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Leaving a Legacy — Rebecca Humrichouser: Advocate, volunteer, traveler

By **DIANA SPORE / OABHC**

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Rebecca Humrichouser is energetic, passionate about her work as an advocate and volunteer and sociable. When Rebecca reflects on her life, experiences and beliefs, one is immediately struck by her strength, forthright nature, dependability and dedication in meeting commitments. She thrives on volunteering, traveling and “giving back” to the community. She writes poetry and enjoys sharing her poems with family members and friends, journals every day, and is an avid reader during her spare time.

Rebecca is 79 years old, was born in Port Clinton, and lives in Ashland. She was married for 45 years, and is widowed; her husband, her “Knight in Shining Armor,” Robert (Curt) passed away in 2005. She has three children, Allen, Annette and Wade. Rebecca has six grandsons and two granddaughters, and one great-grandson.

Rebecca graduated from Ashland High School in 1956, and earned her BS in Education from Bob Jones University in 1960. She is a retired elementary school teacher, serving in the field of education for approximately 18 years. Her “teaching philosophy” was to accept all children on the same level, to tailor her teaching style to best meet the needs of individual students so that they could learn fully and to help them find and build on their unique “gifts.”

Rebecca served on the Ashland County Council on Aging Board and on the Mental Health and Recovery Board of Ashland County. Currently, she is chair of the Seniors and Law Enforcement Together Council. Rebecca has been active as a volunteer, e.g., serving as an ombudsman, visiting residents at The Good Shepherd. Building her legacy has involved charitable giving: “paying it forward” to her alma mater, and creating an Ashbrook Scholarship — under her and her husband’s names — to help students with financial needs. Rebecca shared how grateful she was for obtaining financial assistance to go to college. She never

thought it would be possible, and receiving help made it a reality.

Sheriff E. Wayne Risner indicated that “Rebecca is truly an outstanding and caring resident of Ashland County. She is unequivocally dedicated to being a positive advocate for educating and assisting the senior population in the Ashland Community.”

Peggy Boales, executive director, COA, noted that “Rebecca Humrichouser has championed the cause of older adults in Ashland County for many years. Her support has been greatly appreciated.”

Steve Stone, executive director, MHRB, shared, “Rebecca’s love for and commitment to her community is reflected in her many years of service to organizations like the MHRB and currently in her role as the chair of the SALT Council. And when she is involved with community organizations, it is more than lip service — she is engaged, active and contributes her talents in meaningful ways.”

As chair of the SALT council, Rebecca sees her primary role as being a communicator and educator. SALT aims to bring law enforcement and seniors together, to address concerns that revolve around safety and crime prevention. In efforts to meet needs of all older adults, information is provided about where to go or who to call for assistance. Seniors are educated about how not to be victims of fraud, learning tips about what “not” to do (e.g., avoid providing information such as social security numbers and bank account details). Rebecca noted that scammers are not your friends even if they call you by your first name, and fees are not part of what is said to be “free.” (Contact the Ashland County Sheriff’s office at 419-289-6552 for more information about SALT).

Traveling has been an important activity — perhaps bordering on a way of life — for more than half of Rebecca’s lifetime. For almost two decades, she and Curt would go to Disney World on spring breaks. She has traveled within and outside of the United States, including traveling to all seven continents. She has walked on a glacier, rode on a train from Chicago to California, stayed on the Queen Mary and more. She still has many places that she would like to travel to, again or for the first time. What she loves most about traveling is meeting people. With dry wit, Rebecca admits that what she has learned along the way helps her with answering questions posed on Jeopardy.

For five years, Rebecca was a full-time caregiver to her husband, who was living with Alzheimer's disease. In the last year of Curt's life, he received hospice care at home. Rebecca reflected that caregivers can become isolated during their caregiving journeys, and underscored the importance of friends continuing to keep in touch through phone calls, notes, and cards.


When expressing thoughts about what has been the foundation of her life, her guiding principles, Rebecca spoke of her faith, and her perspective that one should accept people the way they are. When reflecting on how to age successfully, Rebecca's suggestions were: (1) keep active, (2) be yourself, (3) do not dwell on the past yet learn from your mistakes, (4) do what you can to help others, (5) accept and embrace what makes you "different."

Rebecca indicated that she was honored to be interviewed, considering herself to be "only average." However, as reflected in this article, Rebecca Humrichouser has a unique story to share, has built a strong legacy, and has served as a dedicated advocate for seniors. She does not fit into the "average" compartment at all. (Actually, none of us do, regardless of age!).

Diana Spore, PhD, is a member of Older Adults Behavioral Health Coalition. She can be reached at dianaspore@zoominternet.net



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Rebecca Humrichouser at the SALT table , Wednesday, Sept. 19, at the Ashland County Fair. - Tom E. Puskar, Times-Gazette.com