

MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS: CAROL AND PETE DECKER

Carol Barnett was a 17-year-old senior in high school when her parents returned from a sojourn in Oklahoma to the place of her birth, Greenville, Texas. Almost immediately she caught the eye of a Texas A&M senior cadet named Howard Grant (Pete) Decker, who liked what he saw and sought out her company every time he came home.

He began inviting her to the dances at A&M, and well chaperoned by



Carol and Pete, Senior Ring Dance 1941

his mother, whom she adored, she went more than willingly for the wondrous “Corps weekends”

that every Aggie wife recalls with fondness.

By the time Pete finished his 5-year course in Architecture in June of 1941 Carol was graduating from high school in Greenville. She was 18 years old and they had known each other less than a year, but they were married that summer. With the nation gearing up for

war even before Pearl Harbor, Pete with his reserve commission as a Second Lieutenant was called up for active duty almost immediately and they began an odyssey that took them from Fort Huachuca, AZ to many strange places.

Their first child, Diane, was born on December 7, 1942. Pete had applied for and received a transfer to what was then the Army Air Corps, and they stayed together as long as they possibly could, packing up their Ford V-8 and driving to each assignment for training. When he received his wings as a single-engine fighter pilot he went through phase training and then was sent to the Italian front. Carol returned to Greenville with Diane and toddler son Grant to stay with family for the duration.

When Pete came home at the end of WWII he began receiving phone calls from Aggie architect buddies urging him to come to Dallas, which they felt was a great place to practice. He went for an interview, went to work for an established firm, and later formed a partnership with his eight Aggie friends, designing schools, commercial buildings, and residences. Eventually they broke into nine separate firms, but they remained lifelong friends and Aggie buddies. It is said there is no such thing

as an ex-Aggie; an Aggie is an Aggie till the day he dies. The Deckers, now with sons Grant and Lee in addition to Diane, and with Pete well established in his career, designed and built a lovely home in the prestigious Preston Hollow section of north Dallas. Carol did all the things mothers do—car pools, homemaking, help with homework, etc. and managed to find time for tennis and church work along with socializing with her friends, many of whom were also Aggie wives.

Diane grew up and went off to the University of Texas. Always interested in music and the performing arts, she was invited to join the original Serendipity Singers, whose tours took her all over the world and gave her great pleasure and experiences.

Grant died tragically in his twenties, and when Lee, who was much younger, was ready to leave for college the Deckers decided it was time to downsize and moved first to a patio home and then a few years ago to a retirement community in Dallas named Treemont but related to Houston's Treemont by name only.

In June of 2012 their son Lee persuaded them to move to Houston to

LBJ's rules for a good marriage:

1. Let your wife think she's getting her way.

2. See that she gets it.

Happy wife = happy life!

be near his family. Diane was living in Florida, and they didn't want an out-of-state move, so they agreed with Lee and came here.

They love Treemont and are certainly an asset to it. Both have great senses of humor that play off each other like a carefully choreographed ballet. Even in their teasing and badinage it is easy to see how deep their affection is for each other. They are witty and funny, always amiable and pleasant even when exchanging good-

natured barbs. In short, they are fun to be with. They celebrated their 71st wedding anniversary last June.



The Deckers at Treemont, January 2013

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails... *Holy Bible: NIV, 1 Cor.13:4-8a*

Happy Valentine!

