

TROUTVILLE Tidbits



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Harold Wilhelm – A Life of Service

By Nancy Womack

I've been asked to write down what I know about Harold Wilhelm, and his service to his community and his country. As I started to put thought to paper, I realized that talking about Harold's service is an easy thing to do as he has spent his life in service to his country, Botetourt County and his church.

Harold is a World War II veteran of the United States Navy. He graduated from Eagle Rock High School in 1944 and enlisted, but had to wait a month until he was old enough to become active. The war ended one week after Harold arrived for duty in England. He eventually was sent to Germany and worked in supply. He has some interesting stories about how, while in Frankfort, he met up with six fellow Eagle Rock servicemen - four of them from his graduating class.

After returning home in 1946, and with the assistance of his agriculture teacher, Ed Robertson and his former high school principal, Hunter Huffman, Harold enrolled in the agriculture education program at Virginia Tech. He graduated in 1950, and those of you who know Harold, know that he is still an avid Tech fan. Harold started his professional career teaching agriculture at Troutville High School. When Lord Botetourt High School opened in 1959, he became LB's first agriculture teacher. He didn't stay long because at midterm, superintendent of schools, J.W. Obenschain, asked Harold to consider becoming principal of Buchanan Elementary School. We often meet former teachers and students who fondly remember the days that Harold was the principal of the largest school in Botetourt County. He received his Master's Degree from UVA in 1962, and when Botetourt County made plans to open the Botetourt Vocational School (now the Botetourt Technical Education Center), Harold was the school's first principal. He went to work at the school a full year before it opened in 1971, ordering supplies and hiring teachers. With 36 years of service to Botetourt County schools, Harold retired as principal in 1988. However, he was not entirely finished with education in Botetourt County as he was appointed to the school board and served in that capacity for three years.

Harold's service to Troutville began when he ran for town council, and then was appointed mayor when Mayor Henry Cox had to step down. Harold still resides in Troutville, and feels that his greatest accomplishment in town government was the rebuilding of the town hall.

In 1972, Harold successfully ran for the Botetourt County Board of Supervisors; he served in that capacity for 12 years. He was chairman during the rebuilding of the courthouse after the fire, and had the distinction of introducing then-Governor Mills Godwin during the re-dedication ceremony. During that time, Harold met the Rev. Dr. Wilson Gunn, of Peace Presbyterian Church. Harold was so impressed with Wilson's perseverance in getting improvements made to Alternate 220, that he started attending his church. He has served as an elder, worked on the planning and building of the new church, and still remains active today.

Harold has always been a very kind and generous person - to his family, friends, co-workers, country, town, county, and his church. He has been so good to me, and I am happy to say I am one of his biggest admirers.

Veterans Day Service

Wednesday, November 11, 2009 @ 10:00am



This will be a very special service for all Botetourt County Veterans at Troutville Elementary School. If you are a Veteran or know of one, please call to sign up for the morning program. Special recognition and medals will be given out to those who served our country. The public is welcome to attend this service where we will be proud to honor our special soldiers. For more information or to sign up a Veteran, please call 819-6335.



"We often take for granted the very things that most deserve our gratitude." Cynthia Ozick

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