

## Remembering Wesson

The outpouring of tributes to Sheldon Wesson in the AAPA, NAPA, and Fossils reminds us of what a true giant he was in the world of amateur journalism.

His was a vivid personality, combining wit and enthusiasm. After spending a short time with him in a print shop, I quickly began to learn there was a *right* way to do things. He was generous in sharing his time, wisdom, experience, and a-jay memories.

We each have our own way of remembering Wes. Mine was to create a Web page with several of his essays. Pam liked the idea: "Dad would be tickled. Pixels instead of ashes, scattered into virtual reality, or some other half-baked metaphor."

Examples of how he communicated using humor include "Triumphal Entry" and "At Least They Are Round," both of which describe printing in Japan when the family moved there in the early 1950s. Wes was a master printer, and he shared that knowledge in "Selecting Body Type Styles" and "Color It!" He succinctly conveyed opinions about amateur journalism in "Viewpoint On Amateur Journalism" and "Sharing via the Bundle."

Visit <http://members.aol.com/aapa96/wesson/> or write to me for a copy of any of the essays.



## Colophon

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# *The Tribby Tribune*

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*Last summer, my parents celebrated their golden anniversary with a family gathering. My three sisters and I had several surprises for them, including a series of essays about family life. My topic:*

## Careers

Dave "Gene" Tribby and Ruth Mennen were both born to farming families in west-central Indiana. Their childhood jobs consisted of working in the garden, tending animals, collecting eggs, milking cows, working in the fields to bring in the crops (mainly corn and beans), and other farming chores. Gene earned extra money by running a trap line and selling the pelts. Ruth had extra responsibilities preparing the meals in the family of eight. There was always plenty of hard work but slim financial rewards during the 1930s. Both took away from their childhood years a love for growing things and a respect for people who make their living in agriculture, but no desire to make farming their life's work.

After Gene graduated from New Richmond High School in 1939, he split his time between the family farm (spring and summer) and working for his Uncle Stanley at Huggins Auto Parts in St. Petersburg, Florida — a job that took advantage of his ability to work with cars. This career was interrupted by World War II. He enlisted with the Army Air Force in June 1942, was called to active duty that December, and served in China as a fighter pilot from March 1944 to June 1945.

When Ruth graduated in 1941, she went on to Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio. She earned a BS degree in Business (with a minor in Physical Education and Home Economics) four years later, and taught physical education at Attica High School, not far from her parents in Indiana.

When Gene returned from the service in 1946, he convinced Ruth to give up teaching, become his bride, and move to the Sunshine State. Gene took on greater responsibilities managing his uncle's business, and Ruth found plenty to keep her busy with a growing family: four children born over 12 years.

Coincidental events in the 1950s led to a career turn. When the family TV needed to be fixed, they were amazed at the cost. Gene understood radios, and easily extended his skills to handle TVs. Tribby TV Repair began as troubleshooting for friends, relatives, and neighbors, but grew as his customers told their friends about his service.

Ruth found her growing family led to involvement in a number of activities at church and school. Her education background and love of children made her a natural for Sunday School teaching and the local PTA. She was a Cub Scout leader for awhile, and spent many years as a 4-H leader. She saw her primary financial contribution to the family as stretching each penny as far as it would go.

After Stanley sold Huggins and retired from the auto parts business, Gene interviewed with Sperry-Rand Corp. at their new microwave division. He was hired as a technician in September 1958 but kept the TV repair business going as a weekend business. Dave (as he was called at Sperry) worked his way up through the technician ranks, and was promoted to Engineering in June 1963. He received a patent for a Tunable Y-Junction Circulator, and was coauthor of an *IEEE Transactions* article, "Temperature Stabilization of Gyromagnetic Couplers."

As the kids grew older, Ruth felt comfortable taking a part-time job outside the home. In the late '60s she helped out during lunch time at the local elementary school. This opening led to substitute teaching. The substitute's life is not always predictable, often being called in on short notice to a school anywhere in the county. Eventually she began receiving more calls from the local high school, including several longer-term assignments. In 1974 she joined the Business Department faculty at Dunedin High School as a typing teacher, later also

teaching business math, bookkeeping, and accounting.

The late 1960s were not a good time for Sperry Microwave. The market was shrinking due to reduced defense spending, and better-managed competitors seemed to get most of the new business. Layoffs became a common occurrence, and Dave's turn came in 1970.

During the long downturn he had prepared himself for this eventuality by studying tax preparation at H & R Block. A friend from his auto parts days who had become manager of the local Waddell & Reed office convinced Dave he could also be a financial planner. When people have their taxes done, they want to know how to earn more money and give less of it to the IRS. After a couple of years working out of the H & R Block office, Dave set up his own tax preparation service, and later added several bookkeeping clients.

January through April — tax season — was the busiest time, and clients' paperwork tended to fill up Dave's office and the family dining room table. Computers became an important addition in the early 1980s, starting with a Radio Shack TRS-80. His financial advice matches the client's temperament: he doesn't want them to put all their money into a high risk investment, then lie awake at night worrying.

Ruth decided to retire from teaching in 1989, in part to help plan the wedding of Kris, her youngest daughter. She soon found another "career" as a Stephen Minister at church, providing one-on-one care to a member in need. She also stays in the "education game" by helping several days a week at the school where her oldest daughter, Anne, teaches. Dave continues to prepare taxes and sell investments, although he has cut down the number of tax clients in recent years.

Dave and Ruth's careers are a perfect complement to their family roles. Everyone wants a mom who loves kids, enjoys teaching, and provides sympathetic care. And who wouldn't want a dad who knows everything about cars, can repair almost anything, engineer solutions to problems, and provide sound financial advice?