



SHARING OUR STORIES

by Paul Basham, Wiley Christian Retirement Community

Warren Sawyer and Neil Hartman

Warren Sawyer and Neil Hartman were longtime friends before moving into the Medford Leas Retirement Center. Both were conscientious objectors (COs) during World War II and both volunteered to be inoculated with the hepatitis virus to help researchers find a cure for this disease. Both worked in what was then Byberry State Mental Hospital of Philadelphia, both are members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and, independently of each other, they both chose to retire to Medford Leas.

Warren's experience of working at the Byberry psychiatric hospital was featured in the recent documentary "Under One Roof" in which he described "man's inhumanity to man." Warren said when he worked there, four COs from Byberry went to Eleanor Roosevelt requesting her to intercede with the Selective Service System to create a pamphlet with medical articles about the care for mental patients, since no training had been provided. It was granted and "The Attendant," a monthly pamphlet, was produced for persons working in the mental hospitals. After World War II, Neil said that the Church of the Brethren sent milk to Spain and other European countries. One minister suggested that instead of sending milk we should send cows. Neil stated he made seven trips to Europe and Asia on "cattle boats" transporting cows, goats and horses and that part of this program is still operating today in what is known as the "Heifer Project." Also, Warren once went on a cattle boat with 800 horses to Danzig, Poland.

After the war Neil was a teacher for over 30 years. A building on the Moorestown Friends School is named after him. He taught in Japan for two years and he has housed Japanese exchange students in his home. Neil was acquainted with the three men who envisioned and developed Medford Leas before the groundbreaking ceremony in 1970. At first the founders wanted to purchase land in Moorestown, but according to Neil, "the mayor of Moorestown was more interested in horse farms than a retirement center." At the time the mayor of Medford was a Quaker and he knew about a large farm in Medford that was for sale and which the three men purchased. Neil watched the development of Medford Leas from its early beginnings and for him, moving to Medford Leas on his retirement was an easy decision.

For 32 years Warren broadcast a weekly radio program for the visually handicapped persons in the Philadelphia area. He now reads every week to other residents of Medford Leas. In the real estate business he was one of five persons to found the Moorestown Economic Neighborhood Development to renovate or build housing for low to moderate income families. As a realtor, Warren said he helped any minority person get a home anywhere they could afford. For seven years he spent one weekend a month conducting workshops to help reduce violence in prisons. As I visited with Neil Hartman and Warren Sawyer, I could see that the friendship they forged years ago was still enriching their lives together in the Continuing Care Retirement Center of Medford Leas.

Kathy Riley's Origami

Kathy Riley found that her hobby of origami quickly opened new doors of friendship after she became a resident on the Medford Leas Lumberton campus. Origami is making unique designs and models by folding paper. It's a skill that is thousands of years old but currently has been gaining in popularity.

When I was in the lobby of the Medford Leas main campus, I saw examples of origami on display. They were labeled with the names of the persons who created them and when I saw Kathy Riley's name included, I decided to talk with her about her hobby. During my visit with Kathy she put a "folding board" on my lap along with a piece of square paper. Then she demonstrated with a piece of

square paper on her own folding board, asking me to repeat what she did. Fold after fold I followed her instructions and, like a miracle, I was soon holding a model ship in my hands.

Kathy said she has splashed her origami happily all over the Medford Leas campus and that her neighbors are asking her to show them how to do it. She is glad that people are so interested in origami and that it is continuing to open more doors for teaching the art of origami and making new friends. Kathy's hobby has enabled her to make a very smooth transition when she moved to the Lumberton campus of Medford Leas.



Please consider inviting Paul Basham to speak to a group of your residents, to help them celebrate their personal stories. Thanks to Paul Basham, a resident of Wiley Christian Retirement Community, ORANJ is embarking on a new project which we call "Sharing Our Stories."

The meeting with Paul is designed to help your residents come together for fellowship and to become better acquainted with each other. Also, since Paul is an ambassador of ORANJ, his Paul's visit will lead to a special issue of *ORANJ Leaf* with a compilation of participants' stories.

The number of people in your group can be from five to more than 50 and the session can be from an hour to an hour and a half. Within your community there are stories of perseverance and courage in the face of adversity and dramatic change.

Questions? For more information contact Paul Basham 856-983-0618.



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