getting together, so that we spent a lot of our social time with the other three couples. The Civic Club was the first focal point of our small circle of friends, but that later changed to Summit Hills Country Club, as we became slightly more affluent.

The four men played golf every Saturday, when the weather would cooperate, for over twenty years. This doesn't mean there weren't any tense moments; in fact, there were quite a few. On one occasion, Bob Lemker and I did not speak to each other for over a month, but that didn't interfere with our golf game. With a lot of practice, my golf game improved quite a bit, and I did break 85. I could play even with both Bob and John as our handicaps were about the same, about 8 to 11.

Freddie and I were in sales, Bob was a CPA, and John worked as an engineer. We were all struggling for success, and always kept our family responsibilities well in mind. I had my own business, and Bob eventually started his own practice. Fred traveled considerably as a sales representative for a small paper company. John had spent a number of years with a leading machine tool manufacturer, and he began to talk with me about starting his own business as a manufacturer's representative in the machine tool industry, much the same way as I was in the chemical process industry. I gave John all the encouragement I could, and he took the step. His two sons now carry on the business and it is very successful.

We had lots of good times together with this group, and Norma and I have many fond memories of these very special friends.

A FRIENDSHIP FORGED AT THE CINCINNATI CLUB

Paul & Joanne Hock

I was invited to join the Cincinnati Club, a business and professional men's club in downtown Cincinnati, in 1958. I needed to cultivate some Cincinnati business contacts, and I thought the Cincinnati Club might be a good source for new contacts. So I joined the club and at the same time, I started to bowl with one of the teams in the club league. This expanded my potential contacts considerably. One of the members of the bowling team I joined was Paul Hock, who was the son of the founder of Brighton Corporation, a manufacturer of vessels for the brewing and the chemical process industries. Our personalities blended well, and I found out he was interested in many of the same things I was. On one of our bowling nights just before Christmas, I told him we were going to Florida on the day after Christmas, and asked him if he might like to bring his family down at the same time. He liked this idea and decided to join us at the same place we were staying.

Norma and Joanne also got along very well. They had two young sons, Jeff and Gary, who were slightly younger than David, but they were old enough, and were good company for our family. We became very good friends. Paul and I traveled to Europe together, we fished together, with and without our family, and I also got him interested in golf. We played cards together and always enjoyed good food and drink together. He was a great friend, always willing to accept an invitation to travel or socialize.

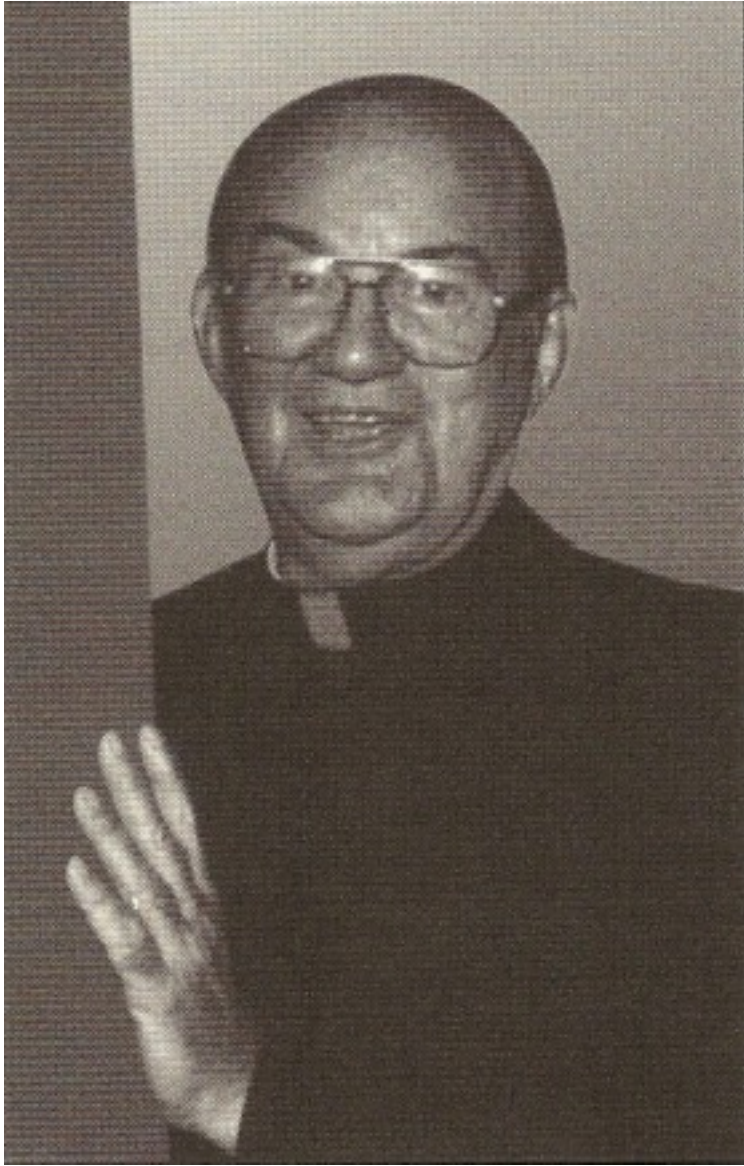
Paul died of a heart attack in April 1988. Joanne remains an intimate friend of ours.

NAPLES FRIENDS

For many years, I disdained the thought of retirement. But I was fortunate that the evolution of my leadership role at Comair allowed me to gradually spend more and more time away from the company, scaling back from a full commitment to the responsibilities of an active position at the airline. Idleness or lack of activity was never an option in the transition from work to “play,” however. Instead, we began to spend more time in Naples, and Norma and I both started to get more involved at the Quail Creek Country Club. The sphere of our social life greatly expanded as we spent more of the year in Florida. We made many new friends, and quite a few of them were from the Cincinnati area, although they were unknown to us before we came to Naples.

In 1986, several of us from the Cincinnati area were having dinner, when I suggested it might be fun to get all the Naples residents who were from Cincinnati together for a Naples-Cincinnati golf and social gathering. We started this event and now we fill the golf course at Quail Creek and have over 250 people for dinner. This provided Norma and me with a great number of new friends, all of whom live in Naples in the winter.

In addition to this group, we have also made a number of friends from other parts of the country, who are members of the country club and other clubs in the Naples area. While I considered briefly mentioning each of these friends, I am afraid it would be difficult without unintentionally missing someone and upsetting a good relationship. Suffice it to say that all of the friends we have made in Naples have enriched us, and their friendship, like that of all the friends we have known, has given them a special place in our lives.



Father Clunan



Our Ft. Wright Friends



Joanne and Paul Hock in Switzerland on Their 35th Wedding Anniversary



A Few of Our Naples Friends

Overview of Life

*If the student hasn't learned,
the teacher hasn't taught.
R.A.M.*

The philosophy quoted above has served me well. To me, it simply means that I try not to shift the blame for any of my shortcomings onto others. If an individual does not respond the way I expect them to respond, the blame lies with me. This may be idealistic but it sure has helped me to be a more understanding and tolerant person.

I don't think an account of my life's experiences can be complete without expressing my thoughts concerning the issues of my time. I think it is important to document my reaction to current events, to examine history and the impact of surrounding issues on me, my family, and my generation.

THE TIMES I LIVED IN

Presidents and Politics

The first time I remember anything about a presidential election was in the fall of 1928, when Calvin Coolidge could no longer run again and the Republicans nominated Herbert Hoover. The Democrats nominated Alfred Smith to run against him. Hoover was an engineer in government service, and Smith was the governor of New York and the first Catholic ever nominated to run for president of the United States. As you can imagine, our family was solidly behind Smith, as were most of our neighbors. Despite our support, Hoover won the election. Less than a year later, the stock market crashed, and Hoover and the Republicans were blamed for the crisis for many years.

In 1932, the Democrats nominated Franklin D. Roosevelt, the governor of New York. FDR had a great voice for radio. He was an excellent speaker and easily carried the election with his convincing proposals to get the country moving again. "Happy Days Are Here Again," was the song of the land. He inaugurated many of the social programs that still exist today, some 60 years later.

In some households, Roosevelt was just one step below God. He was our savior. He instituted workmen's compensation, minimum wage, Social Security, the WPA (Work Projects Administration for unemployed workers), the Civil Conservation Corps for youth employment, and many, many other programs. He encouraged the labor movement, and was a true friend of the working man.

The only problem was that all the government handouts did not help business. The Great Depression ended when our country started to prepare for war in 1939, after Hitler began to pummel Europe.

In 1940, when Roosevelt had completed two terms as President, he broke with tradition and decided to run again. FDR won an unprecedented third term in office, and then he successfully ran for still another term in 1944.

History records him as a great President, but I have trouble accepting that. He was a real charmer, had a great smile, and while afflicted with crippling polio, he showed no evidence of physical weakness. I know I was eligible to vote in 1944, but I do not recall voting for FDR.

When President Roosevelt died in 1945, Harry Truman became President. His credentials were somewhat suspect, since he had connections with the Pendergast political machine in Kansas City. Since this was pre-television, the media was not quite so quick to jump on this as they might be today, and there were few if any “investigations” into Truman's background. He was a Democratic president, faced with a Republican-controlled House of Representatives and Senate, because the Republicans had swept the country in the elections of 1948. I voted for the Republican Tom Dewey in the presidential election, even though the rest of my family voted for Truman. Truman was a feisty man, small in stature, but he was tough. He fired one of the best-loved generals of World War II, General Douglas MacArthur.

In 1952, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who had commanded the Allies in Europe, won the nomination of the Republican party. To get his party's nomination, he defeated a Cincinnati, Robert A. Taft, known as “Mr. Republican.” Taft was the son of President William Howard Taft. He died from cancer about a year and a half later. Ike was elected on November 5, 1952, the day our son David was born.

Eisenhower was a strong military leader who employed military discipline in the Washington bureaucracy. The legislation to build the country's entire interstate highway system is credited to his administration. This had a great impact on the economy. Eisenhower was pro-business; he developed a business climate that allowed small businesses and big businesses alike to grow and prosper. Ike served for two terms. He loved the game of golf and helped the sport become more and more popular throughout the country.

In 1960, the Democrats had a bruising campaign that pitted Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota against John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts for the nomination. The Republicans nominated Richard Nixon. Kennedy won the presidential election by a very slight majority, mostly because of the Cook County, Illinois vote, which was controlled by Chicago Mayor Richard Daley. Some say the ballot boxes were stuffed, but Nixon never challenged the vote. Even though I was Catholic, I voted for Nixon.

John F. Kennedy was a dynamic leader. In the tradition of FDR, he could charm individuals as well as Congress to come around to his way of thinking, and he generally got his legislative packages approved. Unfortunately, because he was assassinated before he finished his term in office, his programs did not get a proper chance to be evaluated. When President Kennedy was

shot, it was the country's first experience with a presidential assassination in many decades. The nation took on a solemn mood for quite a while. Much has been written about President Kennedy's life and untimely death.

Lyndon B. Johnson, who served as Vice President under Kennedy, took the oath of office upon Kennedy's death. LBJ was the consummate Democrat, believing as he did that the government should be all things to all people. His motto was "Butter and Bullets." He greatly escalated the war in Vietnam, a real sore spot in American history, and he passed legislation for more social programs than Roosevelt. He responded to every cause and liberal movement.

Johnson choose not to run in 1968, when the country was in more turmoil than at any other time in my life. The war in Vietnam was totally out of control, and Johnson had lost his ability to govern the country.

Richard Nixon was elected in 1968. He started to work to end the Vietnam War immediately, but was unsuccessful for several years. The turmoil, both foreign and domestic, was almost unprecedented. It was a time when authority and those in authority were challenged. The era was marked by rudeness and very poor conduct, in spite of what is written about the period today. Nixon won the 1972 election handily, but he had to resign in 1974, under pressure from the "Watergate" issue. Nixon tried to cover up a political scheme to get restricted information from the Democrats. While Nixon had a brilliant mind, he did not have the capacity to deal with the media, who, in my judgment, destroyed him.

Gerald Ford, Vice President under Nixon, assumed office in 1974. He probably had more legislation packages vetoed than any other president in our history. It was a very nonproductive Congress, and the country was busy wallowing in the Watergate controversy, an expression of the mood of the majority of the citizens.

Jimmy Carter was a nondescript governor of Georgia whose pitch to the country was a more laid-back, less formal, less structured approach to government. During his administration, inflation reared its ugly head, eventually reaching into double digits. This had the effect of wiping out fixed assets, particularly for the elderly. Carter was not a very popular president and was defeated after one term.

In 1980, Ronald Reagan, a Hollywood movie star and former governor of California, was elected by a strong majority over Carter. Reagan was an idealist, very conservative, and appealing to the masses. He took a strong stand against Communism that lead to the fall of the Berlin Wall, and in effect, the end of Communism in Russia and most of the world, with the exception of China. During Reagan's administration, the country was not at war and employment was high. The country was in a recession for the first two years, but for the remainder of his administration, it enjoyed substantial prosperity.

George Bush was elected President in 1988. Both houses of the Congress were controlled by Democrats, so he had an extremely difficult time getting programs approved. He made the mistake of changing his position on taxes. His campaign slogans, including "No new taxes," and "Read my lips," came home to haunt him.

Bush was defeated by Bill Clinton, largely due to the entry of the third-party candidate Ross Perot. I think that most of Perot's supporters were defectors from the Bush campaign. With Bill Clinton's election to the Presidency, a dramatic change in politics occurred. Clinton is a product of the "Baby Boomer" generation. That group, born between the years 1945 and 1960, is the generation of children whose parents married in the post-World War II decade. The Clinton administration has placed a heavy emphasis on changing legislation in welfare and health care programs. It has also experienced more investigations into the ethics of the governing body and less stability in foreign policy.

As this is written, the jury is still out on Bill Clinton; however, his popularity is very low and the Republicans had a sweep in the midterm elections in 1994 with their "Contract with America" program.

Looking back over my own experiences and my opinions of our country's leaders, I believe Ronald Reagan produced more for the overall good of the country. Historians will probably record it differently, and my brief encapsulated recollections may be unfair and lacking in-depth analysis. My second choice would be John F. Kennedy, but his term of office was too limited to form a complete opinion.

I think Richard Nixon was the most intelligent of the presidents who have served during my life. He easily digested the world's problems and offered solutions, not all of which were successful. His foreign policy and his diplomacy were very strong; his weaknesses were with domestic programs and the press.

Economic Conditions Throughout Six Decades

My sensitivity to economic conditions was much less than it should have been, in hindsight. I rarely made business decisions on the basis of economic barometers. I read most of the business journals that followed the industries in which I worked, but I seldom heeded the advice they offered.

As a child of the Great Depression, I had already experienced the worst, perhaps the low point of economic activity in this nation's history. Any kind of genuine improvement in the economy was a positive step after that dire decade. As I stated in another place, the Depression did not really end until our country started to gear up for World War II. During the war, every available person was put to work in some productive capacity.

The usual business cycle that economists talk about was out of phase through the first 25 years of my life because of the Depression and war. In the late 1940s, the scramble was on to put together some kind of homes for all the returning GIs and their new brides.

It was in the 1950s that business cycles started to unfold. My first memory of a downturn, now called a recession, occurred around 1958. I couldn't understand why our business stopped growing. The 1958 recession was bad, and I didn't prepare for it. My overhead was more than I could absorb and business financial problems led to many sleepless nights, as I tried to figure out a way to meet upcoming payrolls. This was my first serious introduction to bankers, as I did have

assets to use as collateral for loans, mostly in the form of commissions receivable, that is, earned commissions for which I had not yet been paid.

During this time, I contacted most of the bankers in Greater Cincinnati. Cincinnati has a reputation for being conservative. The bankers there were even more conservative. I was fortunate to meet a loan officer at Central Trust, later PNC Bank, who understood my dilemma and helped me through some of my financial crisis. My loyalty to this bank lasted until the time they called all our Comair loans, when the aircraft went down in 1979, some 21 years later.

In the 1970s, inflation ran to double digits, and interest rates skyrocketed to nearly 20 percent at some banks. It was extremely difficult to operate a company with large indebtedness during this period. It made me realize the importance of strong capitalization in the business. Housing prices escalated at the rate of 15 to 20 percent a year throughout the decade. During the same time, however, the stock market remained almost static because of the lack of profit opportunity.

When President Reagan was elected, he encouraged a strong monetary policy, which reduced the availability of money and the consequence was two years of recession. However, this led to nearly a decade of prosperity.

Financial Planning and Retirement

After retirement, I believe you begin to think of money in an entirely different way. The basic concern is that you have enough to satisfy your needs for the lifestyle you have chosen for an indeterminate amount of time, due to the unpredictable life expectancy for you and your spouse. Catastrophic health expenses are usually of great concern, and retirees try hard to protect themselves against unexpected medical expenses that could wipe out their assets. Medicare provides some assistance, but often it only offers partial help. Trying to plan for medical expenses probably explains why many of the senior citizens of our land live so frugally.

Our Legal System

During my lifetime, I have witnessed a dramatic change in the legal system in the United States. When I was born, the American Bar Association had 17,000 members, and the population of the United States was just under 110 million people, so there was about one attorney for every 6,500 people at that time. In 1990, there were 633,000 practicing lawyers and judges, and the population of the United States was nearly 250 million people. The number of lawyers had grown at a much faster rate than the population, so that in 1990 there was one lawyer for every 350 people. While the population has increased to more than double what it was when I was a boy, the number of lawyers has exploded at a 375 percent rate of increase since then, and the growth in the legal field is still high. It has been predicted that there will be one million lawyers in the United States by the year 2000.

Following the cultural revolution of the sixties, there was a great desire on the part of that generation to correct the ills of the nation and reform its legislative system. Law schools were overflowing with applicants. Hardly a school in the country had space available for anyone other than the very brightest, most qualified, or best-connected students.

As our country's communication system expanded and television became so prevalent, the media moved to become a voice for all sorts of debatable issues. Their willingness to provide an outlet for the many "movements," such as feminists, environmentalists, segregationists, and other groups, provided the forum and the vehicle for aggressive legal challenges. The very idea that the burden of proof is on the party who makes a legal charge went out the window as far as whole categories of charges were concerned. Now, the medical profession is being challenged on a regular basis. The liability exposure frightens corporate America. Anyone with "deep pockets" is a target for the vast army of litigators. In many cases, however, deep pockets are often nothing more than a lot of much shallower pockets of ordinary taxpayers and stockholders.

There has always been a threat to any society that promotes the idea that some of its citizenry is the natural prey of others. Given all the groups with "causes" complaining about the injustices to their particular sector of society, the legal profession has, in my opinion, exploited our justice system with the help of the liberal community and the media.

My concern is for the health of a country in which people who contribute nothing to the wealth of the nation but who are very vocal in their demands get the ear of our legal profession to the detriment of the rest of society. My hope is that a more tempered legal system evolves in the generation to come. We need to see a point where differences are more often negotiated through thoughtful and caring discussions prior to entering into the court system.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Religious Beliefs

Religion and the belief in a Supreme Being, God, the beginning of the universe and our role in it—these are personal, defensible convictions that represent our innermost thoughts.

I was born and raised in the Roman Catholic religion, but throughout my life, I have always tried to keep an open mind, to investigate the advantages or perceptions of other beliefs, to consider the original premises on which they were founded, to compare them to what I believed, and then draw my own conclusions about their merits and how they would affect me.

Nothing I read or saw has ever changed my basic beliefs. I believe that the teachings of the Catholic religion have served me well in my life. While there may be some disagreements on specific issues, and some disappointment with individual members of the clergy, I have found a great deal of comfort in spending an hour or so each week reflecting on my life. I have drawn strength from my religion, listening to the messages of the Bible, thinking of those that preceded me in life, and looking to the days ahead.

As I watched loved ones die, it was a great comfort to turn to the teachings of the Catholic Church with regard to eternal life. I believe that I was spared by God from my first serious illness to perform an important function on this earth. That function was to make a contribution to my family and society, in whatever way I could.

I have always respected the views of others and their thoughts on matters of religious beliefs. Rarely did I try to impose my thinking on another individual, always believing that this was a matter of personal choice.

Leadership

In setting down my thoughts on various subjects, I have found that the most difficult analysis I have had to make is to define the quality of leadership. In some of my activities, I have found myself a leader, while at other times I have been a happy and willing follower. Having a leadership role has rarely been a primary motivation for me in my life, but if it happened and I enjoyed it, I did pursue it.

My most significant memory of commitment to leadership occurred shortly after I started R. A. Mueller, Inc. While driving to the office one morning, it hit me that if I was to be an important force in the work I was doing, I had to act the part. I had to have a defined sense of purpose, a goal or goals, a marked level of achievement.

I have always felt that the success of any company mirrors the integrity, the vision, and the modus operandi of the leaders of the company. These factors weighed heavily in the decisions I made and influenced my actions. I tried to create an image of quality in every aspect of our business dealings, and I made a conscious effort to carry this image over into my personal life as well as my business career.

As I reflect on various activities, there were some common threads that identified the qualities and characteristics of leaders. These qualities are an integral part of any leadership role:

GENTLE PASSION—An intense but subtle desire to excel and be a force to be reckoned with in whatever you do.

PREPAREDNESS—Always do your homework on any issue.

PHYSICAL CONDITION—Maintain a healthy, strong body with good stamina.

SET GOALS—Clearly state defined goals for all to understand.

HUMAN NATURE—Understand human nature, surround yourself with quality people, and help them to succeed, then you will also succeed.

CHARACTER—At the core of competent leadership, character includes ambition, drive, integrity, and an individual's moral fiber.

FUN—Enjoy the routine, day-to-day activities and the challenges they present.

In my opinion, leaders are not born, they are made, and they are usually self-made. Experiences that cover a wide range of activities are useful to a leader, and moving around on a career path often helps a person gain that breadth of experience. As a person gains knowledge in a wide variety of subjects, self-confidence also develops. Formal education is important, but how that education is used is more significant than the amount or type of formal training. Most studies show little correlation between academic success and business success.

To attain a leadership role, you must want it badly, badly enough to apply the passion. You need to prepare yourself, take care of your body so you have the physical stamina to commit to the ordeals of strenuous mental or physical exercise. Define a goal for yourself and go for it.

Surround yourself with high achievers, people you respect, and help them to be successful. Embrace adversity, because it strengthens leadership. In every instance of adversity I faced throughout my career, I came out of it a stronger, more knowledgeable, more confident person. How a person deals with adversity is the truest test of mettle, a defining requirement of leadership.

Family Values

Questions have often been put to me concerning how to keep business life and personal life equally successful. After some 50 years of wedded life, with three children and six grandchildren, I hope I am a qualified candidate to speak to that issue.

First of all, in my mind there is no question about how to set priorities. Family considerations always come first. The purpose of business is to support the family in all its aspirations. I found that in most instances, compromises could be worked out that would accommodate both. But there were times when this was not the case, and when this happened, family requirements had top priority.

A study I read made the point that the two aspects of life are totally compatible. You lead by example. The same fundamental issues apply, whether a matter concerns business or your personal life. You lead your subordinates, you do not nag or push them, and if you use the same approach when dealing with your children, you will find they respond as well as your business associates.

It has been extremely difficult for me to grasp and understand the vast changes that have occurred in my lifetime in the values of family life. For example, the huge increases in the divorce rate and the out-of-wedlock birth rate are shocking. One could pontificate on cause and effect in this example, but my training and observations of life do not qualify me to address this enormous issue.

Tom and Audrey Salb, friends of ours in Florida, sent the following Christmas greeting after they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary:

A Tested Recipe for 50 years of Happy Wedded Life

A Strong Heart, and Inquisitive Mind

A Barrel of Senses: Common, Horse, Humor, and Decency

A Mighty Portion of Grit and Ginger

A Soupçon of Pathos

A Compatible Co-existence, Laced with Compassion and Tolerance

A Generous Dollop of Mutual Sacrifice

A Sprinkle of Nostalgia

And Flavored Throughout with Dedication to God and Country

Education

I was in my early twenties before the full impact of my lack of formal education really hit me. That was the first time I realized there was a serious dimension to life that I had not recognized or had pointed out to me earlier. Perhaps I was a late bloomer. However, at the point when I discovered that an education might be important and worthwhile to me, I had already made a firm commitment to marriage and a family. There was no way I could take the time, nor did I want to get a formal education in the traditional way, attending day classes at a college or university.

This meant the only options available to me were to study on my own or attend evening classes. I opted for a combination of the two. I made the decision to pursue “how to” knowledge, learning about how things worked, so there would be practical applications for my education.

Hard work has a way of teaching us lessons. This is the one university that is open to all and it is free. It can be a very valuable resource if used properly.

My primary task was to build my knowledge of information on subjects I needed to pursue my career. Therefore, I had no exposure to any of the arts or humanities. I did not study English, literature, or history; I took no language, writing, or grammar courses. My education was geared towards earning a living, not learning how to live. I had to depend on my curiosity to pursue an informal education, as needed, in these less practical areas.

Our country is uniquely multicultural. In a sales career, it is important to have a basic understanding of the motivation of all cultures, so you can relate to each individual you encounter on their own terms. This requires serious thought about the concerns of your fellow man, their lifestyles, and their interests. Invariably, such considerations include many areas that a “how to” education doesn’t cover.

If I had been given the opportunity to pursue my education with a more traditional college experience, in hindsight, I certainly would have opted for a liberal arts degree, with some graduate work in a specific field, probably marketing and finance, as I truly like the challenges of

business. I would like to have played some competitive sport at a college level, because I believe this provides great discipline for the body as well as the mind. I like idea generators, and would probably have identified with those academicians who thrive on ideas, rather than those who expound on causes.

Public Speaking

The first time I was ever invited to make a speech to a noncontrolled group was in 1950, when the Rotary Club in Alcoa, Tennessee, asked me to address their group on the vocation of salesmen. My topic was “Are salesmen basically honest?” I recall the tremendous pressure I was under while preparing for this speech. I had no training in public speaking past what I had gained in an oratorical contest as a second-year high school student, some 12 years earlier. Most of the members of the audience at the Rotary Club were business or professional people who were accustomed to reasonably good speakers. However, my presentation came off well and I was able to make several more speeches to various service clubs in the east Tennessee area.

At R. A. Mueller Inc., I used a number of motivational organizations to help train our representatives and develop our sales techniques. Among them were Dale Carnegie, Scientific Management (the grid system), Charles Arnold, and several others. The Conference Board, of which I was a member, once invited me to speak about the motivation of salesmen at their annual conference in New York for business leaders. This was quite a challenge, since I found it difficult to define motivational theories. However, I put something together and presented it to the 450 attendees at the conference. Following the talk, several individuals asked me to address their organizations, but since I was not in the professional speaking business, I declined all the offers.

When we expanded our service to new cities with Comair, it was frequently necessary to meet with the local press, airport officials, and travel agents, to plug our service to that area and encourage people to travel via our not-so-exciting nine-seat Navajo turbo-prop planes. These press conferences gave me more experience addressing an audience and fielding questions and comments.

When we took Comair public the first time, we had very little knowledge of the public financial marketplace, so I thought it was important to get involved in NAOTC, the National Association of Over-the-Counter Companies. This was the issuer arm of the National Association of Securities Dealers, NASD. In April 1987, I was elected chairman of NAOTC, and it was my responsibility to visit various areas around the country to build interest in the association. Our audience was comprised of the chief executive officers of the companies whose stocks were traded in the NASDAQ system. I was awarded the Globe of Leadership Award for my efforts. This in turn provided Comair with some good exposure.

In 1989, I was invited to address the Forum Club in Naples, Florida, a very prestigious group of 450 members. Two months later, the speaker who followed me was General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, who alerted his audience to approaching military involvement in the Middle East, “Operation Desert Storm,” which he eventually commanded in the Persian Gulf. Later, I was

invited to become an officer of the Forum Club, which led to my accepting the position of President of the organization for 1996.

So, with my sketchy preparation in public speaking in high school, when I came in third in the sophomore oratorical contest, my career as a speaker was an intellectual exercise, from which I received a great deal of enjoyment.

THE FUTURE AS I SEE IT

Many members of my generation have written about the vast changes that occurred during the past 70 years. The innovations and advances that we have seen in the past few decades are mind-boggling, yet there also seem to be so many things that stay the same.

There is no question that living conditions in the United States are superior to almost anywhere else in the world. When the politicians talk about the rich, they could be talking about all but a very few. If my grandparents, who lived 70 years ago, could see us now, they would think we are all living like kings. Statistics show that there are color televisions, VCRs, and computers in more than half of the homes of the country, telephones have become too common to even notice, and there are automobiles for practically the entire adult population. Airline travel is available at prices affordable for over 80 percent of the population.

This explosion of consumer goods and opportunities didn't just happen, however. Progress is a long, hard, and costly process. Visionaries saw the opportunities, capitalists provided the means of production, and consumers demonstrated the demand for more and better goods and services.

With great advances still being made in electronic technology, perhaps some new breakthrough in core scientific technology, space travel, and space stations will become closer to reality. Certainly the field of communications is expanding rapidly, with new technology being introduced even as this is written.

It seems to me that preparedness is the best hope for the future. An open mind, with a good deal of curiosity, a strong, healthy body to handle the stresses and the enjoyment of life, and faith in God are all essential ingredients to cope with and participate in whatever the future has to offer.

There is also another side to the wonderful potential for life's pleasures available here in the United States. By comparison, people in many other countries of the world still suffer in desolate circumstances. I have witnessed living conditions in New Guinea, Africa, China, and the Caribbean, where life is just as primitive now as it has ever been.

With the global communications system that is now in place, there is a great opportunity for worldwide lifestyle enhancement. It will take some self-sacrifice, some deliberate motivation by world leaders, and the willingness of informed individuals to offer their best efforts to achieve this goal.

Peace among people, in their own minds, in their families, their countries, and the world is an everlasting pursuit. I believe there has been considerable progress made in this area. Much has

been discovered about the human mind and its behavior, so that help is now available for those that need it. The plight of peace in the family bothers me, as I have seen it deteriorate during my lifetime. I hope that future generations will recognize this problem and work to improve it.

The chances for world peace, in my opinion, have improved dramatically. The fall of Communism and the breakup of the U.S.S.R. has left the United States as the lone remaining “super nation,” and with a willingness to maintain peace worldwide, along with the growing global and instantaneous nature of communications, and the enormous cost required for global weapons, there is a better chance for peace now than at any other time in our history.

I am sure we all realize there always will be confrontation, so a lot depends on our willingness to cope, and with calm minds and demeanor, try to work through these confrontations. If we want peace badly enough, we have to work at it as hard as we do at any of our other endeavors. This is the only way to achieve peace within ourselves, our family, our nation, or our world.

At a celebration marking the fiftieth anniversary of the ordination of my friend Father Clunan, I received a remembrance card with the following inscription. The philosophy it expresses hit home with me as I look back at my life. There were certainly a number of times when things got tough, but I made it through, and I learned that you just don't quit.

Don't Quit

When things go wrong as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all up hill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest, if you must, but don't you quit.
Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As everyone of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about
When he might have won had he stuck it out;
Don't give up though the pace seems slow—
You may succeed with another blow.
Success is failure turned inside out—
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are,

It may be near when it seems so far;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit—
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.

OUR PAST GUEST SPEAKERS 1985-91



HON. HARRY A.
BLACKMUN



HON. BYRON R.
WHITE



GEN. H. NORMAN
SCHWARZKOPF



HON. WILLIAM H.
WEBSTER



WILLIAM E.
HOGLUND



ADM. C.A.H.
TROST



HON. CONNIE
MACK



GOV. LAWTON
CHILES



HON. ARTHUR
HARTMAN



EDWARD I.
FOOTE II



DEAN DANIEL C.
TOSTESON



HON. WILLIAM
W. TREAT



PETER
CORELAND



GEN. LARRY D.
WELCH



M. KATHRYN
EICHHOFF



VADM. DONALD
D. ENGEN



ANN
McFEATERS



J. PAUL
STICHT



NICHOLAS dB.
KATZENBACH



CHARLES J.
ZWACK



R.A.
MUELLER



DR. EDWARD W.D.
NORTON



HON. TOM
LEWIS



DAVID M.
JONES

Guest Speakers at the Forum Club, Naples, Florida

Epilogue

As I have said previously, the idea of retirement did not really concern me very much, right up to the time when I finally retired from the position of chairman of Comair in June 1990. My Commitment to the job was total, but the position did not require a defined number of hours or regular office attendance. So I became accustomed to a smaller workload progressively, and there was a a mental and physical metamorphosis from full-time employment to retirement that went on well in advance of the date when I officially retired and turned over my duties to the company.

Retirement has turned out to be a very exciting period of my life. I have not experienced any reduction of activity, in fact, it has been quite the opposite. Sometimes I find myself setting priorities in my schedule to accomplish everything I want to do during my retirement.

GETTING ON THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY

I consider myself fortunate to have been active in business when the personal computer became popular in the early 1980s, and I am glad that I was able to recognize it as a powerful tool for business people. The variety and types of programs available offered me a wealth of data and the means to use it, and my curiosity was aroused to the point that I began to use a computer myself. I had one problem when I first became interested in personal computers—I discovered that my ability to learn and to absorb new information seemed to have declined. But with a great teacher, I managed to catch on to the new technology, and I used a computer to write this biography. Without my computer and word processing software, I doubt that I would ever have attempted to set down my life on paper.

With a computer modem, I have also discovered that the world is at your fingertips. The various electronic databases and on-line services such as CompuServe, America Online, and Prodigy are all available at a nominal cost, considering the amount of information they can provide. Now the Internet and the World Wide Web offer even broader scope for global communication and allow an individual to explore all sorts of new and interesting subjects.

Since my career was business-oriented, I continue to subscribe to the Wall Street Journal as well as Forbes and Fortune magazines. I usually read one daily newspaper each day also. I think it is important and stimulating to continue the activity that occupied my mind for most of my life. But with all the changes taking place today in the corporate world, I sometimes think you need a scorecard to continue to identify the players.

COUNTRY CLUB MANAGEMENT

At age 73, it is comforting to know that some of your successors in the world still look to you for intellectual stimulation. I have had a great experience serving as a member of the board of

directors of the country club we belong to in Naples, Florida. A country club is unlike any other entity in its demand for management performance. Most members expect the very finest facilities, the best service, a complete range of social amenities, and most of all, the finest dining in exchange for their financial contribution to the club. The board of a country club has a continual challenge to provide its membership with a high degree of satisfaction in each of these areas.

In Naples, Florida, there is a lot of new residential development taking place, and a number of them are country club communities. The developers are primarily concerned with selling real estate, and they offer competitive and alluring enticements to get prospects to buy. The prospective country club member has a wide choice of fine facilities from which to choose. This makes the challenge that much more difficult for the board of directors of a mature, member-owned and member-controlled country club.

A NEW CHALLENGE

In 1992, I became involved with a start-up company that had the potential for a breakthrough in core technology. Several patents have been filed, and the theory behind the technology has already been proven in-house at the company. Just about the time the product was reaching its final development stage, the individual who was responsible for the scientific work on the project suffered a fatal heart attack. This was a devastating blow to the scientist's original partner in the enterprise as well as to the board of directors of the company.

Despite this setback, the product is now about to be introduced on the market. It appears that the product will have a revolution impact on the scientific field, if it survives the challenges of the marketplace. As this is written, I am unable to make an accurate prediction of where this company and its new product are headed. But it has been an interesting experience for me during the past three years to be involved with a company on the brink of new technology.

AN IDEAL RETIREMENT

If I had written a script describing the ideal agenda for retirement for myself, I doubt that I could have improved over the life I now have. It encompasses nearly ever interest I have developed over the course of my life, keeping me occupied, and rarely allowing me to become bored. I am also fortunate to have Norma to share my retirement with me. For over 51 years, I have depended on her to keep our home and our social life well arranged, and she continues to do this in our retirement.

We follow the sun, living in Naples, Florida, for seven and a half months of the year and in northern Michigan for three months each summer. We spend the remaining time at David's horse farm in Verona, Kentucky. Our roots remain in the Greater Cincinnati area, and our family still lives there, so we travel regularly to that vicinity for many occasions. The Cincinnati business scene, sports activities, the current events of the city and surrounding towns, and the people who live in the metropolitan area, are all still of great interest to me.

In its quieter moments, I have found that retirement does offer a great deal of the tranquility that many of us search for during our working lives. There are not so many deadlines, and the perceived pressure to be in a certain place at a certain time continues to lessen. Even though my schedule can appear full in retirement, I think that it is less demanding simply because the consequences of the activities don't bear the same weight that they once did.

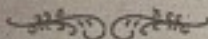
The time for reflection offers great rewards. I enjoy thinking back and remembering past experiences, things I have seen or done as well as events I have heard about from other people. The danger of such reflection, however, is that it can dominate your discussions and conversations with younger generations. Sentences that begin with, "The way we used to do it," or, "In the old days," can lose a young person's attention very quickly, so I try to be on guard most of the time, to avoid slipping into too much nostalgic reflection.

With a healthy attitude, I think that our retirement years can continue to provide the same exhilaration for living that the journey through life has given us so far. Norma says the key is to "keep moving," and I believe she is right. There is no need to be concerned that retirement will be dull or uninteresting. I have golf and exercise for physical interest, keep my hand in business with membership on the board of directors of a financial institution, a country club, and the airline, and face new challenges on the board of a start-up core technology company and in the exchange of views on issues at the Forum Club. There is still plenty of opportunity for both mental and physical stimulation in retirement. I never stop looking to the future, and anticipate new interest and continued activity, even now that I am enjoying my retirement.

THE HERITAGE AWARD

The Heritage Award presented to me by the Northern Kentucky Convention and Visitors' Bureau on March 23, 1993, touched my deepest emotions with its dedications—"whose vision and life-long work have inspired an entire community, now and for generations to come, with the American Dream of Success."

HERITAGE AWARD



RAYMOND A. MUELLER
Retired Chairman of the Board
Co-Founder
COMAIR

The Northern Kentucky Convention & Visitors Bureau
bestows the 1993 Heritage Award upon Raymond A. Mueller
whose vision and life-long work have inspired
an entire community, now and for generations to come,
with the American Dream of success.

March 23, 1993

