

November 2021

A MAGAZINE *from* UMRC & PORTER HILLS

Community

Special Edition: STORIES FROM PORTER HILLS' PAST



50+1

Celebrating the History
of Porter Hills



UMRC &
PORTER HILLS
Foundation

INTRODUCTION

Fifty plus one years ago, Porter Hills officially opened its doors to serve older adults at our Porter Hills Village location. But the legacy of Porter Hills dates back even farther, when members of the Westminster Presbyterian Church wondered, 'what if?' They saw the need to create a modern retirement community and, with it, a better way to provide care for older adults in the Grand Rapids area. They not only wondered about it, they made it happen. The vision, planning, and generosity of these men and women brought Porter Hills to life and set the stage for the organization's incredible future.

We hope you will enjoy this special edition booklet, highlighting the stories of just a sampling of those who have been instrumental in founding and shaping Porter Hills as we know it. These represent some of

the many remarkable stories of our founders, corporate and Foundation board members, team members, and residents. Thank you for your assistance with this project! We know

there will be many more remarkable stories to come as UMRC & Porter Hills continues on its journey to provide exceptional care and innovative services for older adults in West Michigan and across the state.

Thanks to all of you for joining us at our 2021

ThanksForGiving event and for being our treasured "plus ones" as we forge our future together! We are grateful for your continued caring and support of the older adults we serve.

With gratitude and warmest regards,

*The UMRC & Porter Hills
Foundation Team*

*Here's to
the next
50+ years!*

UMRC &
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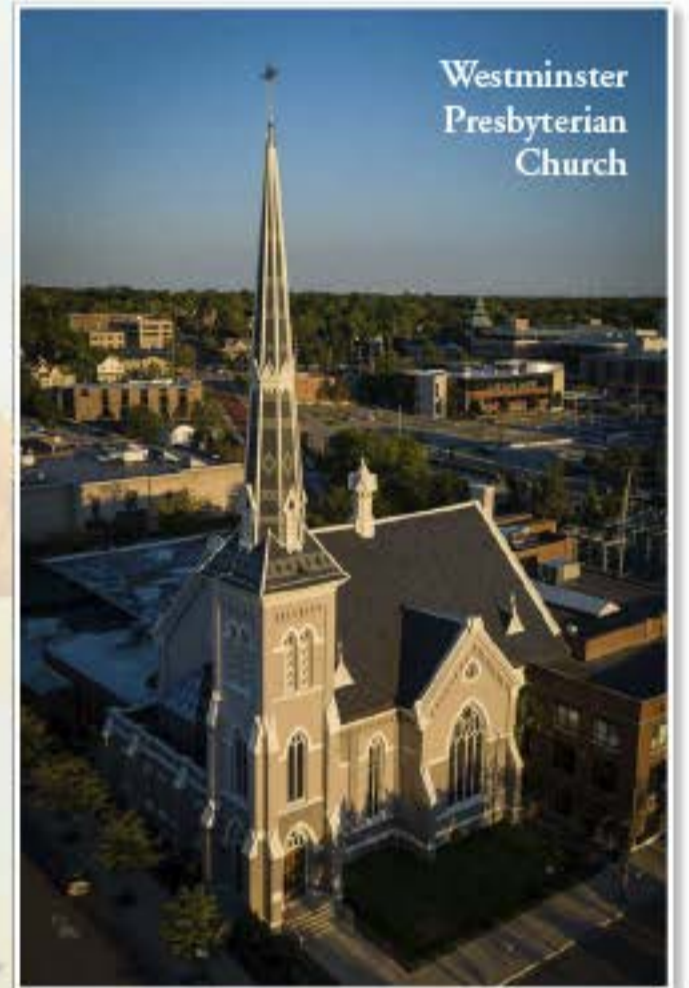
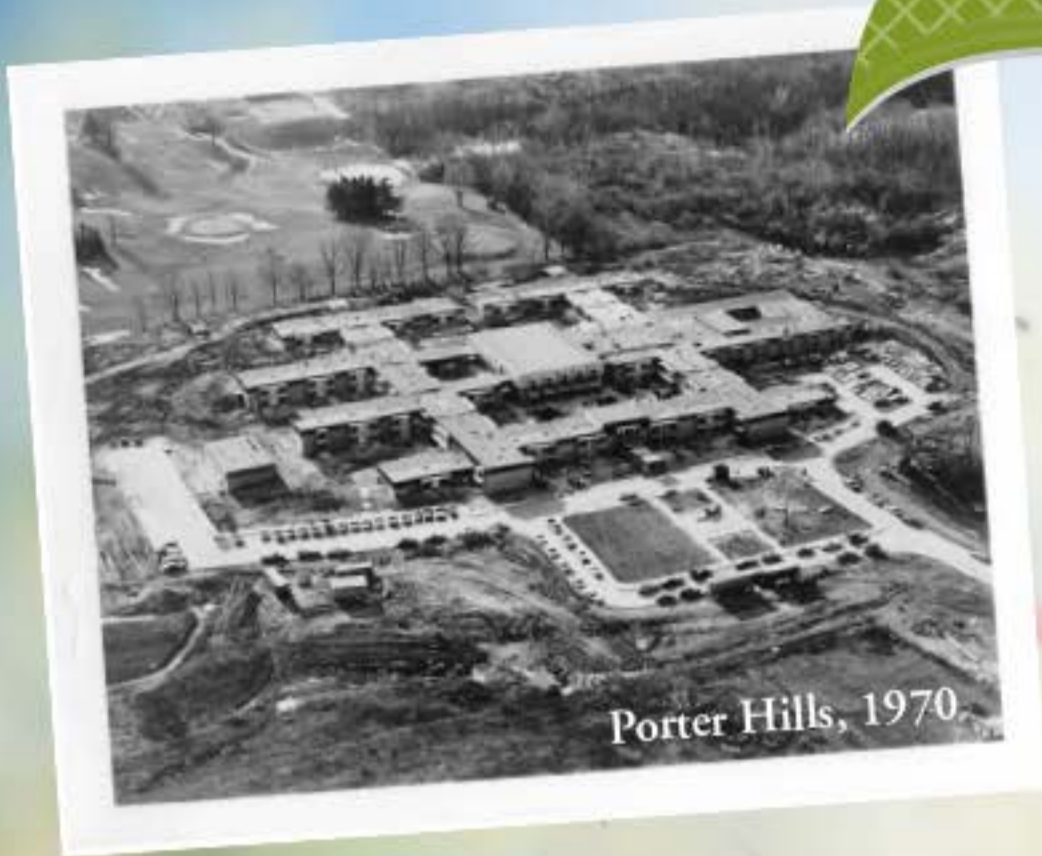
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Every effort has been made to ensure the information in this book is as accurate as possible. Please accept this gift with the grace and love with which it has been created.

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THE BEGINNING



WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Making a Difference in the Lives of Older Adults



Westminster Presbyterian Church in Grand Rapids has a long history of making a difference in the community, going back to its founding by a group of abolitionists before the Civil War.

Its ministries include Camp Henry, the Westminster Child Development Center, and the Downtown Food Pantry.

Westminster was even instrumental in the founding of Alma College! So it is no surprise that, when members of the church saw a need for enhanced care for older adults, they would do something about it.

“Providing a service to the larger community is what motivated our members to create Porter Hills,” says Rev. Dave Baak who served Westminster Presbyterian Church in several roles over the years. “It’s still a very important relationship.”

Over the last fifty years, this relationship has included a Westminster representative serving on the Porter Hills Board. In the 1990s, Rev. Dr. William Evertsberg, then the Westminster Presbyterian minister serving on the Porter Hills Board, urged the group to do more charitable work, including the idea of affordable living for older adults of limited means. He felt it was in keeping with the organization’s faith-based mission, and the Board agreed. In 1997, Porter Hills worked with HUD to create Walker Meadow Retirement Community in Walker, Michigan, the first of Porter Hills’ six HUD 202 rent-subsidized independent living communities for older adults developed in the Grand Rapids area through 2005.

Most recently, Barbara Goodspeed, President of Westminster’s Trustees and on the staff at Spectrum Health, filled this role on the Porter Hills Board from 2015 to June 2021.



Barbara Goodspeed

Barbara served on the search committee when Porter Hills was looking for an affiliate partner. “The faith-based similarities between UMRC and Porter Hills made a huge difference,” says Barbara. “We felt that UMRC was a really genuine organization and a really fine fit for Porter Hills. It felt very comfortable. It was great to find UMRC who shared our values for caring for older adults of a diverse range of income levels, who treasured affordable housing and was committed to PACE.”

“As a faith-based organization, we start from the heart,” says Barbara of UMRC & Porter Hills. “We are a caring, nurturing, care-about-our-community place. As a volunteer, it makes me feel good about spending my time with UMRC & Porter Hills.”



RUTH AND DON PORTER

Generosity and Vision

Ruth Leenhouts Porter grew up on a farm in the Grand Rapids area. She attended Rockford College in Illinois and the University of Wisconsin, receiving her degree in home economics which she taught in New York.

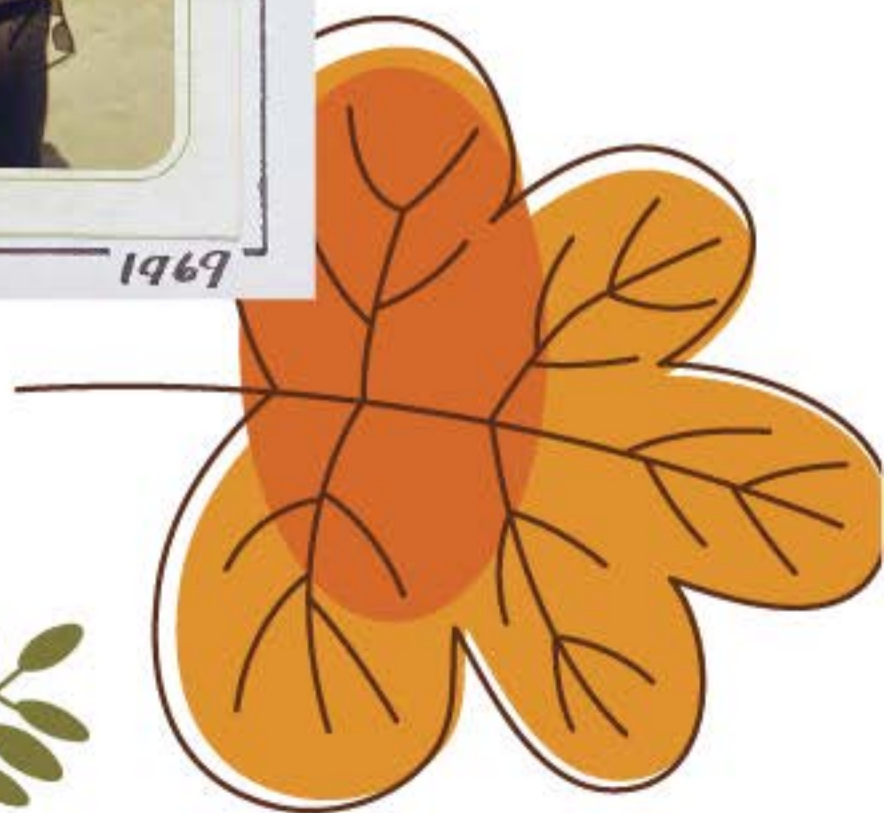
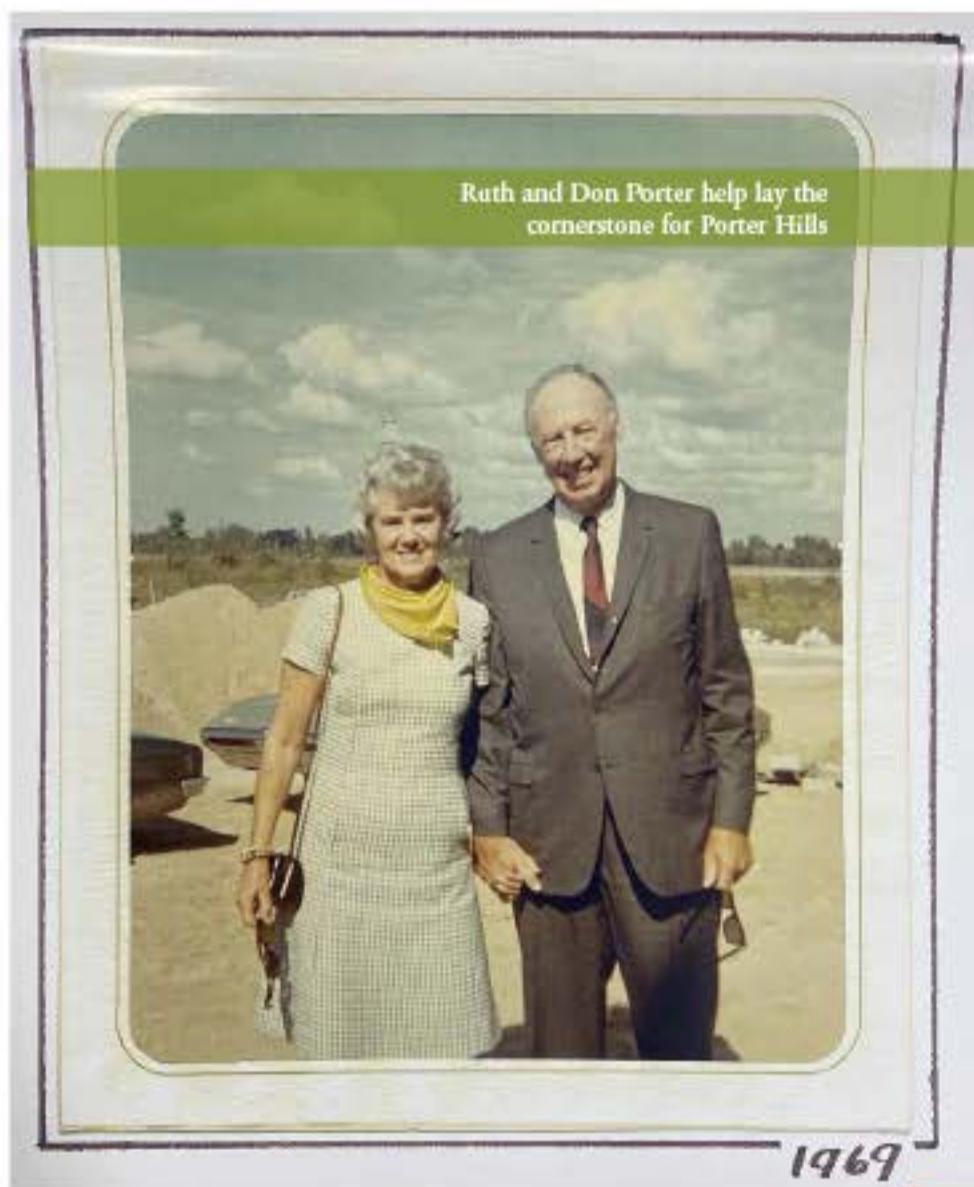
While visiting a friend back home, she attended Westminster Presbyterian Church. That Sunday, Don Porter also happened to be a guest at the church, and a mutual acquaintance introduced them. Not long after, the couple was married.

A 1921 graduate of the University of Michigan, Don worked in the lumbering business, then sold life insurance during the Great Depression. In 1938, he joined Harold Hadley to form the Porter-Hadley Company which manufactured doors, windows, and more.

Their church remained an important facet of Ruth and Don's life, and they were active members of Westminster Presbyterian. When a group of church members decided to build a retirement community in the area, the Porters

wanted to help. Ruth offered to donate 35 acres of her father's farm, which he had left to Ruth and her brother, to make this project possible. Located on rolling hills, this property was the perfect spot. The project now had a location and a name – Porter Hills.

This act of generosity and vision was instrumental to the launch and success of the organization which has provided care for thousands of older adults over the past five decades. Don Porter sat on the original Porter Hills Board of Directors, serving as the vice president, and was a member of the board for twelve years.



JAN AND JACK BOWIE

Dedication, Volunteering, Mission



“Our family has been involved with Porter Hills since the early discussions of it – nearly 60 years,” says Jan Bowie.

She and her late husband, Jack, were members at Westminster Presbyterian Church when Mrs. Paul F. (Marion Pampel) Steketee, Sr. organized a group to develop senior living in Grand Rapids. This group was comprised of businessmen, financial analysts, and attorneys, like Jack.

“We were part of the process from the first spade-ful to the dedication of Porter Hills,” says Jan. “Our children were young then. After construction began on Porter Hills, Jack and I would check on the progress nearly every evening, and our kids would play in the sand in the construction area.”

Jack went on to serve on the Porter Hills Board for 31 years, dedicating his life as a volunteer at Porter Hills. Jan also volunteered as a member and president of the Porter Hills Women’s Board. “We did everything!” she says, including decorating the halls at Christmas, throwing monthly birthday parties for residents, organizing craft shows, and raising funds for Porter Hills. Their son also served on the Porter Hills Board prior to the affiliation with UMRC.

Jack’s mother was among the first residents at Porter Hills. In 2000, Jack and Jan were some of the first to move into Cook Valley Estates. Today, she enjoys living in the Garden Apartments at Porter Hills Village.

Jan says she appreciates the mission of Porter Hills, especially the importance of Benevolent Care. The Porter Hills Foundation is included in the Bowies’ estate plan as Porter Hills Legacy Society members. “Porter Hills has been our lives’ work.”



HAROLD HARTGER

A Love for People and a Drive for Caring

Harold Hartger lost his father at the tender age of 12. Harold's son, Dick, and daughter-in-law, Sue, say that event shaped Harold's love of people and his drive to care for others.

"He had to deal with a lot of issues at such a young age," says Dick. "He supported his mother and, later, put himself through law school at the University of Michigan."

As a boy, Harold was also encouraged by family friends to attend YMCA camps which helped develop his character and prepare him for service in World War II.

"Two days after Pearl Harbor, my Dad and Gerald Ford, who worked in the office next to Dad, went together to sign up for the Navy," says Dick. "While serving as a Plank Officer on the U.S.S. Hancock in the Pacific Theater, Dad was responsible for notifying loved ones when members of his command died at sea. He also established procedures for keeping the 500-pound bombs on the ship from exploding en route to other aircraft."

Harold served for five years in the Navy, reaching the rank of Lieutenant Commander, and was awarded the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star.

With previous experience in banking, Harold started a mortgage company with Allen H. Willard in 1949, Hartger & Willard. With his expertise in financing, Harold later became instrumental in the founding of Porter Hills. As a member of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, he was part of a visionary group that "saw the need that was coming for caring for older adults," says Sue.

Dick says his dad had a close relationship with Don Porter, another member of the Westminster Church. "The Porters had the land, and Dad was involved through his mortgage company to help with the financing," says Dick. "They went through some amazingly difficult times – high interest rates and making the economics of the project work." Eventually, they were able to bring in resources from the Isabella Home in Grand Rapids that was closing, which helped launch Porter Hills.

An avid sailor and photographer, Sue says Harold "was very savvy. He had a lot of charisma and charm, and a deep sense of caring. He had a gift."



Harold Hartger addresses attendees at the Porter Hills Village groundbreaking event

When Harold himself needed care at Porter Hills, he was not happy about the move at first, according to Dick. "He never thought he would live there. It took him a while to get adjusted," says Dick.

"What was really great, though, was that he ended up with a sense of fraternity there," says Sue. "He found that he had friends and former colleagues there from the banks he had worked closely with. They started a Lunch Club, which brought him back full circle. It gave him the social outlet he needed."

Dick believes his dad lived seven years longer than expected because of the care he received at Porter Hills. "He was thrilled to get to meet his grandkids," says Dick.

Dick's mother, Marjorie Bjork, also lived at Porter Hills' Cook Valley Estates and later at the Green House® Homes. An accomplished pianist and music teacher, her Steinway piano is on display at Cook Valley Estates and is used

periodically for concerts by musicians from local colleges and universities.

"Porter Hills is one of the first and one of the finest," says Sue. "It is a leading senior care provider in West Michigan and became a model for other projects. I think Harold would be so excited about things like affordable housing and home health care and the diversity of care that is now provided by UMRC & Porter Hills. He would also be very interested in supporting team members through the Foundation's Scholarship program, I believe."



HORACE BARTON

Passion and Planning



“When you do something that’s a passion of love, you don’t count the hours.”

Horace Barton was born in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, the only child of an athletic father and homemaker mother from Norway. In 1928, Horace and his father won the National Father and Son Tennis Tournament at the Longwood Cricket Club in Brookline, Massachusetts. They were later inducted into the Tennis Hall of Fame in Newport, Rhode Island.

As a young man, Horace worked at a bank where he wrote loans and ran the farm auctions. When Horace’s best friend decided to go to the University of Michigan, he thought he would try it as well, living out of the trunk of his car for the first six weeks. Horace played tennis all through college and also ran indoor track.

Upon his college graduation, Horace began his career at Halsey, Stuart & Co. where he worked for the next 46 years – the last seven as vice president of the company. Horace’s son, Jim, says, “Dad had to create his own business plans

and worked strictly for commissions. At first, he ran bonds on LaSalle Street in Chicago. In 1934, Dad got the West Michigan/Northern Indiana territory when he fell in love with the Grand Rapids area. In 1948, he and friends started The Downtown Improvement Association (which they proudly called the “Crackpot Club”) with a mission of making Grand Rapids an All-American City.”

Horace and his wife, Martha, had two sons, Jim and John. On Sundays, the family attended Westminster Presbyterian Church and would go to the Morton House for lunch afterward. As a boy of 9 or 10, Jim remembers these early discussions with his dad, along with Don Porter, Harold Hadley, Jack Steketee, and others from the church, that led to founding Porter Hills. “My mom volunteered at the old Isabella Home, which was the early impetus between her and Mrs. Porter as well,” says Jim. “What should they do with the property?” It developed from there, and the Westminster Church was involved from the beginning. The Porter family donated the land.”

As one of the founding fathers of Porter Hills, Horace served on the Porter Hills Board from 1982 to 1990 and on the Porter Hills Foundation board from 1995 to 2000.

“Dad was always a planner,” says Jim. “When it came to creating Porter Hills, he wanted it to be a continuing care retirement community (CCRC), and it worked just the way he envisioned it. Dad knew my brother and I might not stay in Grand Rapids, and he wanted Porter Hills to be a place where he and mom would eventually live. As Mom’s health began to fail, they moved to the Garden Apartments and then to continuing care. Dad lived 15 years at Porter Hills.”

Jim says his dad was most proud of the Benevolent Care Fund that he helped create for Porter Hills residents to remain in the home they loved, even if they outlived their resources. “Dad had a real passion for it,” says Jim. “It was something he always felt was worthwhile.”

Horace concentrated his philanthropy in the areas he cared deeply about. “Porter Hills was always one of my parents’ top concerns, along with their church and the Butterworth Hospital,” says Jim.

The family’s devotion to caring for others has been passed down to Jim as well. After retiring from Union Carbide, Jim started his own consulting company and got interested in nonprofit work in Naples, Florida where he and his wife, Betsy, spend half the year. Jim is the founder and board chair of Collier Senior Resources (CSR), a nonprofit that provides information, resources, and services for older adults and caregivers in an area with one of the highest populations of those over age 65. CSR serves over 1,400 older adults, primarily female, largely Spanish-speaking, and low-income, providing hot lunches, mental health counseling, fitness classes, and other services – all at no cost to the participant. “It’s about Dad from the standpoint that he felt strongly about giving back, and he ingrained that in me.”

Jim says, “When you do something that’s a passion of love, you don’t count the hours,” and the same may be said for his father who dedicated much of his life to Porter Hills. “It was a gift for the family,” says Jim. “When Mom and Dad reserved a place at Porter Hills, they didn’t want to be a burden on my brother and me. Porter Hills was just the way Dad planned it, and now my wife and I have taken the same plan so our three children never have to worry about us. God has smiled on us.”

PHIL AND CHERRY JACOBUS

Deep Roots and Service Help Porter Hills Grow

Cook Valley Estates residents Phil and Cherry Jacobus have deep roots with Porter Hills.

“It goes back to my work with Hartger & Willard mortgage company,” Phil begins. “Harold Hartger, president, and a few others from Westminster Presbyterian Church had an idea in the 1960s for a senior housing development. At that time there was nothing in the way of a modern design for senior living in Grand Rapids.”

A committee formed to assess the need, design, and financing for this idea. This group included Don and Ruth Porter, Jack Bowie, Bill Martindill, Horace Barton, and Harold Hartger. “I was involved primarily with the financing,” says Phil.

WDDC was the local architecture firm in Grand Rapids that created the design, and Owen-Ames-Kimball (OAK) was the builder for Porter Hills. Next came the financing. “The Federal Housing Administration had some funding available at that time for senior living, offering 40-year financing at a low rate. Our loan was approved, but we still needed working capital,” explains Phil. “At that time, Isabella Home decided to close its doors. They agreed to provide funding and resources to Porter Hills to proceed, and some of their board members joined the Porter Hills Board.”

Porter Hills opened in 1970, the first modern senior housing project in West Michigan. Phil’s father, who had recently retired from Ford Motor Co., volunteered in Porter Hills’ office in its early days, and Cherry’s dad, W. Glen Harris, served as the Porter Hills chaplain.



Phil spent nine years on the Porter Hills Board, ending in the 1990s when he retired. During his board tenure, Phase II of Porter Hills was completed, adding an apartment wing and free-standing homes along the driveway. They also received funding to develop assisted living projects, including Meadowlark in Sparta.

“It was exciting to be part of the initial project, a new concept of senior living, and watching it grow,” says Phil.

Phil and Cherry, a retired pediatric and emergency room nurse, have long been active members in the city of Grand Rapids and their Westminster Church family. They continue to support Porter Hills through their gifts to the Porter Hills Foundation. “We live here and are part of the community, and we want to see it keep going,” says Phil. “It’s a nice, secure feeling to be part of a community like this.”



CAL OWEN

Decades of Dedication to Serving Older Adults

Cal Owen has been dedicated to caring for older adults for decades.

A World War II veteran and 1948 graduate of The Ohio State University with a degree in civil engineering, Cal Owen went on to a 40+ year career at Owen-Ames-Kimball Company in Grand Rapids. His last seventeen years were as President and Chief Executive Officer of the company. Cal married his wife, Ann, in 1948, and the couple had three children.

In 1960, Cal was elected a trustee for the Isabella Home for Aged Women in Grand Rapids. Isabella Home provided housing at a modest fee for “worthy, aged” women of limited means; many were retired school teachers. In the mid-60s, the home wished to expand to include additional nursing beds. However, its reinforced concrete structure built in 1924 would not allow for the necessary widening of its corridors required by the state. Without land to expand its facility, it became unfeasible to remain open.

At the same time, plans were underway at Westminster Presbyterian Church, where Cal and his wife, Ann, were members, to launch a modern retirement center. Discussions ensued with leaders of the Isabella Home and an agreement was reached – the Isabella Home provided \$300,000 in seed money for Porter Hills in return for providing care for the women living there at that time. It was also agreed that a member of the Isabella Foundation board would serve as a member of the governing board of Porter Hills. This began a decades-long relationship between Isabella and Porter Hills, which included Cal.

Owen-Ames-Kimball Company was chosen to construct Porter Hills Village which was completed in 1970. Cal was the general superintendent of construction at that time. Cal’s company completed other projects at Porter Hills over the years as well.

Cal served as president of the Isabella Foundation, and as a member of the Porter Hills Board and various board committees until 2000 when he and his wife, Ann, moved to Porter Hills’ new community, Cook



Valley Estates. Cal devoted the next nineteen years to the Porter Hills Foundation Board. Ann was one of the early members of the Porter Hills Women’s Board as well.

The Porter Hills Board honored Cal for his service: “His dedication and genuine concern for the well-being of his fellow men and women have contributed importantly to the achievement of the ideals for which Porter Hills was founded.”

Cal says he has always appreciated the sense of community at Porter Hills and Cook Valley Estates. At 98, he says, “I have done my share, and now others are stepping forward to take the baton.”



AUDREY SEBASTIAN

"A Wonderful Life"

Audrey O'Rorke Sebastian often commented that she "had lived a wonderful life."

Born into a loving farm family in Arcadia, Michigan, and growing up during the Great Depression, Audrey learned solid values from her parents which served her well throughout her 100-year life.

"She always felt, because life had been good to her, that she should do what she could to help others less fortunate," says her son, John O. Sebastian.

After graduating from Arcadia High School at 17, Audrey trained to become a registered nurse at Mercy School of Nursing in Manistee and St. Mary's Hospital in Grand Rapids. While working in Manistee, she met Jim Sebastian who had started a caster manufacturing business. They were married in 1938.

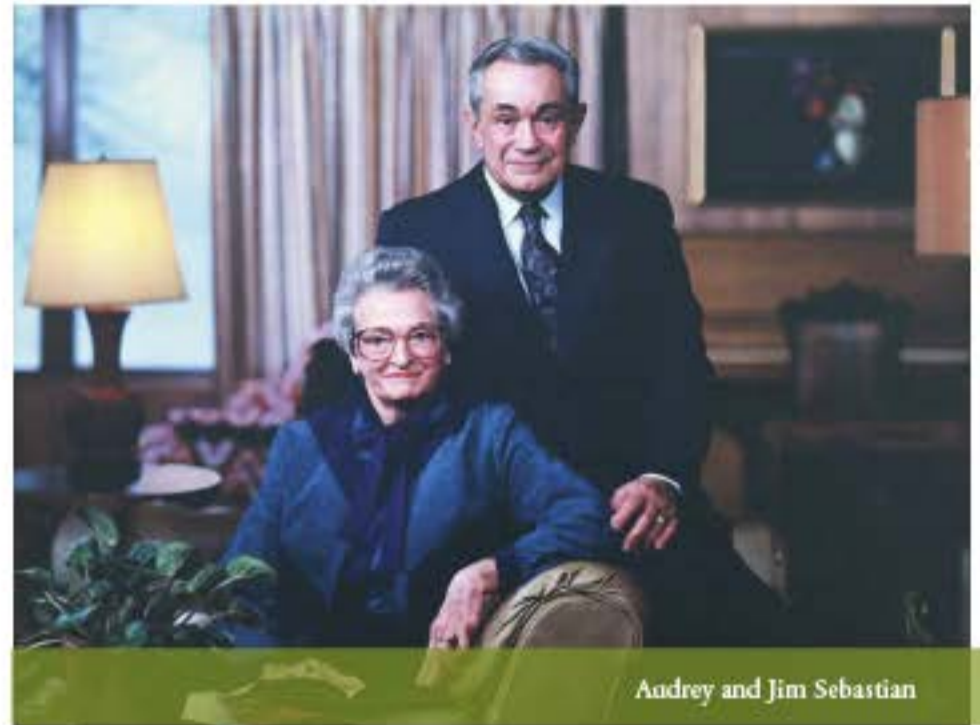
A year later, Jim merged his business, the Standard Truck Caster Company, with the Rapids Manufacturing Company of Grand Rapids to

become the Rapids-Standard Company and, later, Rapistan. At that time, Jim and Audrey moved to Grand Rapids where they became active members of the community.

In 1952, Jim Sebastian established the Rapids Standards Foundation. "Dad wanted to be able to help organizations in good years and bad," says John. "When the company was sold, the name of the Foundation changed to the Sebastian Foundation." (Recently, it was converted to a Donor Advised Fund at the Grand Rapids Community Foundation.)

The Sebastians gave generously of their time, talents, and treasure. "It's just natural to be interested in your community," Audrey said. She and Jim were especially interested in supporting health and education programs. This included Audrey's service on the boards of both the Isabella Home and Porter Hills.

Even before the official opening of Porter Hills in 1970, Audrey was an active member of the



Audrey and Jim Sebastian

Porter Hills Women's Board which formed in April 1969. She went on to serve the Porter Hills governing Board from 1977 to 1989 and the Porter Hills Foundation Board from its beginning in 1995 to 2005.

In 1991, Audrey, along with Horace Barton and William Martindill, led the successful campaign to renovate the Porter Hills Health and Rehabilitation Center. This project included additional private rooms for residents, as well as an upgraded dining room, a childcare center (Generations Child Development Center in partnership with the YMCA), and a large meeting room and chapel.

Jim passed away in 1994. In 2003, Audrey made her home at Porter Hills Village Garden Apartments, where she lived the next ten years. "We were very pleased with how that all went," says her son, John. "Her level of care was excellent, and our family was happy that she was there."

Porter Hills has also been home to additional members of Audrey's family, including her son, Jim, Jr. and his wife, Susan, who now live at Cook Valley Estates. Susan's mother lived in Harmony Hall. John's mother- and father-in-law, Juno and Wally Hook, also lived in the Garden Apartments and at Harmony Hall.

Dori Vander Mey



Men lifting weights in the Porter Hills Fitness Center



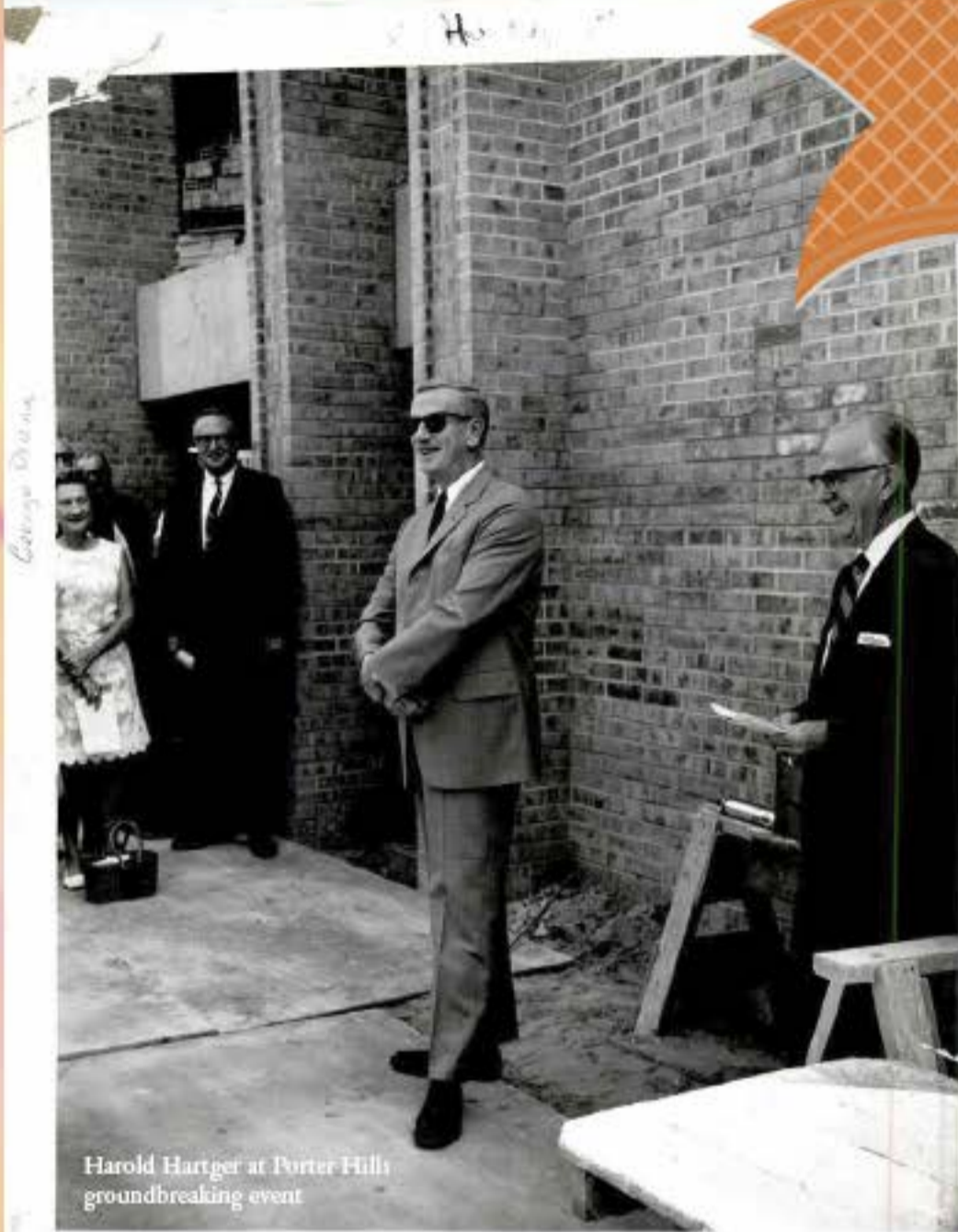
Yoga Class



R. Jensen, J. Taylor & P. Kidd



SERVING PORTER HILLS



Colony Printing

Harold Hartger



Armen and Pat Oumedian



Sister Aquinas Weber and Nancy and Don Lubbers



2019 Emeritus Board Chair event



DICK AND JUDIE RATHBURN

Longevity, Caring, and Commitment



Dick and Judie Rathburn

Originally from the Lansing area, Dick Rathburn graduated from Western Michigan University with a degree in accounting, then studied law at Wayne State.

A member of the bar and a CPA, Dick worked at Ernst & Young for 22 years and led the tax department in Grand Rapids. After retiring, he moved to Varnum Riddering where he spent the next two decades working on a variety of special projects. Dick and his wife, Judie, have two sons and four grandchildren.

Dick has some of the most longevity of service to Porter Hills of any other board member, with a total of 22 years serving on the corporate board and 26 years on the Porter Hills Foundation board – from its launch in 1995 to 2021.

Dick's service to Porter Hills began in 1984 when he joined the Porter Hills corporate board. "At that time Porter Hills was only 14 years old," says Dick. "Many of the original, key people who started Porter Hills were still serving on the Board, including Dick Young and Bill Martindill."

Because of his background, Dick became treasurer and then vice president and, in 1994-95 became Chair of the Board. He served as past chair, then dropped off the board. However, Porter Hills President and CEO, Dave Douma asked Dick to come back to the board. "Dave had some big projects in mind for Porter Hills, including other locations," says Dick. "I dearly loved Dave Douma, so I came back to the board as second vice president."

Dick's years of service saw a great deal of growth of the organization, including expansion of Porter Hills Village to include the Garden Apartments, Health and Rehabilitation Center, the Martindill Wellness Center, the chapel, and Harmony Hall Memory Care. It also included new communities, such as Cook Valley Estates, Affordable

Housing communities, and the Green House® Homes.

"Dave and I were traveling a lot, meeting with people and vetting potential partnerships," Dick remembers. "Dave was a natural at leading these new building efforts. He was also a really good judge of character. He would build close relationships with people like Mr. Peter Cook, people who were interested in Alzheimer's disease and low-income housing. Dave maintained these relationships which led to them being good contributors as well."

Some of these partnerships included other healthcare organizations and the YMCA which brought Generations Child Development Center to the Porter Hills Village campus. "I think this has been a real service to the community and to our team members," says Dick. "It has been a benefit to our residents as well."

One of the accomplishments that means the most to Dick is his service as Chair of the Nominations Committee. "I am really proud of the people I helped bring onto the board to keep the board multi-talented," says Dick. "We tried hard, with every new class, to bring in at least one person we felt could make a good Chair of the Board. For the most part, they were people I had worked with and knew that they were really quality people."

These board members included Reezie DeVet, Milt Rohwer, Tom Jackaboice, James Moyer, Cindy Havard, and Mark Yost, to name just a few.

"Above all, the most important thing about Porter Hills is that we have kept our promises," says Dick. "People come to a retirement village in their golden years, putting their final years and funds into that organization, based on the promises they hear when they come in. It's very important to keep those promises and to ensure those services continue to be available to them."

Those promises continue with the affiliation of UMRC & Porter Hills. "The partnership is really tremendous," says Dick. "My time on the board and working with Wendy [Brightman, president of UMRC & Porter Hills Foundation] has been very impressive. I'm sure these promises will continue and that makes me feel really good. I'm very pleased with the relationship between UMRC & Porter Hills."



Porter Hills hosted a luncheon for Emeritus Board Chairs.

JIM AND MARIE PRESTON

Living Out Our Promise



Jim and Marie Preston

Jim Preston first got acquainted with Porter Hills through a business connection – several trustees of the Porter Hills board in the 1990s were friends from the Grand Rapids Rotary and other civic organizations, including Dick Rathburn, Tom Jackoboice, and Chuck Jennings.

At a time when Porter Hills was looking to raise money through municipal bonds, Jim, a stockbroker, was able to introduce them to experts in that area. Soon, Jim was invited to join the Porter Hills corporate board.

Two years later, Jim and Marie gained a family perspective on the importance of Porter Hills when Marie's parents and aunt needed care. "The three of them were living in Florida at that time. While my mom was still in good health, my dad had early stages of Alzheimer's disease and my aunt required nursing care," says Marie. "We made the decision to move all three of them to Porter Hills Village where they could each receive the level of care they needed."

Marie's mom (Lillian Mountain) lived in Independent Living, her aunt (Alfhild Carr) moved to the Porter Hills Health and Rehabilitation Center, and her dad (Milton Mountain) lived at Harmony Hall Memory Care. "Best of all for Mom," says Marie, "they could all be on the same floor where Mom could easily visit them. During their stay, we pretty much used every service at Porter Hills."

Lillian lived at Porter Hills for over twenty years and was an avid volunteer, including being an ambassador, helping to orient new residents when they moved in, serving on various committees, and repurposing greeting cards. "I attribute her longevity to her ability to stay active," says Marie. "She was only 78 when she moved to Porter Hills. She liked to be involved and in the middle of things – she thrived on that."



Family photo: Milton Mountain, Lillian Mountain and Alfhild Carr

In her final year in 2019, Lillian required care from Emmanuel Hospice. Marie remembers how the music therapist sang and played guitar for her mother at the end of her life. "The way that the staff loved all my family was the most important thing," says Marie.

Her parents and aunt were not wealthy people. Marie shares that her aunt was on Medicare. Her parents had depleted their assets in the two decades they lived at Porter Hills, and her mom received Benevolent Care in her later years.

Jim's personal involvement and service to Porter Hills is his way of giving back to the organization that took such good

care of their family. He has served on the corporate and Foundation board, was on the Affordable Housing board when Porter Hills opened the HUD 202 community of Station Creek in Caledonia, and continues to serve on the Emmanuel Hospice board. "No gift is more valuable than your time," says Jim. "It was a gift for me to keep using my skills after I retired. Having your opinion valued for the knowledge you've accumulated over the years is a great compliment."

"It's been very rewarding to be part of Porter Hills and now UMRC & Porter Hills," says Jim, "primarily because the organization has done what it has promised to do – to compassionately care for elders in the community and for people of all means. Our faith tradition is reflected in every aspect of what we do. At the very base of the organization is our desire to demonstrate Christian charity, benevolence, and love."

Jim was one of the first Porter Hills board members to go onto the new UMRC & Porter Hills corporate board following the affiliation in 2019.

"I believe our similarity, including the belief in Benevolent Care and a desire to serve a much larger swath of the population through programs like PACE and affordable housing are why the affiliation came together so nicely," says Jim. "The COVID-19 pandemic was a litmus test, and we have thrived during this time because of the affiliation. The two organizations together are stronger than we were apart. We now continue to live out our promise, to always put those we serve first and do it honorably. We have put ourselves in a position of strength to continue providing outstanding services for older adults into the future."

CHUCK AND CAROL JENNINGS

Devoted Volunteers

As head of Human Resources for the former Old Kent Financial Corporation, Chuck Jennings was encouraged to volunteer. So when his friend, Dick Young, invited him to join the Porter Hills board in 1985, Chuck accepted.

“Dick and I had been involved with many community activities in Grand Rapids,” says Chuck. “The Porter Hills board wanted someone with HR experience to serve, so Dick asked me.” Chuck went on to devote over 30 years of volunteer service to Porter Hills, including as chair of the governing board, and serving as the third chair of the Porter Hills Foundation board.

Chuck’s board service encompassed a time of significant growth, including the construction of Cook Valley Estates, LifeCircles PACE (Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly), and six HUD Affordable Living communities. “I had a front row seat to see this place grow from one location to so many,” says Chuck. “It’s been really interesting and really worthwhile to be part of it with a lot of good people who worked well together. I enjoyed the ride.”

The Jennings’ connection to Porter Hills has become more personal over the years. Carol’s mother lived at Porter Hills Village, and now



Carol and Chuck are residents at Cook Valley Estates.

Carol, who worked at Davenport College in admissions, placement, and advising, said she and Chuck wanted to be the ones to make the decision about where to move, instead of leaving it to their three children. “People often wait too long to make that move and then they can’t enjoy the amenities,” says Carol. “We are very comfortable here, we feel safe, and our kids don’t have to worry about us. It is a blessing for our family.”

Chuck and Carol support the organization with a planned gift. “Porter Hills has always shown goodness and value and cares about people first,” says Chuck. “We love Porter Hills, and it’s part of our being to support the things we love. Porter Hills is first on our list.”



TOM AND BARBARA JACKOBOICE

“My Second Job”

Thomas J. Jackoboice worked for his family’s company, Monarch Hydraulics, Inc. In 1996, he joined the Porter Hills Foundation Board and, in 1998, joined the Porter Hills corporate Board as well. “I had a day job,” says Tom. “Porter Hills became my second job.”

It has been a labor of love for Tom, though. “I knew a lot of the original residents of Porter Hills,” he says. “They were my friends and neighbors having lived near Fulton Street. I watched Porter Hills Village grow. It was the beginning of a fabulous legacy.

“Porter Hills is the trusted destination for seniors,” adds Tom. “It lives its mission. When you have a choice for where you want to go and live as an older adult, Porter Hills would be your first choice.”

Tom and his family have experienced the welcoming nature of Porter Hills from all levels. “When I joined the board, they welcomed and supported me, they answered my questions and were always available to me,” Tom says.

When his mother needed care, Tom witnessed Porter Hills from the perspective of a son. “I lived the continuum of care with my mother,” says Tom. “She moved in her 90s and experienced everything Porter Hills has to offer, including independent living, assisted living and, as she became more frail, the Health and Rehabilitation Center. The Porter Hills team was so helpful and friendly and wanted the transition to be so easy for my mother. They really made it easy for our family, and they did it with great style and grace. Porter Hills feels like family.”

Tom appreciates the faith-based history of Porter Hills. “I knew when I got involved with Porter Hills that it was an outreach of Westminster Presbyterian Church,” Tom says. “Each campus has a chapel

with chaplains always available. This permeates the environment of the organization and the Board as well. We prayed together as a board and tried to include as many people as we could of various origins and backgrounds. When I became the chair of the governing board, I never realized that I was the first Roman Catholic person to hold a leadership position at Porter Hills. It was a great compliment to Porter Hills as an inclusive community.”



Tom believes that Porter Hills has “done a great job of listening to the market place” when it comes to meeting the needs and wishes of older adults. “A lot of people say they want to remain at home,

so we offer services to assist with that, such as Home Health, Avenues, and LifeCircles PACE. Eventually, though, there comes a time when you may need to move to a community. We offer all those options as well. When home is no longer an option, you want to go to a secure, quality place – I don’t think that will change. People are always going to want a campus lifestyle ultimately.”

Tom sees a bright future for UMRC & Porter Hills. “You can never remain on the sidelines – you must be proactive and create community,” says Tom. “Porter Hills has to constantly renew itself. You need attractive campuses and programs to attract future residents. We have the legacy and the reputation. For the greater good of the community, it is vital to constantly update to offer what people want.”



DICK AND BARBARA YOUNG

Deep Ties and a Strong Foundation

Dick and Barbara Young have deep ties to the community of Grand Rapids and to Porter Hills.

Dick earned degrees in business and law from the University of Michigan. He and Barbara, a teacher, married during his last year of law school. After completing three years in the Army, the couple returned to their native Grand Rapids where Dick joined Behler-Young Company. Dick was the second generation of his family to lead this organization which has served over 90 years in Michigan.

Dick was first recruited to the Porter Hills Board by Cal Owen in 1978. "Initially, I became connected with Porter Hills because I was attracted to the people involved. Many were Rotarians," Dick shares.

In 1995, Dick saw the need to create a foundation in support of Porter Hills. "It was clear to me from the start that, if Porter Hills was to be successful long into the future, there would need to be an endowment to support and maintain it into perpetuity," says Dick.

Dick served the Foundation as its first president and was instrumental in forming the first board and gathering support for the initial funding of the endowment. His service to the Foundation Board continued through 2016. Their son, Doug, also served on the Porter Hills Board from 2003 to 2006.

The Youngs have had a close family connection to Porter Hills. "My mother and sister, and Barbara's mother and sister, have all benefitted from years of care at Porter Hills," says Dick. "It's been comforting to me

to know that, when extra help is needed, Porter Hills can be counted on to provide quality care for aging persons."

Dick and Barbara now make their home at Cook Valley Estates. "Barbara and I are enjoying our time at Cook Valley Estates," Dick says. "We enjoy many friends and activities and feel comforted by the support and care offered at Porter Hills.

"Happy 25th to the Foundation and Happy 50th to Porter Hills," says Dick. "May many people have peace of mind in being associated with this fine organization."



ROGER AND MARCIA OETTING

A Philosophy of Giving Back

“It has always been my philosophy to give back to the community in which I live.”

This last sentence from Roger Oetting’s memoir to his family sums up his life of service to Porter Hills and the city of Grand Rapids.

Talented yet humble, Roger was a graduate of the University of Michigan and joined ROTC while completing law school and his MBA degree at the same time. He earned a fourth degree from Georgetown University while serving in Army Intelligence in Washington, D.C. His wife, Marcia, remembers that one of his assignments during this time was protecting Queen Elizabeth during a visit to the U.S.



After his service in the nation’s capital, Roger and Marcia moved back to Michigan, and were neighbors with Ruth and Don Porter in Grand Rapids – their first acquaintance with Porter Hills. Their second was a friendship with Alice Van Dusen, a retired interior decorator and one of the first to move into Porter Hills’ Garden Apartments. Alice eventually experienced the entire continuum

of care at Porter Hills, and Marcia and Roger were part of her journey, driving her to doctor appointments and handling her mail as her sight declined. “We were very close to Alice, and we adored her,” says Marcia. “That’s how we got to know Porter Hills.”

Roger served the Porter Hills Board from 1989 to 2001, including nine years on the Executive Committee; twelve years on the Finance Committee – nine as Treasurer and Chair; and eight years on the Investment Committee. “Roger was asked to be president of many organizations in the area, but he preferred to be the treasurer and to do the financials,” Marcia says.

Marcia Oetting holds her husband’s memoir to his family



With two business degrees, two law degrees, as well as a CPA, Roger was among a small, elite group who served as a partner in both law and accounting firms. It was this unique expertise that made Roger the perfect choice to help launch the Porter Hills Foundation in 1995. Roger, along with his friend, Dick Young, researched the prospects of forming a separate foundation for Porter Hills and completed the financials for this endeavor. Roger became the second chairperson for the Porter Hills Foundation, after Dick Young, and served the Foundation board until his death in 2016.

“Roger was very proud of all of his work and his role at Porter Hills,” says Marcia. “Roger volunteered innumerable hours and truly enjoyed being part of the success of this fine organization.”

ARMEN OUMEDIAN

“Making the World Better”

Armen Oumedian had many connections to Porter Hills during his life. His mother, Sarah, was one of the first to move to Porter Hills when it opened in 1970.

His brother and sister-in-law also made their home at Porter Hills. His son, Dan, was a member of the Planned Giving subgroup of the Porter Hills Foundation Board which Armen later served from 2003 to 2018. Armen and his wife, Pat, were members of the Porter Hills Legacy Society.

Still, Armen’s proudest connection to Porter Hills may have been his involvement with the program Avenues by Porter Hills.

As an engineer, Armen Oumedian always had the mindset of seeking solutions to a challenge, says his son, Dan. It was this out-of-the-box thinking that led Armen to brainstorm about Avenues, an innovative membership program that began in 2012 as an option for those planning for their long-term care needs.

“Caring for my mom really opened his eyes,” says Dan of his father. “They were married for nearly 67 years. Dad really wanted to care for her at home, but Mom needed more care than he could provide. Finding quality caregivers, retaining them, and coordinating their care was difficult.”

In her last three years, Pat received round-the-clock care from Porter Hills Home Health Care, spending time at Porter Hills Village only for rehabilitation. It was at this time that Armen met Paige Hendrickson, who was then the intake nurse for the Health and Rehabilitation Center. Paige now serves as the manager for Avenues.

“We would brainstorm based on his experience in caring for Pat,” says Paige. “Armen didn’t want to be a burden on his kids and was very mindful of maintaining those parent-child relationships and boundaries. He also wanted to help older adults live



more independently. It was very important to him to be able to remain in his home and community, while having the assurance that he would have the care he needed in his later years.”

Armen was the first member of Avenues when it launched in 2012. “Dad was so proud to be the first Avenues member,” says Dan. “He and our family were able to take advantage of this program for the latter part of his life. It was a great concept and really helped out our family a lot.”

Armen’s passions also included STEM education and scholarships for students in the Grand Rapids area and at his alma mater, Kettering University. Armen was an engineer for General Motors, then Rapistan, where he retired. He then started a company with some former business associates and retired again at the age of 80.

“I had lots of fun earning money, and I’ve had more fun giving it away,” Armen is often quoted as saying.

“Armen was always thinking about how he could make the world better,” says Paige. “It was just the way he lived his life.”



PETER COOK

A Forward Thinker: "Able and Willing"



Peter Cook was quoted as saying, "There are two necessary things in giving: One is to be willing; the other is to be able."

Able is secondary because many people who are not willing do become able but still never give. People who have little yet give what they can become the big givers when they are able. That's because they had always been willing!" Peter and his wife, Pat, certainly followed these words during the course of their lifetime.

Peter was born in Grand Rapids in 1914 and graduated from high school in the midst of the Great Depression which kept him, for a short time, from his dream of attending college. Instead he took a job at the Kelvinator Refrigerator factory to help support his family. He earned enough to take night classes at Davenport Business College, allowing him to get started in a business career. Peter and Emajean (Pat) Vander Sluis, whom he had met in church, were married in 1940.

Peter began climbing the corporate ladder as a bookkeeper for a local furniture store. His boss had a love for imported cars which he shared with Peter. Eventually, Peter became the owner of Import Motors and, in 1977, launched Mazda Great Lakes. Peter's friend, Bob Hooker, worked with Peter as the Advertising Manager at Import Motors and as his partner at Mazda Great Lakes. In 2000, Mazda Motors of America forced a buy out of Mazda Great Lakes.

Peter remained active as a minority owner in many businesses. He also

invested time and money in a variety of support organizations. One of those was Porter Hills. Peter joined the Porter Hills Foundation Board in its infancy in 1995 and served through 2007. During this time of growth at Porter Hills, its President and CEO, Dave Douma, approached the Cooks with an idea for a new independent living complex in Grand Rapids. In 1998, the Cooks made a \$1 million naming gift to create Cook Valley Estates.



Pat and Peter Cook

Peter's life-long membership at Grace Reformed Church, along with his family, inspired him to be a joyful giver. Over the years, the Cooks shared their generosity and compassion throughout the community of Grand Rapids and, in 1987, Peter and Pat established the Cook Charitable Foundation to ensure their thoughtful philanthropy would live on. Tom Claus and Carrie Boer, who now serve as president and treasurer of the Peter C. & Emajean Cook Foundation, say this about their former boss and colleague:

"Peter was a forward thinker. Even into his 90s, he embraced change

and looked forward to seeing what the world would look like next, from business and banking, to aging services and Porter Hills. He realized people are living longer and want to live in community, while also having access to care when they need it. Cook Valley Estates was built with transitional housing in mind and for its residents to be able to enjoy living at home as long as they are able."

Peter and Pat made Cook Valley Estates their home upon its completion in 2001. Several members of the Cooks' social circle lived there, including Ralph Hauenstein and Bob Hooker, as well as other local retirees. "They enjoyed the sense of community and friendships they made at Cook Valley Estates," says Carrie. After suffering a stroke, Peter also lived at the Porter Hills Green House® Homes for a time while he recovered.

"Peter always had the vision to see the need," says Carrie. "But what made him really great, was that he loved to give money – he had the ability and the willingness – and he would step up and give to a variety of nonprofits and businesses as well. Peter was always willing to invest in people."

Tom Claus agrees. "Peter's family did not have financial means, but key people in his life bet on him at a young age to succeed. He carried that forward in his own life and it shows in his setting up the Cook Foundation. At the most basic level, he did this because he was a Christian – he was blessed and wanted to be a blessing to others. It was in his spirit to make a difference for other people."

SISTER AQUINAS WEBER

A Faithful Life of Service

**I give you thanks for this wondrous life;
all your works are wonderful.**

These words from Psalm 139 inspire and describe the life of Sister Aquinas Weber, a Grand Rapids Dominican Sister for over 75 years. This Aquinas College graduate continues to bless the lives of others, from college students at her alma mater, where she is Chancellor Emerita and still works part-time in the Advancement office; to older adults living at Porter Hills.

“Porter Hills has a wonderful reputation and is warm and welcoming,” says Sister Aquinas. “I like that it has a religious atmosphere that permeates its philosophy and brings comfort. It’s the place to go when you retire.”

Sister Aquinas joined the Porter Hills governing board in 1990 and, in 1995, became a charter member of the Porter Hills Foundation Board, which she served for 15 years. Her years of experience working in development made her an excellent coach for the early Porter Hills Foundation. In particular, her passion was Benevolent Care.

“We worked hard on the Benevolent Fund,” says Sister Aquinas. “I told the board, we needed to look at the Benevolent Fund. People are getting older and won’t have someone to care for them or have a place to go. I felt, if I could make that happen, I would feel that I properly served. We set a goal and, I remember, Horace Barton said, ‘you’ll never make it.’ But we did make it, and we raised our goal amount the next year. We

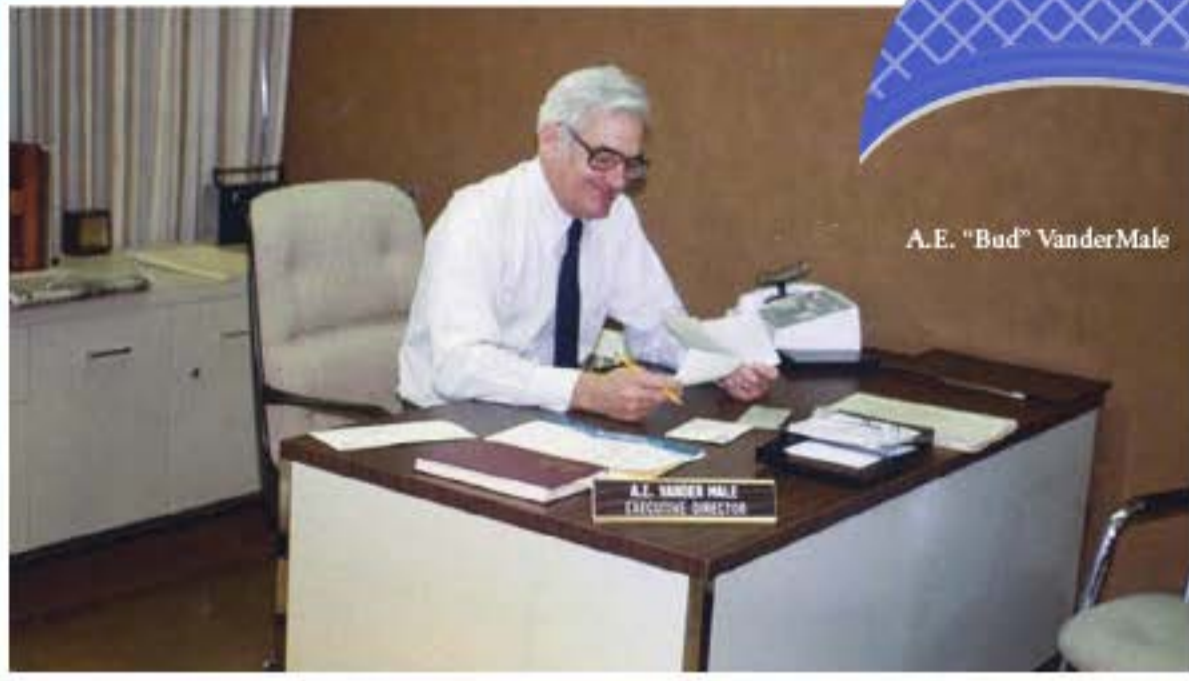
had an optimistic view and the determination to get it done.”

Today, the Benevolent Care Fund is just as vital as ever. While no longer a member of the board, Sister Aquinas continues to be a trusted advisor to the Porter Hills Foundation.

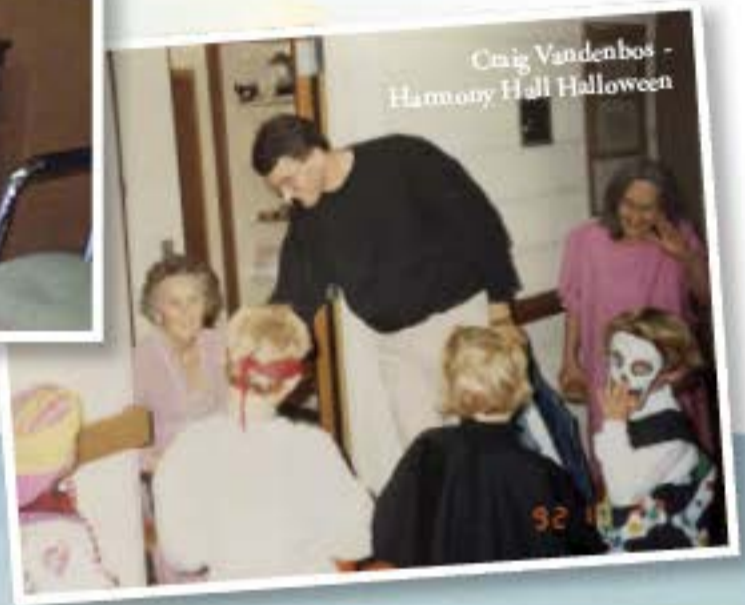
Sister Aquinas adds, “Our population is living longer. We have to think beyond today to look at what older adults will need in the future. UMRC & Porter Hills offers a lot of options, and people can exercise control over their lives and be as independent as possible.”



TEAM MEMBERS



A.E. "Bud" VanderMale



Craig Vandembos -
Harmony Hall Halloween



Porter Hills, 1972



Dining Service



A. E. "BUD" VANDERMALE

Porter Hills Executive Director, 1974-1982

During his tenure as Executive Director at Porter Hills, A. E. "Bud" VanderMale performed a variety of roles, engendering loyalty from team members and appreciation and good will from residents.

Significantly fewer employees worked there then, and the small administrative staff had a strong esprit de corps. As director, he held meetings, did financial planning, and solved problems, all the while ensuring that team members were treated with fairness and kindness and that residents had their needs met in timely and gracious fashion.

As director, Bud often gave a tour to prospective residents, and his warm, vibrant personality shone through doing it. Visitors and residents alike were especially impressed with the dining room with its elegant character and inviting spaciousness, to say nothing of the delicious food served there. He once organized a bus excursion

to a cottage in Holland so residents could enjoy Lake Michigan views, games, and burgers on the grill. He loved organizing parties for them in the Porter Hills dining room, so they could celebrate special occasions.

One day a cute, dappled fawn sauntered around near his office, and Bud approached it gently and befriended it briefly in a photo scene captured by *The Grand Rapids Press*. He was known to do some simple repair jobs for residents and was adamant that all corridors and common areas be kept nothing short of pristine. The executive offices were located where the west side of Dogwood Court is currently. In fact, Bud's wife, Jayne later lived in the very same apartment where Bud's office had been.

The area north of the main campus was largely lawn and open fields then. A major construction project undertaken during VanderMale's tenure was the pond and environs. It went from a small non-descript piece of property to the picturesque water feature it is today.

VanderMale was thoroughly and personally engaged in many facets



of the goings-on at Porter Hills and took great pride in its preeminence as the area's finest retirement home. One day during a bad snowstorm, he borrowed a Jeep and picked up nurses who otherwise were snowed in. Driving them to work to be able to tend to their patients in the Health Center exemplified his dedication. Elected President of the Michigan Non-Profit Homes Association, VanderMale earned the respect of many, and thoroughly enjoyed and worked hard at his job.

But Bud told his own family that what gave him the most satisfaction and pride was when people expressed appreciation for the extraordinary care and attention shown to their loved ones who were residents. His daughter,

Anne VanderMale Tuuk, recalls that, in her first job as a law clerk for newly appointed federal judge Douglas W. Hillman, her boss had just moved his mother into Porter Hills. His Honor asked Anne on several occasions to pass along his heartfelt thanks to Bud for personally helping Mrs. Hillman settle in, feel welcome, and receive such excellent care. Her case was, of course, no exception.

Bud's outstanding leadership, along with that of his staff, was tailored to the residents' continued well-being. He personally ensured they were respected and understood and able to lead their best lives. That priority was valued then as it is today.

- Anne VanderMale Tuuk

DAVE DOUMA

Tribute to a Compassionate, Visionary Leader



Tom Jackoboice first met Dave Douma while serving on the Porter Hills Foundation Board.

“Dave was a very special person,” says Tom. “Very earnest. He loved the organization, was passionate about the mission, and wanted to secure a growth pattern and a great future for Porter Hills. For Dave, it was not a job, it was his vocation.”

Dave Douma became Porter Hills’ President and CEO in 1989, but began his career as a facilities manager in 1970. Dave’s father, Rev. George Douma, was Porter Hills’ first director beginning in 1968 prior to the community opening; Dave’s mother was later a resident of Porter Hills Village.

Under Dave’s leadership, Porter Hills grew from a single senior care community to a nine-campus organization, in addition to Home Health, serving nearly 1,000 residents and clients with over 600 employees during that time.

“He was like a house on fire,” says former Porter Hills corporate and Foundation Board member, Chuck Jennings. “There was a lot of growth at Porter Hills in the 1980s and 90s.” This included affordable housing communities in partnership with HUD, such as Walker Meadow Retirement Community in Walker, Michigan which opened in 1997. Dave Douma served on the boards for all six of Porter Hills’ affordable housing communities in the Grand Rapids area.

Dave was involved in developing many innovative programs at Porter Hills, including in-home health care (Home Health), Harmony Hall Memory Care, Green House® Homes, and Generations, an intergenerational child care center in partnership with the YMCA. Cook Valley Estates was also built during Dave’s tenure at Porter Hills.

“Dave and I were traveling a lot, meeting with people and vetting potential partnerships,” remembers Dick Rathburn, who also served on the Porter Hills corporate and Foundation boards during Dave’s tenure.

“Dave was a natural at leading these new building efforts. He was also a really good judge of character. He would build close relationships with people like Mr. Peter Cook, people who were interested in Alzheimer’s disease and low-income housing. Dave maintained these relationships which led to them being good contributors as well.”



In addition to being highly regarded in the senior living industry (he was a past President of the Michigan Association of Homes and Services for the Aging and served on the Governor’s Task Force), Dave was beloved by his team members.

Laura Rottschafer, who was one of Porter Hills’ first team members, along with her mother and brother, remembers, “Dave was very friendly. He would always tease my mom, ‘Do you have any more kids at home?’ He was always so approachable, and we had great working relationships.”

Dave Douma’s life was tragically cut short in 2006 following injuries he sustained in an auto accident in San Francisco as he was heading to the airport following a conference of the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging. But his legacy as a compassionate, visionary leader lives on.

Tom Jackoboice says, “Dave loved being with people. He always wanted to keep things intimate and personal with the residents and to not lose sight of the ‘people’ side of our mission. He really cared. He would be very proud of our focus on mission and growth today, and I believe he would be very supportive and proud of our affiliation with UMRC.”

LAURA ROTTSCHAUFER

Creating Relationships

Laura Rottschauer was a high school student when she first began working at Porter Hills, just a few months after it opened in April 1970.

She continued working there until she graduated from nursing school in 1975 and took a job at a local hospital. In 1979, thanks to a friend who was working at Porter Hills, she began working there part-time on the weekends. Three years later, her career path brought her back full-time as a charge nurse and later as assistant director of nursing in the Health and Rehabilitation Center, before she and her family moved to Holland in 1985.

Laura's brother also worked at Porter Hills in the kitchen and later became the co-director of maintenance and housekeeping. Her mother, Carolyn Post, was a housekeeper at Porter Hills as well.

"What I liked most about Porter Hills was that it



Laura and her mother, Carolyn, with grandson, Aidan (circa 2015)

felt like a family place," says Laura. "We always had really good working relationships. Even now, I still remember the names of people I took care of all these years ago. You create those relationships."

Laura saw Porter Hills from a daughter's point of view when her mother moved there in 2002. "My dad had passed away and, later, Mom fell and had a bad fracture that needed time to heal at the Health and Rehabilitation Center. She returned home, but then thought, maybe she should move

to Porter Hills," Laura remembers. "She lived there for 15 years, in independent living for the majority of that time, then in assisted living for three years and her final year and a half with Emmanuel Hospice."

Laura says she is proud of the growth that has taken place at Porter Hills. "A big part of my life was spent at Porter Hills," Laura says. "I'm excited about its future."



CHERYL VAN BEMDEN

"A Great Place to Work"



"I don't like it here, I LOVE it!" says Executive Director for Porter Hills Village, Cheryl Van Benden. "I wouldn't be here if I didn't love it."

Cheryl is back at Porter Hills for the third time. "When you work at other places, you realize what a great place Porter Hills is to work," says Cheryl. "I have personally had so many opportunities, and I'm thankful to have worked here as many years as I have."

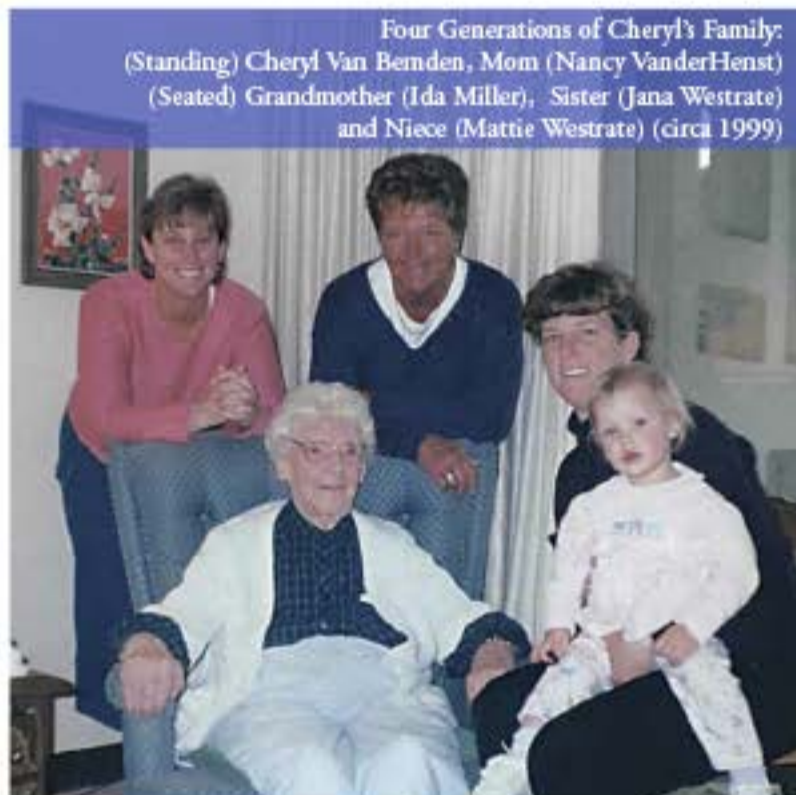
Cheryl's first job experience at Porter Hills was as a high school student working in Dining Services – her mom worked as a unit clerk in the Health and Rehabilitation Center. Cheryl then went to Calvin College, graduated, and moved to North Carolina where she worked at a continuing care retirement community. Eventually, she moved back to Grand Rapids and worked at Porter Hills for ten years until she returned to school to earn her nursing degree. After working as a labor and delivery nurse at a local hospital, she once again returned to Porter Hills. Her career path took her from charge nurse in the Health and Rehabilitation Center to unit manager, then assistant director of nursing.

When Porter Hills pursued the creation of the Green House® Homes, Cheryl was part of that

development. She received her nursing home administrator license and worked at Green House® Homes for six years. "It was a privilege to be part of the Green House® Homes project," says Cheryl. "It was so exciting to have private rooms and a home-like environment that supports person-centered care for our residents."

Living, then moving through the continuum of care.

"It's all about the relationships, the people I've met over the years and the residents," says Cheryl. "Having friends and family who have worked here really says a lot. I have so many great memories – it just becomes a part of you."



Four Generations of Cheryl's Family:
(Standing) Cheryl Van Benden, Mom (Nancy VanderHenst)
(Seated) Grandmother (Ida Miller), Sister (Jana Westrate)
and Niece (Mattie Westrate) (circa 1999)

In 2015, Cheryl transitioned back to Porter Hills Village as the director of residential living, then became its executive director as UMRC & Porter Hills began its affiliation.

In addition to her mom, Cheryl has had several family connections to Porter Hills over the years. Her son and nephew worked there during high school, and her sister, Jana Westrate, has been a valued team member in Dining Services for 35 years! Her grandparents were residents as well, starting in Enhanced Independent



CRAIG VANDENBOS

34 Years of Making a Difference for Older Adults

In the early 1980s, Craig Vandebos' grandmother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Craig's grandfather cared for her as long as he could, but eventually she moved to a nursing home.

"At that time, caring for someone with dementia in a nursing center meant restraints and drugs," says Craig. "It was awful to watch my grandparents' experience."

When Craig graduated from college in 1987, he started a job and put his accounting degree to good use at a local nonprofit. But on the evenings and weekends, he wanted to do something more.

At that same time, Porter Hills had just opened its memory care wing, Harmony Hall, which provided dignified, person-centered care for those living with dementia. "Porter Hills was hiring, so I started working in Harmony Hall, getting residents ready for supper and for bed," says Craig. "As one of the only male resident assistants, I felt there was a need, and it really helped the male residents have a male take care of them."

Craig remembers fondly his early years in Harmony Hall. "I would always volunteer to work on holidays, especially the first shift on Christmas morning," says Craig. "Every year, I would dress up as Santa Claus, and the 16 Harmony Hall residents and the other team members and I would have our own special Christmas, then help residents get ready to go out to visit their families. It was always a lot of fun, and it was a way I could help my colleagues enjoy their holidays off with their own families."

Craig continued his "accountant by day/caregiver by night" career for the next 13 years! But in 2000, Craig was asked to "beef up" his hours at Harmony Hall, which he was unable to do.

As fate would have it, though, Porter Hills also had an opening for a Controller position. "I had always wanted to use my accounting skills in a place like Porter Hills," says Craig. "In 2000, Porter Hills had grown from one campus to many locations and services, with the addition of Cook Valley Estates, the acquisition of Meadowlark Retirement Village in 1999, and the Porter



Craig assists Harmony Hall resident with baking

Hills Home Care program. I applied and got the job.

"People are kind of shocked when they find out I have worked at Porter Hills for 34 years," Craig says. "What keeps me engaged is the fact that there are always new and innovative ways to care for the older adult population. Seeing what my own grandparents went through makes me know and value the need to continue to improve ways we care for that generation."

"Things are constantly changing in our industry. The needs of older adults change, and people want different things in terms of how they age, such as PACE or Avenues. It's never boring – it doesn't look at all the same as it did in 1987 or in 2000. That keeps me energized and engaged."

The affiliation of UMRC & Porter Hills is also exciting, Craig says. "The two organizations coming together has made us a lot stronger, and we can do so much more to be innovative and continue to grow. We look at things from new perspectives to care for older adults, and bring together a lot of knowledge and expertise that helps us move in that direction."

"I also stress to people making decisions for their older loved ones of how much it means to choose a nonprofit, and the importance of the Benevolent Care Fund," says Craig. "My accounting career has always been with nonprofits, and I like that we invest back into our organization."

LIFE AT PORTER HILLS



Porter Hills Village Rooftop Garden



Balloon volleyball at Meadowlark



Angie Van Hoven, a WWII nurse, was a Porter Hills resident

Angie Van Hoven



Residents stay fit and active



JOAN BUCHANAN

Faithful Connections to Porter Hills

Cook Valley Estates resident Joan Buchanan has had a decades-long association with Porter Hills.

It began with her family's connection to Eastminster Presbyterian Church, a satellite of Westminster Church, started by Pastor Ed Brigham. In the 1980s, while serving the church as a deacon, Joan was asked if she would volunteer to visit residents at Porter Hills. In particular, Pastor Brigham's wife knew Edith and Lou Ella (Lou) Butler, sisters who were the first to move into Porter Hills in 1970. Joan began calling on them once a week and a trusting friendship ensued. Eventually, Joan started helping them with their finances and was appointed their Power of Attorney.

Edith, the oldest Butler sister, was born in the late 1800s; Lou was born in the early 1900s, according to Joan. They never married. Edith was an artist and taught art at Michigan State University. Joan shares that, at one point when she was helping the sisters with their finances, "there were some issues with the IRS because they didn't believe Edith had worked prior to the establishment of Social Security in 1935!"



Lou became a social worker and, during World War II, worked in the Japanese internment camps.

When Edith retired from teaching, the sisters became the first residents at Porter Hills upon its opening in 1970. They remained at Porter Hills until their passing in 1985. Each left Porter Hills in their estate plan.

Joan, who was a stay-at-home mom with three sons, says that volunteering at Porter Hills through her church "was a very rewarding experience. I learned a lot about Porter Hills." It's no wonder, then, that Porter Hills was the first choice for retirement living for Joan and her late husband, Jim.

"We didn't look at any other places to move to when we retired," says Joan. "Jim and I attended some early invited meetings about Cook Valley Estates in 2000 when Phase I was underway. We walked around wearing boots to see where the

homes were to be built." At that time they felt they weren't quite ready to move, but, three years later during Phase II of the project, they made the decision to move to Cook Valley Estates which has been Joan's home since June 2003 (her husband passed away in 2012). Joan has been living there independently ever since.

"I love it here!" says Joan. "I love the location – I'm in the neighborhood where we raised our kids, but I have less responsibilities than living in my own home. I feel protected here. There are activities if I want to participate, but I don't have to. I especially appreciate the prayerful, faith-based aspect of the Porter Hills mission and the religious connection of Porter Hills. I love the chaplains, including Chaplain Melody Johnson."

Joan also has a unique connection to The Thome Rivertown Neighborhood in Detroit, a UMRC & Porter Hills affordable assisted living community for low-income older adults in the city – the first and only one of its kind. After graduating from Michigan State University in 1957 with a degree in business, Joan worked for two years at Parke Davis on Jefferson Avenue in Detroit's riverfront area. This same pharmaceutical laboratory

was renovated in 2013 to create Rivertown as part of the city's redevelopment efforts!

Joan has been a long-standing member of her church and its women's circle, as well as a 40+ year member of the PEO Sisterhood (Philanthropic Educational Organization). Until recently, Joan also walked one and a half miles each day. She enjoys visiting with her three sons who live in Michigan, North Carolina, and Massachusetts – these days via Zoom.



The Butler sisters, Edith (seated) and Lou

Joan says she appreciates the Porter Hills Foundation's Benevolent Care Fund. "It is the reason I support the Porter Hills Foundation," says Joan. "I appreciate the help it provided to the Butler sisters, and it is reassuring to know it is available – both now and in the future."

PATRICIA “PAT” EDISON

Devoted Career of Service

When Patricia “Pat” Edison and her husband, Bill, moved to Porter Hills Village in 1992, he was the youngest man and she was the second youngest woman living on campus!

“We made the decision to move to Porter Hills because we were spending our winters in Florida and didn’t need our big house anymore,” explains Pat. “Our three grown children all live in Grand Rapids, and it was very convenient to come here. It’s been a wonderful situation for me.” When Bill passed away in 2000, Pat was especially grateful to live at Porter Hills.

Pat’s career was devoted to nonprofit service, most notably as the Executive Director for the Grand Rapids Community Foundation in the 1980s. “There have been so many changes,” says Pat. “When I worked there, it was just me and my assistant working four days per week. Today, they have 17 staff members, and the foundation has grown immeasurably. It was a time when there was a great interest in creating foundations. A wave of foundations came into being at about the same time.”

One of those new foundations was the Porter Hills Foundation, established in 1995 as the nonprofit fundraising arm for Porter Hills. Because of Pat’s wealth of knowledge in the world of philanthropy, she was asked to join the Porter Hills Foundation Board, which she served from 1999 to 2015.

The charitable aspect of Porter Hills means a lot to Pat. “Benevolent Care is an important feature of Porter Hills and one that speaks to its strong faith tradition. The position at Porter Hills has always been that nobody would be asked to leave because of their financial situation. Helping to grow and sustain the Benevolent Care Fund is an achievement I’m most proud of while serving the Porter Hills Foundation board.”

She adds: “What a pioneer Porter Hills has been in Grand Rapids in the field of senior living! The concept of a continuum of care allows people to move through the various stages of care they need and still feel that they are at home at Porter Hills. The Generations Child Development Center, led by the YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids, is another charm located on the Porter Hills Village campus. Many of our residents have helped as volunteers in the program as ‘Grandmas’ and ‘Grandpas.’”



As a resident of Porter Hills, Pat believes the people – both team members and fellow residents – are the key to the success of the organization. “The staff really makes it go, and the people who live here are so welcoming to newcomers,” says Pat. “That quality has become identified with Porter Hills.”



ROBERT “BOB” HOOKER

Lasting Legacy to Porter Hills Foundation



people dry in the rain, the Hookers made a gift to the Porter Hills Foundation to construct a portico at the entrance.

Bob and Judy both grew up in Grand Rapids and attended Calvin College. Bob went on to earn his MBA degree from University of Michigan. He was a business partner with Peter Cook at Mazda Great Lakes. Bob describes Cook as “an entrepreneur, mentor, and friend.” Cook donated the money to purchase the land for Cook Valley Estates.

Bob and Judy chose Cook Valley Estates for their retirement home. “We were able to put our plan in place to create a home at Cook Valley, while committing a portion of our life lease to the Porter Hills Foundation.”



Bob and Judy Hooker

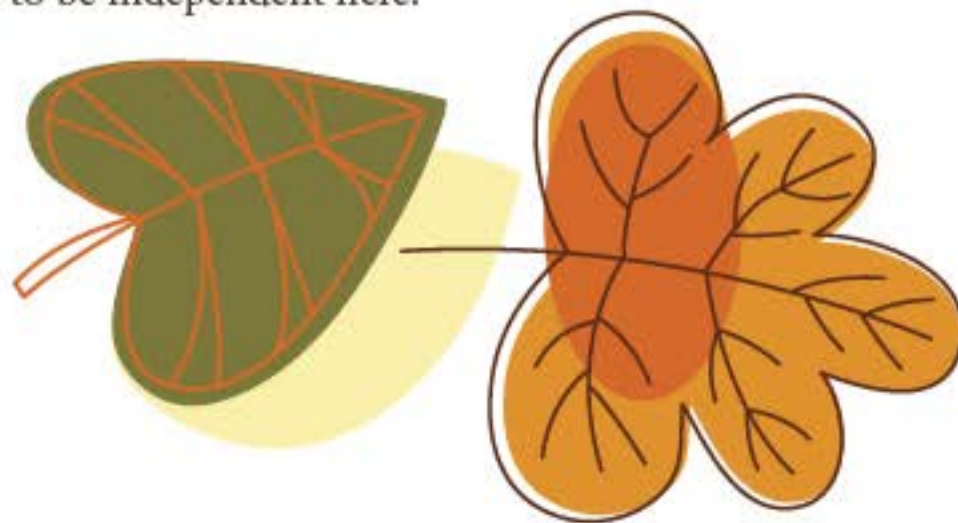
When Bob Hooker’s father passed away at age 65, Bob and his wife, Judy, wanted to find a retirement community for Bob’s mother where she would be well cared for.

His father had been a Christian Reformed minister and the couple had lived in a parsonage. Bob says he and Judy toured more than a dozen retirement communities and they agreed – Porter Hills was the best. When an apartment became available, his mother moved in.

“Mom made great friends and was so happy at Porter Hills,” says Bob. “I am grateful for the great experience she had at Porter Hills Village.” Eventually, Judy’s parents also made Porter Hills their home.

In noticing that there was no covering at the main doors of Porter Hills Village to keep

Judy passed away in 2017, but Bob continues to live at Cook Valley. “My health has been a gift – I am blessed,” says Bob. “I enjoy the connections I have with Porter Hills’ team members and leaders. I am fortunate to be able to do what I want to do and to be independent here.”



ZOE HADLEY REMIEN

Welcoming and Friendly

“I’ve known about Porter Hills from the beginning,” says Zoe Hadley Remien, now a resident of Cook Valley Estates.

“My dad (Harold Hadley) and Don Porter were friends and business partners, and I knew their family since first grade.”

In 1938, Harold Hadley and Don Porter formed the Porter-Hadley Company which manufactured doors, windows, and more. “Mr. Porter and my dad complemented one another,” says Zoe. “Mr. Porter was more of a PR person, he loved to speak, and he was well-known in the community through Westminster Presbyterian Church. My father liked to be behind the scenes and just run the business.”

When Westminster began planning for a retirement community, Don’s wife, Ruth, donated 35 acres of her father’s farm to provide a location for Porter Hills. “It was the first time I had heard of a retirement community,” says Zoe. “The original architect was a good friend of my husband’s.”

Zoe remembers her father was a member of the “Improvement Association” in Grand Rapids – a group of twelve businessmen who met every Monday at the Peninsular Club. “They had all

worked in various charitable positions in the community, in addition to their businesses, and they all enjoyed meeting together. When a member of the group passed away, they would invite someone else to join. Fred Meijer was the new person who joined and sat next to my dad, and they became good friends.”



In 2005, the Cook Valley Wellness Center was named the Meijer-Hadley Wellness Center, to honor these friends and supporters of Porter Hills.

Zoe and her husband put their names on the list to live at Porter Hills but, each time their names came up, they felt they weren’t ready. “We thought about it for a long time,” says Zoe. But after her husband died in 2001, and after living in her house for a year on her own, she decided it was time to make the move. “By that

time, Cook Valley Estates had just opened, and I was interested in it. Sue Thoits, a good friend and neighbor for 35 years, was one of the first residents at Cook Valley. She was so enthusiastic, I thought, ‘that was the place for me!’”

Today, she is very happy with her decision and has lived at Cook Valley Estates for more than 18 years. “It’s a very friendly community,” says Zoe. “Porter Hills also offers the continuum of care when needed. After a hospital stay about a year ago, I spent two weeks at the Porter Hills Health and Rehabilitation Center before returning to my Cook Valley apartment. They cared for me very well and made sure I got the therapy and exercise I needed to regain my strength and return home.”

Zoe adds, “Everyone is friendly, and the management is efficient and does a wonderful job. Cook Valley Estates is a lively place and I feel so welcomed here.”





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