

EAGLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Apr 2021



Please call EHS if you are available to help spruce up the museum grounds. Many hands make light work! We would appreciate your help!



Please check your newsletter label for the year "2021" to see whether you have renewed your membership.

If you have any questions, please contact Elaine Ledrowski at 262-594-3301 or elaine@ledrowski.com.

Donations were made to the Memorial Fund
in memory of
Rob Hawes and Donald Ledrowski.



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WELCOME NEW MEMBER:

Rosemarie Booth

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS:

Family \$15

Viola Berg

Richard & Gretchen Jones

Robert & Janet McCue

Robert & Charlotte Miller

Diane & Tom Poehnelt

Crystal & David Shamsi

Sustaining \$25

Ellie & Jeff Hawes

Sponsor \$50

Maria Hinnens

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CASH DONATIONS:

Janet Evans \$40

Eagle Lioness Club \$50

Dorothy Bovee Clark \$100

The museum remains closed to the public at this time. Please continue to follow us on Facebook and/or check our website for updates and stay well and safe, friends!



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EHS Museum

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CLOSED

Check our website for updates.

Website:

curator@eaglehistorical.com
society.org

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Eagle Historical Society

The Elmer Kilian Story *by Art and Carrie Peavy*

A long time ago, and on a dairy farm not too far away, begins the interesting life story of Elmer Harold Kilian. Elmer, or “Buddy”, as he was called by his family until his late 20s, was the oldest of 12 siblings and born just after the Great Depression on March 15, 1932 in the Town of Waterloo in Jefferson County. Saving, conservatism and frugality were emphasized as well as a strong work ethic. Money was not plentiful, but because he grew up on a farm, the family always had food. Buddy attended parochial Catholic schools and would go on to graduate 3rd in his class from Waterloo High School.



Korea, October 1951

Elmer joined the US Marine Corps. and served his country for a total of six years. He worked hookups by FM radio at the battalion to the division headquarters as an FM Radio Technician in the Communications Department and recalls watching with binoculars the signing of the 1953 Armistice Agreement that paused the Korean War in Panmunjom.



Seoul, Korea

Returning home to civilian life also meant looking for gainful employment. As a child, Elmer had wanted to become a dairy farmer, but after a while, he came to believe that you worked at what became available to you since “You cannot become a CEO of a company unless you marry the daughter of a VIP.” He was always good in math and took bookkeeping courses. While living in Spring Green, Elmer applied for a government inspector position for the State of Wisconsin and scored No. 1 out of 300 applicants tested. He had to wait for the third opening, but his diligence paid off, and he accepted a job covering the Janesville, Kenosha, and Milwaukee areas.

By now, he was married to his wife Carol, had three young children and one on the way. Elmer found a place to rent in Waterford, WI, and stayed for four years. His nickname of “Buddy” had been changed to “Red”, which has stuck with him over the years by both sides of the family and even coworkers. Interest rates for mortgages were high at this time, and he needed to live within a required radius of the area in which he worked as the growing family yearned for a home of their own. They considered many homes before seeing a sign advertising this home on Main Street in Eagle in 1967. The family toured and loved the home and ended up securing a mortgage with an acceptable interest rate to finance the purchase.

Red traveled around the country for his job and sometimes spoke at meetings. His aptitude for numbers incited him to find time to take some courses in real estate and accounting from WCTI. He went on to take federal and state courses every year in addition to working at his day job. Over a 30-35 span of years, he built up an income tax business that included at one point 100-140 clients and continued to complete and file taxes for his clients even after they moved away from Eagle.

Elmer did not use computers; all tax forms, even now, are completed by him on hard paper, and he recalls that tax season used to begin about the second week of January but has gradually evolved over time to begin February 1. Red formally retired in 1998 at age 70 and proudly reported that he was only off work three days during the whole period of time while working a part-time job plus full-time for six years.

Retirement for Elmer did not mean sitting around waiting for his grass to grow. He remained an active member at St. Theresa Catholic Church where he had served as an usher, trustee, and commentator. He had also headed up the Meat Department for the annual Turkey Dinner and supervised the kitchen for 40 years. On one occasion after the tables had been set up for the dinner Ken Mealy (Eagle's local undertaker) jokingly asked Elmer's permission to leave his calling cards at each table in case his services would be needed after eating Elmer's cooking. This story still draws a smile and a chuckle from him. EHS could always count on six jars of his homemade raspberry jam for its bake sales. He and Carol also donated some for church events. We also learned of yet another hobby; he was a vintner. Elaine Ledrowski remembers receiving a homemade glass of wine sent by messenger just before the Kettle Moraine Days Parade along with a bottle for EHS members to share. She would politely thank, yet chastise, Elmer that it was much too early in the day to drink.

Other community activities include serving on the School Board back when it only consisted of three members. His intention was only to stay on for a couple of terms, but he ended up staying for 30 years in order to have his name on each of his children's high school diplomas when one of his kids asked him to do so. He initiated the pizza fundraiser as well as the brat stand at Kettle Moraine Days. He counseled the Boy Scouts and helped them to get their badges and medals. Elmer was instrumental in organizing Wisconsin's Farm Bureau Youth Program in Dane, Dodge and Jefferson Counties. This program focused on nurturing the interests in the farming profession of young people in their late teens to under 30 years of age. Elmer was also one of the original Men's Eagle Horseshoe League members and played for 40 years.

He prides himself on taking Mr. Carl Kalb's place as the neighborhood watchdog and reports any suspicious characters or events to the authorities. The neighborhood reciprocates by watching out for him as well. He recalls being scolded by Mrs. Ledrowski once when she spotted him up on his roof. She asked him just what he thought he was doing up there, and he mischievously answered, "The work isn't going to get done by itself" and invited her husband, Don, to come on up to help him.

Elmer used to go fishing but hasn't gone since he retired. He recalls his first experience boat fishing at great duration in Canada with an Oscar Meyer Meat Packing party of 20. The group caught mostly walleye and "ate them until they stuck out of their ears." They could only bring two of each type of fish back across the border at that time, and he brought back lake trout because the others didn't want them. His first hunting trip for elk at age



May of 2003

75 found him tent camping outside of Denver, Colorado, with his son and two other men. From July to the end of September, he pedaled 2-3 times a day on his stationery bike to build up his leg muscles. Not only did his faithful conditioning routine pay off, but his military training had made him a good shot and hence the only successful one of the group taking a bull elk with a brow tine measuring over four inches long.

Elmer did somehow find time in his busy life to vacation. He took two cruises—one to Mexico and one to Aruba--and also toured Germany. Likely his most memorable excursion was during one of his two trips to Ireland and England. A favorite meal included “bangers” while there. It was interesting to learn that these sausages were named during WWI when they were made of such a high amount of water (due to meat shortages) that they were likely to pop when cooked. This is where he breaks off to share the story of how he “took a lady over there and left her there.” The party Elmer was traveling with had been visiting various sites by bus, and their tour guide kept complaining that one of the suitcases was woefully heavy each time he loaded and unloaded this particular piece of luggage. At the appropriate time, it was disclosed to him that that was because Margaret (a 300-pound, lovely peach of a woman) was inside of it. You see, a good friend of Elmer’s had had a lifelong desire to visit Ireland. When her life ended short of achieving that goal, Elmer became part of a well-orchestrated plan. Margaret had been cremated and traveling with the group inside of the suitcase until they reached their destination. At the Cliffs of Moor her ashes were spread during a respectful ceremony as Amazing Grace was played on a harmonica thus fulfilling Margaret’s dream and honoring her memory.

As we sat in what was previously the Eagle Hospital’s waiting room, Elmer pointed out the exam room off to the right and explained that surgeries were performed in a room upstairs. Babies were delivered in another room upstairs; mom and baby were moved to a home three houses west of the current EHS for about 10 days. (See article entitled, “Life in a Former Hospital” in the July 2006 edition of the EHS Newsletter for more information on the home.) It really didn’t take a far stretch of the imagination in that respect to envision a bygone era of a much simpler time when patients sought and received care and attention in this building. Elmer with his wife, Carol, and their four children did a lot of living in this remodeled hospital over the last 50 plus years. Elmer holds in his heart many happy memories of parties marking



70th Birthday, 2002

birthdays, holidays and other happy occasions in this home on Main Street. He also fondly remembers when his children lovingly arranged for a beautiful 50th wedding anniversary celebration at the Clausen Barn at Old World Wisconsin honoring the very full lives they had lived. The thought occurred to us as we listened to him reminisce that perhaps he has lived the lives of two people. Thanks for sharing your story with us, Elmer.

All photos for this article were provided by Elmer Kilian.



Halloween 2002

C. B. Banister arrived in 1866 and attended to patients in the Eagle area through the late 1880s. The house that would later become the Eagle Hospital at 224 Main Street was built during this time. J.J. Fitzgerald moved into the building in 1895 and married Theresa Lawless in June of 1897. A daughter, Katharine, was born to them on Dec. 7, 1898 and lived only nine days; Theresa died in April of 1901. Even though there was no other doctor in the Eagle area, patients were slow to realize the merits of the young doctor, and just when he was about to give up hope of doctoring here, he came up with an idea. When he was sure residents were out doing their morning shopping, he hitched up his team of horses and drove through the streets of Eagle at breakneck speed. Word quickly spread that the new doctor was answering emergency calls, and before long his practice was established.

"He has not only built up an exceedingly fine practice but is held in high esteem by the community with which he has become identified."

Wisconsin Free Press in Feb., 1904

He often compounded his own remedies for patients and, therefore, was his own middleman. When cash was in short supply, a type of bartering system was used for payment of services. Sometimes this came in the form of firewood for their wood burning furnace or chickens for their dinner table.

Described as a friendly, witty man, "Dr. Fitz" took a special interest in the young people of the Village by inviting them to use the tennis court on his lawn or the swimming beach on his Eagle Lake property.



Bill Thiele's mother with infant in front of Eagle Hospital. Date unknown.

He also supplied Eagle baseball teams with bats and balls and held musicals in his home sharing his fine tenor voice.

In 1914, the Eagle Hospital was established on the second floor to accommodate several patients as well as a fully equipped operating room. The \$125 fee for delivering babies included a 10-day confinement.

One of his team of nurses, Hannah Connell, became his second wife in the fall of 1929.

Francis Heintz-Taylor was the last baby born in this hospital on Nov. 4, 1932, the same week that FDR became our 32nd president. The coming of automobiles brought many out-of-pocket shoulder injuries due to the hand cranking of the engines. Cars replaced horses and carriages, enabling patients to travel more quickly to the big city (Waukesha) for their medical needs. A shortage of nurses arose, and Eagle Hospital closed its doors in 1932.

Dr. Fred M. Schmidt joined the practice in 1912. One of many accomplishments he brought with him was the gold medal he had earned as the valedictorian of his graduating class at St. Vincent de Paul School in Chicago. In 1913, he married Laura Borisch and the couple had two sons, Frederick and Thomas. Thomas was killed in an airplane crash overseas during active service in the Naval Air Corps. Frederick lived a long life, and he and his offspring proudly carried on his father's commitment to the Boy Scouts. Dr. Schmidt served Eagle residents for 35 years and died in June of 1946, age 58, after a short illness. While self described as "a fishing fool", he stood ever ready to lend a helping hand when and wherever needed, often postponing vacations.

By 1951, Dr. Fitz had attended the birth of almost every resident of Eagle. In the latter part of his career, he saw his patients at Waukesha Memorial Hospital where they were encouraged to just stop in or call any time. He died in Dec. of 1952, age 82, after having served Eagle residents for 57 years and thus ending an era of the typical small town doctor.

Both Dr. Schmidt and Dr. Fitz served many years on the School Board and actively supported many other civic and community organizations. Dr. Fitzgerald was also a former president of the Eagle Lake Assn. What a rich legacy of care and commitment to Eagle Hospital's history they left behind.

On a Friday afternoon at the Masonic Hall, Eagle, the immunization for protection against small-pox and diphtheria was administered by Dr. J. J. Fitzgerald and Dr. F. W. Schmidt, of Eagle.

*Waukesha Freeman
Apr. 21, 1944*

Source: EHS archives

While reading your Oct. newsletter on page 8, it brought back memories of WSA on station WHA. I attended the one-room school Rural leader in the Town of Cornira in Dodge County. WHA was used as part of our curriculum. Professor Gordon was one of my favorite classes. Miss Breit, our teacher at the time, would follow along & draw notes & scales on the blackboard as Professor Gordon talked & sang. I also remember the 'Let's Draw' class. One class in particular, I remember when I got paired up with the teacher, Mr. Kohler, at the time, & we had to draw each others portraits. I didn't care much for Mr. Kohler & I wasn't very complimentary on my drawing. Luckily, I don't remember the grade I received. I'm not sure how most of the art classes progressed without visual aids.

I recently read that in the 1937 era the radio programs were used & very beneficial for confined children due to the polio epidemic. How time, in a way, repeats itself.

I still enjoy WPR with its many interesting & educational programs.

Donna Fanshaw

EHS Member

Ledrowski, Donald J.*Dec 19, 1932—Mar. 23, 2021*

Donald J. Ledrowski, 88, of Eagle, WI passed away on Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at his home with his loving family by his side.

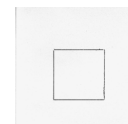
Don was born on Dec. 19, 1932 in Milwaukee, WI the son of Stanley and Clara (Fischer) Ledvorowski. He grew up on the south side of Milwaukee and after graduating from Dom Bosco High School, he faithfully served his country in the US Army as a member of Company C in the Eighty-Second Reconnaissance Battalion, Second Armored Division stationed in Baumholder, Germany. After an honorable discharge, Don returned to Milwaukee and attended Spencerian Business College of Milwaukee graduating with a bachelor's degree in business. On July 18, 1959, Don married Elaine Satre at St. Lawrence Catholic Church in Milwaukee. God

blessed Don and Elaine's union with three loving children, David, Anne and Alan. Don had a gift with numbers and excelled in the accounting field. He worked as a Controller for Bagley Produce for the majority of his career, retiring in 1994. He was also in charge of the finances and numbers for a few different entities during his life. Don sat on the St. Theresa Parish Council and served as a Trustee in addition to serving as a Eucharistic Minister. Don was a board member and the financial officer for the Eagle Historical Society for many years. He greatly enjoyed serving his community and preserving the local history of Eagle, and was proud of the work he and his wife did with the historical society. Don and Elaine managed the Eagle Community Food Pantry for many years and were also involved with Meals on Wheels for a number of years and he enjoyed serving others in that way as well. Above Don's work and service to his community was his love and dedication to his family. He was a devoted husband to Elaine and put his children and grandchildren first in every situation. Whether it was coaching a soccer team, attending a track meet or concert, or even dressing in costume for an event, he loved and supported his wife and family in all of their pursuits and was willing to try pretty much anything for them. Don had many interests throughout his life and some highlights include: singing, touring and recording with his family and friends in a Gospel music group called Pilgrim People, working in the district offices at Kettle Moraine High School after his retirement from Bagley Produce, participating in the Honor Flight in 2016, and playing Sheephead once a month with a group of his grade school friends for over 60 years. For leisure, he enjoyed jigsaw puzzles, reading, working in his yard and he was an avid bowler in his younger years. Don and Elaine loved traveling in their retirement in addition to an occasional trip to "Visit the Governor" aka stop at a Casino for a small donation. Don was well known in the family for getting creative with his meatloaf recipes and was always happy to share a drink and a smile with friends and family. Donald J. Ledrowski was a good and kind man. He lived his faith by serving others, loving and supporting his family, and he will be greatly missed and forever remembered by those he leaves behind.

He is survived by: his loving wife of 61 years, Elaine Ledrowski of Eagle, WI; his three children, David (Julie) Ledrowski of Raleigh, NC, Anne (Mark) Jung of Eagle, WI, and Alan(Scarlet) Ledrowski of Sun Prairie, WI; his dear grandchildren, Jessica, Naomi, Daniel, Reid, and Cole; and his canine companion, Stanley. Don is also survived by a number of nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

Memorials in Donald's honor may be made to Eagle Historical Society or to St. Theresa Parish's Together We Build Fund. The family expressed its heartfelt thanks to the staff of the Greenwald Cancer Center (especially Dr. Raza) for the loving care provided to Don. Due to the public health crisis, there was no visitation. A private service for Don was held at St. Theresa Catholic Church on Wed., March 31, 2021 at 11 am for the immediate family. Gibson Family Funeral Homes of Eagle & Palmyra, WI served the family; online condolences can be placed at gibsonfuneral.com.

Eagle Historical Society, Inc.
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Eagle Lines Up Girls for Annual Social

Waukesha Daily Freeman
August 15, 1952

Sally (Whettam) McKenzie was about to enter her Senior year of high school when she was approached by a gentleman outside of the lumber company one summer afternoon. He asked her if she owned a formal gown and could find some friends who would be willing to pose for a picture. She called Pat (Reed) Hawes and they rounded up these girls for the photo op. Sally and her friends were not the actual Dime-A-Dance Girls at the Eagle social; in fact, she doesn't remember the event ever materializing!

A three-piece band was set up for the dance. Other events were a horse pulling contest, kiddie parade and talent show as well as a free presentation of the Ward 4-H club play "Mother Walks Out" directed by Mrs. Eleanor Crawley.

Funds raised were to be used to defray the expenses of the new clubhouse members of the Eagle American Legion were building.



Can you find Pat Hawes?