

2005 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI AWARD SPEECH

This year our committee decided to give an Outstanding Alumni Award. Obviously we had many people to choose from our membership. We really wanted to give this award to someone who has been active in the Alumni Association over the years and also someone who is interested in this area and especially New Oxford. After some discussion one name seemed to be ahead of all the rest.

Not only has William Millar been active with the Alumni Association, having served as past president in the years of 1990, 1991 and 1992, I can't think of anyone who is more interested in the history of New Oxford and this area. In fact he is such a collector of anything historical that he must be running out of room for all his collections. Some time ago the building next to his home was for sale. When his wife, Pat, was asked if they might buy this building she said, "If we were to buy it the first thing I would do is put a chute from the attic down into the building and throw everything my husband has stored there for years.

When I talked to Bill to get some information for tonight I was quickly aware that he has truly led an amazing life. I hope he will write a book of his life to keep his legacy alive. What I have to tell you will only scratch the surface of his accomplishments.

He was born in Mt. Pleasant Township which is just up the road from here, and attended three different elementary schools; one at Moritzs, one at Conewago and another at Mt. Fairview then known as Kohler's school; all of this while living in foster homes. Times were tough in those days, but he would be the first to tell you he had many lucky breaks in his life.

He attended New Oxford high school until the end of his junior year when he quit school to join the United States Navy in 1942. After boarding the U.S.S. Kasian Bay in California they traveled through the Panama Canal to the East Coast where they were in training until they reported for active duty in the Mediterranean area. His ship was one of the aircraft carriers that were supplying aircraft to the heavy fighting in North Africa during World War 11, and I might add one of the few that survived.

Many veterans are reluctant to talk about their experiences during this time. I remember a talk he gave to our local AARP group about this and I know it was very emotional for him, but it seemed so real to me that I could almost hear the fighting. He is not unlike the men that Tom Brokow wrote about in his book "The Greatest Generation". He is truly a part of that generation.

After his discharge he came back to New Oxford high school and graduated with the class of 1947. Then he attended and graduated from York Junior College in 1949 and from Gettysburg College in 1954, all under the G.I. Bill of rights. After teaching in the Dallastown and South Western school districts he came back again to New Oxford High School in 1957 to teach Social Studies for three years. The next four years he taught Social Studies half days and also filled a new position of Guidance Counselor half days. After that he held the full time position of Guidance Counselor until his retirement in 1984. Over the years he has been active in the Adams County Historical Society; the York County Historical Society, the Hanover Historical Society and many other historical organizations. He has also been interested in and belonged to many other kinds of organizations. Today Bill and his family had a very busy day.

His granddaughter graduated this morning from West Chester College. They were very gracious to cut their festivities short to be able to come here tonight. At first I thought they would not be able to attend and I was very disappointed; but everything worked out great. The class of 1951 and the Alumni Association are very proud to present this first outstanding alumni award to William Millar.