

“Member Profile”

This week’s feature: Ron and Jan Filkill



Long-time members Ron and Jan Filkill joined Prince of Peace Lutheran Church 50 years ago; not long after it was started. They remember it when the nursery, office space, and boiler room made up the building, with metal folding chairs for church service.

Jan was born in Cleveland and grew up in Brooklyn Village. She said back then the only way to the east side, across the river, was by a draw or lift bridge. Ron was born and raised in Newark, Ohio, 30 miles east of Columbus. He received his BS degree from Ohio Wesleyan University, an MS degree from Kent State University, and did most of his PhD at Cleveland State University.

They met on a blind date in the spring of 1958 and were married in the fall. Ron said that he knew right away that Jan was the girl for him. Instead of going to college to become a nurse that fall, Jan worked while Ron finished at OWU, and then enrolled at Tri-C later.

Ron and Jan had five children. Ron, the oldest, served in the Marines, attended Tri C West for a while, and became interested in retail management. He managed at three Ingersall Hardware stores for about 25 years and is now semi-retired. Daughter Cynthia is married and has had various professions in Health Care most of her adult life. Son Mike was the middle man. He was an outstanding scholar and athlete. After getting a full scholarship to WVU, he transferred to BYU in Utah and got his BS degree in Sports Management. He

taught and coached. Unfortunately, he passed away in March 2018. He was loved and respected everywhere he went by all he met. Son Jeff graduated from Cleveland State. He has been married for 27 years and has three grown children. He lives in Fairview Park and is a supervisor for the Cuyahoga County Board for Developmentally Disabled. The youngest, Catherine, is a nurse. After her daughter graduated from Miami of Ohio University, the two of them moved to the island of Kauai in Hawaii and have been there for three years. Ron and Jan's extended family includes four grandchildren, three step grand-children, and two step great grand-children.

Ron had two simultaneous careers, the first as a teacher, guidance counselor, coach and later in administration. During all that time he served in the Air Force, and then stayed in the Active Air Force Reserves, retiring after 30 years as a Lieutenant Colonel. Jan worked many years in the Metro Burn Unit and several critical Care Units in other hospitals.

Volunteering has also been part of their lives. Ron currently volunteers at the Rocky River Center of the Cuyahoga Board of Developmental Disabilities (17 years), the VFW (30 years), and is on church council. In past years he coached many ball teams – little league to church league. Jan spent many years teaching Red Cross classes. They both have taught Sunday School and volunteered many years with Scouts. Jan presently volunteers at Malachi House and until recently, NAMI and Joseph's Home.

This young-at-heart, wonderfully caring couple has been married for 61 years. I asked them what most folks at POP don't know about them, the answer was, "With two services, many people just don't know them." Well, I for one, know them, and I think the world of them. You will too, when you meet them.

By Dick Hardy, Profile Reporter