

Diane and Jerry Karp



Diane was born and lived in Bristol, Virginia until the age of 12, when her family moved to Roanoke, VA, where she completed High School. Then it was off to college at Wittenberg College in Springfield, OH, where she met Jerry. Jerry grew up on the west side of Cleveland and graduated from John Marshall High School. Jerry said his father was not well when he was growing up, and his older brother, Bob, (one of three older brothers) really raised him, along with his mother. The story of how he ended up at Wittenberg College is interesting. He drove his friend to the college, and when the football coach took notice of his speed, he encouraged Jerry to join the team. There was only a working scholarship, he was a walk-on, and had to use a no-show player's locker and name at the beginning. Two college custodians helped and encouraged him during this period.

After two years of college, Jerry got his temporary teaching certificate under the Cadet Program and left to teach elementary school and coach football in Olmsted Falls, OH. He took courses at Baldwin Wallace College and two years later went back to Wittenberg to complete his degree in math. After graduating, Jerry and Diane married and travelled to California, where Jerry had his first teaching job with a regular certificate, returning to Ohio a year later. While teaching and coaching in Fairview Park, his superintendent encouraged him to take the courses needed to become a principal. He then became a principal in Fairview Park, and later a principal in other school districts, including Michigan, Parma, and Beachwood. Between Michigan and Parma, Jerry & Diane began their own Nursery School in Westlake. They had 55 students in attendance, using a curriculum that Jerry designed. Diane was one of the teachers, but had to step up to Administrator when Jerry was enticed to take on the challenge as an Acting Administrator in the North Ridgeville School District.

Diane has a BA in Psychology, which she used somewhat in her personnel job at North American Aviation in CA, and as a statistical assistant at Forging Industry Assn. in Ohio. After she and Jerry closed their nursery school, she became a teacher's aide in Westlake. While working there, she took the necessary education courses to get her teacher's certificate. For several years she was the Librarian at Columbia Middle School. Then a half day Title One math position became available and she convinced everyone she could teach half a day and run the library the other half....and it worked with the help of several volunteers!

Jerry certainly has shown that he is a renaissance man, having many varied jobs over the years, as well as teacher and educator. These included being a flight attendant for Ryan Air, then training flight attendants, selling homes for Ryan Homes, a photographer for school pictures, and a bus tour guide. Jerry even took on the challenge of canvassing residents in North Ridgeville for the ELCA Northeast Ohio Synod to see if there was an opportunity to open a new Lutheran Church in that area. During that period, he knocked on over 12 thousand doors. Wow! Although retired, Jerry and Diane still think of themselves as educators, and are still involved in tutoring. Jerry teaches math and Diane teaches piano.

The Karps have two daughters. The oldest, Kathy, who is married to Joe, was a youth director in a Lutheran Church in Illinois, and is now a nurse in a doctor's office. Second daughter, Jodie, is a social worker in a Lexington, KY elementary school. She is married to David, who has a degree in engineering, and later enrolled in, and graduated from Asbury Seminary for a career change to be a hospice chaplain. Jerry and Diane have six grandchildren, who now are all graduated from high school or college.

Diane enjoys singing, and feels very fortunate to have been one of the 14 Prince of Peace Choir Members who went to Germany in 1998 to sing in a concert with the choir in Heidelberg. Reading light mysteries and gardening are other favorites. Jerry also likes to read and is intrigued with great plots. He is very handy and can fix most anything around the house. As a matter of fact, they both are involved in flipping houses and do most of their own work. They were Red Coats at Playhouse Square for a number of years. They said one of the most fun jobs they have had is staging homes for sale. They called it "Fun Staging."

Both said that Pastor Charlie had a lot to do with their coming back to Prince of Peace. When they were members of POP 20 years ago, Jerry volunteered doing children's talks, and would like to get involved in that again. I know you will love meeting these two active new members, just as I have.

By Dick Hardy
Profile Reporter