

### The Gene and Nancy Ladd Fund

Gene Ladd was born on April 15, 1931 in Chicago, Illinois. He grew up on the Southeast side of Chicago, where he attended grammar school and high school. Nancy was also born in Chicago in 1931 and began her schooling in Gary, Indiana. Her father was a civil engineer who graduated from Purdue University, and he was building bridges in the Gary area. Later, Nancy and her family moved to Chicago, where her primary schooling took place.



Gene and Nancy met when they were just fifteen years old. They were hanging out with mutual friends at a street carnival, and the group made plans to go to the beach at Lake Michigan the next day. Gene asked Nancy out on a date the following weekend. Nancy remembers being drawn to Gene because he was more quiet and down-to-earth than his friends. Gene remembers noticing Nancy's beauty right away. "She was an attractive gal, and I enjoyed talking to her. And that's always a positive in my mind," he said. Gene and Nancy continued to date on and off thereafter.

When he graduated from high school, Gene went to Wilson Junior College for six months, and then he got a job at a steel mill, as many young men did at that time. After six months, in February of 1951, he joined the Army. At that time, the Korean conflict was in progress. While Gene was in the service in, Kentucky, Nancy was attending college nearby at DePaul University in Green Castle, Indiana.

Later, Gene passed an IQ test and was qualified to go to Officers' Candidate School (OCS) in Forks Hill, Oklahoma, which was the artillery school. He was told that he would have to wait up to a year before he could attend the school because there was not enough room for all of the students. During this time, Gene and Nancy were finally married in October of 1951. Though he was planning to have many months before he went to OCS, as soon as they returned from their honeymoon, Gene was notified that he had just a two-week wait and then one week of furlough before going to OCS.

Gene graduated from OCS in April of 1952. At that time, new officers had troupe duty, and his was in Camp Carson, just outside of Colorado Springs, Colorado. Nancy was able to join him, so they spent four months together there. They loved the mountains and the atmosphere, and they said they would like to return to the area one day.

After staying outside of Colorado Springs for four months, of Colorado Springs, Gene was sent to Korea. He spent most of his time as a forward observer for the artillery, so he was in the infantry most of the time when he was in Korea. While Gene was in the service, Nancy continued to work in various capacities. She served as the President of the Women's Transportation Society of Chicago for three years. When Gene returned home, Nancy worked, and he pursued a postsecondary education at the University of Illinois.

Gene finished school, and they had their first child, David. Upon graduation, Gene got a job in Chicago, which eventually led to him running an office in Columbus, Ohio. There, they adopted a baby girl, Susan. David, who is now 55, lives in Colorado Springs, and Nancy, now 47, lives in Plymouth, Indiana.

Gene was in the insurance business for all of his career, which took him and his family to various parts of the country. They later moved back to Chicago, and then they lived in Houston, Texas for fifteen years. There, Gene sold his business, and they moved to Monument, Colorado, where he started another business there.

In 1936, when Nancy was very young, her father bought a cottage on Bass Lake in Starke County. He loved Indiana, and he would bring his family there during the summer. When Gene and Nancy were dating, Gene would come along. In 1992, when they were living in Texas, Gene and Nancy decided to purchase the property from Nancy's father.

While living in Colorado, they decided to build a new house in place of the cottage and move to Starke County permanently, which they did in 2004. Though he had retired twice previously, Gene, an entrepreneur at heart, started another business in Starke County, which he sold in December of 2013.

Though the insurance business has kept Gene busy, he and Nancy have been very active in the Starke County community. They both thoroughly enjoy reading, and they are both active patrons of the Starke County Library. Gene also intends to join the VFW, and both he and Nancy are members of the Knox Methodist Church. Nancy has also been involved in Starke County Choraleers. This vocal group sings around the area and participates in a music programs at Ancilla and Purdue University. Throughout her life, Nancy has enjoyed singing and music. Though she studied early childhood education at DePaul University, her major was vocal music. This has led her to join various singing and musical groups everywhere that she has lived.

In addition, Nancy is in a women's club at Bass Lake, a book club, and an exercise club. She enjoys gardening vegetables, knitting, and baking, and she is well known for her delicious candy! Nancy and Gene both also love their dog, Darcy, a Poodle/Labrador mix. When asked what they love most about Starke County, they both agreed that it would be Bass Lake.

Upon moving to Starke County, Gene met Pat Mitchell, who was involved with the Community Foundation. He soon had lunch with Mat Swanson, another person who was actively involved with the Community Foundation, and he then became a member of the Starke County Community Foundation (SCCF) Service Committee.

Nancy also has ties to the SCCF; when she was a part of the Choraleers singing group, the Community Foundation gave them a grant for buying music and for renting transportation.

In 2010, Gene and Nancy started a Charitable Gift Annuity through the SCCF. Both Gene and Nancy were very impressed by the SCCF and the impact that it has on the community. They believe that helping others is very important, and they've made this their mission.

Gene said, "God's been good to me. We have our health. And giving back to the community is the most important thing that anybody can do. We've got to help each other."