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Dr. Bhavani Swarna DDS

City breaks ground on new Veterans Memorial

A momentous day of accomplishment and excitement was held on June 16th, 2020, as the Wayne Veterans Memorial Committee held the official groundbreaking ceremony on the south side of Wayne City Hall where a new Wayne Veterans Memorial will be erected.

Wayne Mayor John Rhaesa said, "This memorial will be a focal point long after we're gone. All veterans made it possible for us to be here and there were many who made the ultimate sacrifice. Thanks for all you have done and continue to do."

City Manager and member of the Wayne Veterans Memorial Committee, Lisa Nocerini, shared the long and winding road that led to the Veterans Memorial. She shared how the City was approached by local Veterans who were passionate about the creation of a "true memorial" dedicated to them.

The fundraising for the project started off with generous donations from Ford Motor Company and United Auto Workers Local 900 who raised nearly \$20,000 dollars in seed funding to help get the project on track. Mike Smith, Tom Porter, Bill Johnson, and Lloyd Allen, members of U.A.W. Local 900 presented checks to the City. Lloyd Allen, Jr. a retired member of UAW Local 900, citizen of Wayne, and a proud Veteran was a fervent supporter of the future Wayne Veterans Memorial. Lloyd unfortunately lost his battle with cancer in 2018, but is still an honorary member of the Wayne Veterans Memorial Committee. The City Manager spoke about Lloyd's commitment to the project at the groundbreaking ceremony.

As plans moved forward, the committee focused on fundraising efforts. In 2019, the committee had raised \$10,000 dollars more bringing the total to \$30,000.00 dollars. In 2020, the Wayne Veterans Memorial Committee submitted the project to the Michigan Economic Development Corporation in an attempt to qualify for the Patronicity campaign which would match donations dollar for dollar over a selected period of time. The M.E.D.C. accepted the project and the committee set the goal of \$30,000.00 dollars, which would double to a \$60,000.00 figure if the fundraising campaign was successful.



Community Development Director and Veterans Memorial board member Lori Gouin speaks at the Veterans Memorial groundbreaking. Photo by Natalie Rhaesa

**"This memorial will be a focal point long after we're gone.
All veterans made it possible for us to be here and there were
many who made the ultimate sacrifice.
Thanks for all you have done and continue to do."
Wayne Mayor John Rhaesa**

In February 2020, the Patronicity Campaign went live and the fundraising began at a steady pace. Unfortunately, when the pandemic hit in late March, the donations stopped. The M.E.D.C. Patronicity team provided the committee with an option to extend the fundraiser. The committee decided to extend the campaign another month hoping to meet or exceed the \$30,000.00 dollar goal. In May 2020, the Patronicity campaign, with the help of the Wayne Downtown Development Authority who donated \$10,000.00 dollars and many generous donors from around the country, the committee had exceeded the \$30,000.00 dollar goal and raised \$35,000.00 dollars. The Patronicity campaign matched the \$30,000.00 dollars which brought the total raised to \$60,000.00 dollars. As donations continued to pour in, the total amount raised for the Wayne Veterans Memorial was \$101,000.00 dollars.

In the fall of 2019, United Auto Workers Local 845, contacted the committee and offered to donate the monuments in front of their local to

the City for the Wayne Veterans Memorial Project. The committee gratefully accepted the donation and the monuments have been incorporated into the project. The U.A.W. monuments represent all five branches of the services including; the United States Army, United States Navy, United States Marines, United States Air Force, and the United States Coast Guard. U.A.W. Local 845 also relocated their offices from Plymouth to Wayne earlier this year.

While there is still much work to do, the cement slab is in place, the memorials have been placed, and designated Veterans Parking is on track. The memorial will soon see a new flag pole, lighting and the committee will be discussing plantings in the near future.

Benches for the memorial have been donated by Mayor Pro Tem Tom Porter (Veteran), Ed Queen, Assistant Director of the Wayne Department of Public Works (Veteran), Mike Buiten, Director of the Wayne Building and Engineering Department, Mike Smith, citizen and member of U.A.W. Local 900, Chris Miller, citizen and member of U.A.W. Local 900, Alison Hug, U.A.W. Local 845, Lori Gouin, Wayne Community Development Director, Kathryn Sample, Wayne Finance Director, Lisa Nocerini, City Manager and member of the Wayne Veterans Memorial Com-

mittee. The bench donated by Miller and Nocerini will be in memory of Lloyd Allen.

The committee is planning a ribbon cutting ceremony that will be held in the fall. The committee is still seeking donations for future additions to the memorial including but not limited to signage; honorary plaques or bricks; and for the upkeep and maintenance of the memorial. Donations can be mailed or dropped off at Wayne City Hall located at 3355 South Wayne Road, Wayne, MI 48184. Please write "Wayne Veterans Memorial" in the memo line on checks.

The City of Wayne would like to thank the members of the Wayne Veterans Memorial Committee for their hard work and dedication to this project.

Mayor John Rhaesa, Mayor Pro Tem Tom Porter (Veteran), Ed Queen, Assistant Director of the Wayne Department of Public Works (Veteran), Mike Buiten, Director of the Wayne Building and Engineering Department, Mike Smith, citizen and member of U.A.W. Local 900, Chris Miller, citizen and member of U.A.W. Local 900, Alison Hug, U.A.W. Local 845, Lori Gouin, Wayne Community Development Director, Kathryn Sample, Wayne Finance Director, Lisa Nocerini, City Manager and member of the Wayne Veterans Memorial member.

NEWS BRIEFS

Cornerstone Church, 39390 Michigan Ave, Wayne, will be holding the Cornerstone Cares Drive-Thru event on Saturday, July 11, from 10:00 a.m. until Noon. They will be handing out essential care items including body wash, bar soap, deodorant, paper towels, gallon Ziploc storage bags, non-perishable foods, laundry detergent, household cleaner and dish soap.

Gleaners Community Food Bank is holding free food distributions at Maplewood Community Center, 31735 Maplewood St, Garden City. Upcoming dates are July 22, August 19 and September 16 from 2:30-4:30 p.m. Families and individuals in need of food are encouraged to attend this drive-up distribution which includes 30 pounds of groceries. Items could include milk, fresh fruits, vegetables, lean protein and other shelf-stable items. You will stay in your vehicle; groceries will be placed in your trunk. No appointment is needed. You do not need proof of eligibility or identification to receive food.

Civitan Park has received a makeover thanks to members of the Wayne Parks and Trails Committee, the Wayne Department of Public Works, the Wayne Fire Department and other amazing volunteers. Weeds were removed throughout the basketball courts, dead limbs and branches were removed and mulched, the playscape was cleaned, and weeds, trash and other debris were also removed. All the fencing near the road is slated to be removed and replaced with grant funding. The fence provides an extra barrier from the road.

Westland Wayne Relay for Life has been postponed. Organizers do not want to cancel the event and are currently thinking about a fall date. "Cancer doesn't stop" said Meriem Kadi.

Zeke, Wayne's resident therapy dog who hangs out at the Wayne Police Department, would like to make more friends during the pandemic via Zoom.

He is looking for children who will read to him. If you have a child that lives in Wayne who would like to practice reading skills by reading to Zeke, please email Zeke's Executive Assistant Tammy Gillum at tgillum@cityofwayne.com to set up an appointment.

First Congregational Church of Wayne, 2 Towne Square, has returned to Sunday worship with a Drive-in Service.

Attendees stay in their cars, tune into a radio station and listen to the service. The service starts at 10:30 a.m.



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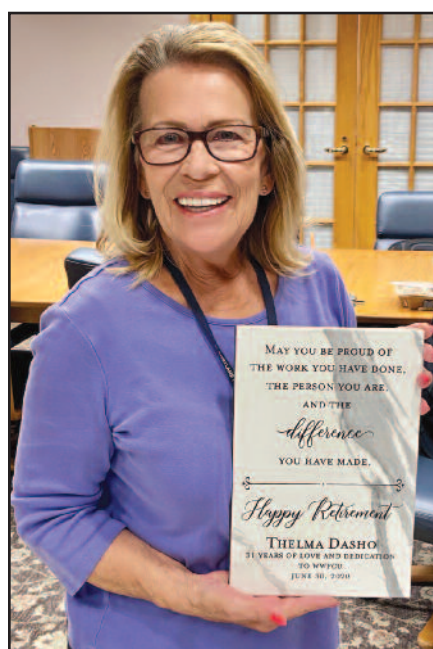
Resident retires after 39 years of serving community

By Carolyn Marnon

Thelma Dasho isn't blue about retiring after 39 years spent at Wayne Westland Federal Credit Union. She's looking forward to the blues. The blues that she'll be gazing upon when she soon moves into her lake-front home on Zukey Lake in Pinckney.

As a junior at St. Mary's High School in Wayne in 1967, Thelma was granted an afterschool co-op position at what was then named Wayne Community Federal Credit Union, located at Sims and Second St. She did light office work before advancing to become a teller. Shortly thereafter, she took on the challenging role of Cash Supervisor. She held that position for approximately five years before she moved into the accounting department where she continued her managerial role.

Like other young mothers at the time, Thelma stepped away from her job in the early 1980s to raise her two youngest daughters. After a few short stints at a couple of other local credit unions, Thelma returned to her banking roots by becoming assis-



Thelma Dasho

tant manager at the credit union, whose name had become Wayne Westland Federal Credit Union in the intervening years.

Within a year of her return, Thelma was offered the role of Chief Executive Officer (CEO). She gra-

"I have always believed in the credit union philosophy of people helping people and that each and every member is a part owner of this credit union. We constantly try to improve our service to our members. By the responses of our member surveys, it is working. They mention the word 'love' a lot."

Thelma Dasho

ciously accepted the challenging position. During her 30-year tenure as CEO, Thelma led her team from being a \$26 million credit union to one that now has \$123 million in assets. What led to this success? "Number one is supporting and believing in my staff," said Thelma. "Then designing our new credit union office on Wayne Road and seeing it come to life."

"Everyone here at WWFCU is highly dedicated to the membership. We encourage member feedback and continue to meet their financial needs...I have always believed in the credit union philosophy of people helping people and that each and

every member is a part owner of this credit union. We constantly try to improve our service to our members. By the responses of our member surveys, it is working. They mention the word 'love' a lot," said Thelma.

After a combined 39 years of dedication to the membership of the credit union, Thelma stepped into the next stage of her life, retirement, at the end of June. After being a Wayne homeowner since 1972, "I purchased a lake home in October 2019 and am currently doing some remodeling to the lake house before I move in. I look forward to the many new adventures of living the lake life."



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Save-A-Life program offers free covid-19 testing

By Carolyn Marnon

The Save-A-Life program provides Wayne County employees and residents over age 10 with COVID-19 testing. There is no out-of-pocket expense involved, and you do not need an appointment.

The Wayne County Public Health Division, in partnership with Garden City Hospital, opened the COVID-19 drive-up diagnostic and antibody testing center June 23. The Save-A-Life program was made possible with CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act funds.

"With CARES Act dollars, Wayne County is making testing widely available and building a key partnership with Garden City Hospital to further flatten the curve," said Wayne County Executive Warren C. Evans.

Wayne County was able to purchase test machines. Garden City Hospital will use the machines to process on-site testing. The hospital will also be able to make arrangements for anyone testing positive for the antibodies to donate plasma.



COO of Wayne County Genelle Allen, Wayne County Executive Warren Evans, Wayne County Chief of Staff Assa Turfe and Garden City Hospital Chairman of the Board Osama Siblani with the new COvitest machines purchased by the Wayne County that are housed at Garden City Hospital. Photo by WLND

This plasma has the potential to save lives of COVID-19 critical care patients.

Not all who have been exposed to COVID-19 have built the antibodies, but some people may have the antibodies due to COVID-19 exposure even without showing symptoms.

The main intent of the testing site is to identify more individuals with the COVID-19 antibodies who could

potentially be eligible to donate plasma, helping those critically impacted by the disease.

According to a press release, "After a positive antibody test, Garden City Hospital will provide necessary documentation for residents interested in donating plasma to the American Red Cross. This administrative step, typically performed for an additional charge, is covered

through the program, making it easier for donations to reach those in need of convalescent blood plasma that effectively fights off the disease."

Since the June 23 launch, an average of 200-250 people per day have come through the drive-thru testing site.

Testing is being done outdoors at Garden City Hospital, 6245 Inkster Rd, Garden City. The drive-thru test, which involves a nasal swab, is being done under the Testing Tent, Monday thru Friday, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. You do not need to show symptoms of COVID-19 to be tested. You do not need an appointment nor do you need to pre-register. You do not need a prescription or doctor's referral. You WILL need to have your ID or driver's license and insurance card (if you have one). If you don't have insurance, the cost will be covered. COVID-19 test results are delivered within 48-72 hours. Results for the antibody test are delivered within 24 hours.

The Save-A-Life program is expected to last until December 2020.



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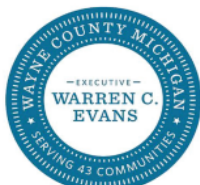
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Resident steps up to help make ventilators during crisis

By Carolyn Marnon

"I've been there 25 years, and I've always built transmissions," said Wayne resident Brian Duka about his job at Ford Motor Company's Livonia Transmission Plant. That all changed when COVID-19 became a pandemic across the nation, sending thousands to hospitals, struggling to breathe. Stay-at-Home orders were executed and businesses closed down, sending employees home for an unknown length of time.

Personal Protective Equipment inventories were low, hospitals were understaffed with front-line health-care workers and those who did work, were overworked while still trying to protect themselves from the virus. Ventilators to help patients with the worst cases of COVID-19 were in short supply. Ford Motor Company saw a need and knew they could help. They would make ventilators.

"We got laid off because of COVID, and during the layoff, a good friend of mine I worked with at the plant died from COVID," said Brian. When Ford asked for volunteers to go off of unemployment to make ventilators, Brian stepped up. While everyone else stayed home and got paid, Brian left the safety of his home to travel to Ford's Rawsonville Plant in Ypsilanti where he was one of 500 paid volunteer UAW-represented employees that staffed the round-the-clock operation during one of three shifts.

According to Brian, Ford sent representatives to Melbourne, Florida, where Airon Corporation produces fully-pneumatic ventilators. No batteries or electrical power are needed; they operate on air pressure. He says it takes two people one day to make an A-E ventilator at Airon. Ford was able to reconfigure the production process whereby the volunteers, whether hourly or salary, "came together as one" to make 200 ventilators per day. "It was really neat the way they did it," Brian raved.

Brian likens his role to a new version of Rosie the Riveter. "Each generation has to do their part, and I felt this was my part for my generation. I felt honored to go do that. Everybody there had a different story.



Brian Duka recounts his Rosie the Riveter moment building ventilators for the war on COVID-19.

Everyone went for someone they knew." The production line was set up so any employee could do any job. Brian says there were short videos on a display next to each workstation that showed the employee at that station exactly what to do.

Project Apollo, the code-name given to the partnership between Ford, GE's healthcare unit and 3M to produce the necessary ventilators, was, according to Reuters.com, so named for "the Apollo 13 launch in 1970 when a lunar landing was aborted after an oxygen tank failed two days into the mission, forcing the astronauts to improvise a fix." After an April start, Ford expected to make 50,000 ventilators in the first 100 days and then 30,000 a month, as needed.

After working six weeks in Rawsonville where his job was to troubleshoot any ventilators that were not working properly, Brian was returned to his regular job at the Livonia plant. He says the majority of the people now working to build the ventilators are people that have been hired off the street so the Ford employees could get back to work.

"It was a great collaborative effort by everybody," Brian said. "It was an honor every day to be a part of that."

Peaceful protest marches through Wayne

By Carolyn Marnon

"Hands up!" yelled the lady with the bullhorn.

"Don't shoot!" came the reply from the dozens of walkers in her immediate vicinity.

This was the scene several weeks ago as the Black Lives Matter Prayer Walk meandered its way along the streets from Burning Bush International Ministries on Annapolis Rd in Westland to Attwood Park in Wayne, drawing hundreds of people along with them. Whether they came out of their houses to see what was happening in their neighborhood, riding their bicycles down the street, or already out for a summer evening walk, people joined their Black neighbors in this peaceful protest proclaiming that Black Lives Matter.

"What do we want?" "Justice!" "When do we want it?" "Now!"

"Hey hey, ho ho. These racist cops have got to go."

"Some young people had been approaching the Bishop saying they wanted their voices to be heard," said Darcel Brown, a member of Burning Bush. Not wanting the



Protesters display their signs before the march into Wayne. Photo by Ryan Wright

church to be silent amongst all the protests and upheaval ignited by the most recent killing of George Floyd, a Black man in Minneapolis, Minnesota who died after a police officer

kneelt on his throat for over eight minutes while George struggled to tell him he couldn't breathe, Bishop Shelby decided to have a Prayer Walk for peace and equality "to be

sure the church wasn't silent on the issue."

Darcel was one of the members instrumental in organizing the Prayer Walk. Over 300 people were invited, including elected officials. Everyone who was invited was supportive of the event, said Darcel, even if they were not able to attend because of a scheduling conflict.

"My skin is not a threat!"

"The inspiration (for the prayer walk) is centered around the Black Lives movement especially as it relates to what happened to George Floyd," said Bishop Shelby. "Youth and millennials were getting involved in protesting. They were encouraged to speak their voice. This was an opportunity to protest in what I feel is the right way—a peaceful protest. As Christians, we can protest and speak aloud about injustice but still let our light shine as Christians."

The sign reads "There Comes a Time When Silence is Betrayal."

"We would have been happy with 200 (people attending) when it was

See **March**, page 9

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MARCH, Continued from page 8

planned. After all the pieces were put together, we had nearly 1500 people in the march,” said Bishop Shelby. He said the sanctuary at Burning Bush seats 1300 people. “I know what 1200-1300 looks like from the sanctuary. “The march was so long at one time, it was all the way down Van Born and Merriman.”

Darcel pauses for a moment. “I was one of the organizers because it took a whole team to put this together. One of the most gratifying moments was just seeing all of the people who came out to support us who were of different ethnic backgrounds and color--Black, White, Arab, elected officials, promoting peace and equality peacefully.”

What did Bishop Shelby think was the most gratifying moment of the event? He replied “Just the outpouring of support. To have the mayors of all four cities, that is Westland, Romulus, Inkster and Wayne. To have them come march with us. To have the four police chiefs. To have the support of the Wayne County police department. To have politicians....It was a collective effort of overall support.”

The Black Lives Matter Prayer Walk was led by two people carrying a banner with photos of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, a 26-year old African American who was shot by police in Louisville in March. The banner read “In Defense of Black Lives.” The parade of peaceful protesters included signs that read “Color is not a Crime,” “Why is Ending Racism a Debate?” “Racism is the Real Pandemic,” “My Weapon is Prayer,” and perhaps the most



The peaceful prayer walk with community leaders and protesters on their way to Attwood Park in Wayne. Photo by Ryan Wright

poignant sign “It Could’ve Been Me... My Dad...Your Son...You.”

All ages participated in the walk. Although the walkers were predominately Black, there were other races mixed in. Police from Wayne, Westland, Inkster, Romulus and Detroit walked in solidarity with the community. Westland Police Chief Jeff Jedrusik spoke to the crowd assembled for the walk.

“Community partnership is how we are going to move forward and how we are going to have to focus on getting beyond all of this.” He said that just like in any profession, bad people find a way to infiltrate a system and that it’s the police chief’s job to get rid of those people. “Nobody dislikes a bad policeman more than the good ones do. They tarnish our reputation, and they ruin our community’s trust.” Chief Jedrusik closed his comments by saying that his goal and that of law enforcement

throughout the Wayne County area is to be a model for the nation to follow in policing.

Wayne Police Chief Ryan Strong told the gathering at Attwood Park, “I’ve been in law enforcement for 21 years. It’s my life’s work. I love the job. I have no words for how painful that was to see that (referring to the George Floyd video.) I just want everyone here to know that the type of hatred and violence that we saw from those former officers now incarcerated does not represent the policies, practices or spirit of the Wayne police department. “We need leadership in the churches, leadership in the community. We need leadership in law enforcement. We need leadership in all levels of government, local, state and federal. I am here to give you my word that I’m going to do my part as police chief of the Wayne police department. I just hope that whenever my time comes” Chief

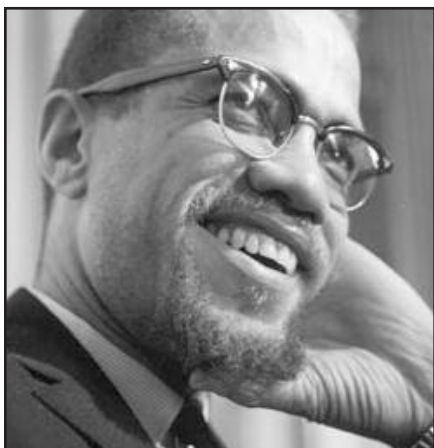
Strong asserted, “we don’t need a Black Lives Matter movement.”

“We need to change mentalities,” stressed Bishop Shelby, not just policies. “The way that people see people like you and I, that has to be changed,” he told the gathered crowd.

Wayne Mayor John Rhaesa shared a story of his Black friend who had won a boxing championship in New York City. They were all trying to get to his victory party. No cab would stop for the group. The Black people in the group stepped away while Mayor Rhaesa was able to get a cab to stop. The friends all rushed into the cab and they went on to the party. Racism exists.

Mayor Rhaesa ended his remarks with a reference to the Mandisa song with lyrics of We all bleed the same. “We have to love each other! ...Together, we can be the change.”

Did you know Malcolm X had ties to Wayne?



Malcolm (Little) X

In August 1952 Malcolm Little was released from prison in Massachusetts after serving 5 years. He was put on parole, limiting where he could travel and having a condition that he be employed. Little moved to Inkster to live with his older brother Wilfred and sister-in-law Ruth. In January 1953 Malcolm began working at the Wayne Ford Assembly plant as a final assembler putting car bodies on the frame. The plant was recovering from a worker strike at the time and was very understaffed. Due to the strenuous work and lack of help on the line he quit after 1

week. Almost immediately he got a job at the Gar Wood plant in Wayne, which made garbage trucks. At Gar Wood many of the jobs for blacks were dirty and dangerous, and Malcolm was hired to follow behind welders and grind their welds. He considered it a miserable, monotonous job and felt caged. In February 1953 the Detroit FBI came to Gar Wood and pulled Malcolm off the line, still wearing his overalls and goggles.

They informed him that he had not registered for the draft and that he needed to do so at once. Feigning

ignorance he did so, but as a conscientious objector he ensured that he would be rejected. The FBI would monitor him and his activities for the rest of his life. At both jobs Malcolm was said to be a pioneer in turning to the east and kneeling for prayers while working on an assembly line.

In May 1953 his parole was completed and he was free to travel again. His temple in Detroit promoted him to Assistant Minister and so he quit his blue collar job at Gar Wood. He continued to live in Inkster until 1964.

Governor appoints interim judge to district court

Governor Gretchen Whitmer appointed Breeda K. O'Leary to the 29th District Court of the City of Wayne and Brian C. Hartwell to the 43rd District Court of the City of Hazel Park.

"Breeda and Brian are well-respected within the legal community and will be bringing their extensive experiences to the bench," Whitmer said. "I'm confident that they will both uphold a standard of excellence while performing their duties for the citizens of Michigan in the 29th and 43rd districts."

Breeda K. O'Leary currently serves as an attorney with Fausone Bohn, LLP. In her practice, she has served as a city attorney for the City of Wayne, assistant city attorney for the City of Westland, and as a prosecutor in the 29th and 18th District Courts. O'Leary's practice also includes civil matters and probate and estate planning. During her time as an attorney, O'Leary has provided pro-bono assistance to local senior citizens, participated in training for the 29th District Court's Regional Be-



Judge O'Leary

havioral Mental Health Court Program and participated in the 18th District Court Sobriety Court Program.

O'Leary is an advisory board

member of the Families Against Narcotics (FAN) Northwest Wayne Chapter, a member of the Wayne 100 Club, vice president of Wayne Main Street, and a member of the Women Lawyers Association of Michigan. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Michigan State University's James Madison College and a Juris Doctor degree from Thomas M. Cooley Law School. Breeda lives in Wayne with her husband Jason and their two daughters.

"I am humbled by the opportunity to serve the citizens in my hometown," O'Leary said. "A district court judge has a unique opportunity to have a meaningful impact on the community. As judge of the 29th District Court, I will ensure that all individuals are heard and treated with respect."

This appointment was made to fill a partial term, which expires at twelve o'clock noon on January 1, 2021, after Judge Laura R. Mack stepped down effective March 1, 2020. O'Leary is running in this upcoming election in order to fulfill the

remainder of Mack's term expiring January 1, 2025.

"The 29th District Court is excited to have Judge O'Leary as our new Chief Judge," said Linda Gable, Court Administrator. "With her extensive experience in nearly all aspects of district court practice, we anticipate that she will seamlessly transition into her new role."

In a statement from retired Wayne Judge Laura Mack, she wrote "Judge O'Leary has the intelligence, energy and enthusiasm to ably serve this community; and she is committed to continuing and expanding the outreach programs I started, including juvenile jurisdiction, the Regional Behavioral Treatment Court, the Truancy Diversion Court, the Teen Court at Wayne Memorial High School, and the eviction diversion program. I believe the citizens of Wayne are lucky to have her as their district judge; and if the court is consolidated at some point, I think Judge O'Leary will honorably represent Wayne in the consolidated jurisdiction."

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Couple celebrates 50th anniversary

By Carolyn Marnon

Patrick Haner and Sandra Clary were just 17 years old when they married at the end of their junior year of high school, June 22, 1970. The couple first met when they were in 7th grade at Adams Junior High School. Sandra had a crush on Patrick. When they approached 9th grade, Patrick went on to John Glenn High School while Sandra went to Wayne Memorial. A mutual friend of theirs arranged a meeting between them during their junior year and according to Sandra, "It was love at first sight!"

Patrick's draft number was low, so the couple were encouraged to get married early. They had been planning to wait until after graduation. The parents said they would pay for the wedding if they did it in June. They went to Detroit with their mothers to get the marriage license. The clerk told them they couldn't get married, "unless you have to get married." One of the mother's replied, "Well of course they have to get married. We have guests coming from out of state!" Sandra chuckles at the



Sandra and Patrick Haner

memory. They didn't get the license that day. Even with parental consent, the groom had to be 18.

After a call to the Detroit Free Press inquiring about the closest place a person younger than 18 could get married with parental consent, they were told Pennsylvania. They went to Pennsylvania, got their blood tests and a license and then

were officially wed on June 22, 1970 in Pennsylvania by a Justice of the Peace. They had the originally planned wedding the following Saturday, June 27, where the pastor "confirmed" their wedding at First United Methodist Church in Wayne. Sandra made her bridal gown and bridesmaids dresses in home economics class.

After getting married, they moved into a tiny apartment in Wayne and finished high school. They each graduated with honors on the same day. Four years later, they had their first child, daughter Michelle (Patrick) Nedglek and then Jackie (Steve) Kosier. They have four grandchildren: Christopher, Mara, Kinsley and Wyatt. Michelle and Jackie both graduated from Wayne Memorial and went on to earn their Master Degrees in Education. "We have so much to be proud of and feel truly blessed," Sandra shared.

In the last 50 years, the couple had never been apart for more than two weeks until recently. Sandra's mother needed 24 hour care at her apartment in Wayne for four months

which luckily ended right before Patrick and Sandra's golden wedding anniversary.

Patrick and Sandra celebrated their 50th anniversary with cake and ice cream in the company of their daughters and grandchildren. They cherish the landmark anniversary. Sandra's parents, Lloyd and Elsie Clary, made it just 7 months short of their 50th while Patrick's parents, Floyd and Ethel Haner, made it 11 months short of their 50th. Sandra feels "to get married at 17, and be able to celebrate 50 years, is quite an accomplishment."

They were planning a once-in-a-lifetime cruise to Alaska because they didn't really have a honeymoon back when they were 17. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, plans changed. They purchased a pair of TerraTrikes, which are 3-wheel bikes (2 wheels in front, 1 in back) that allow you to sit back in a reclining position. They've been out riding every morning for the last three weeks.

A new golden chapter to their lives has begun.

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