

## Remembering Dale Flaherty (1939 – 2021)

“I have told many young women that if they want a happy marriage, marry someone just like Dale,” said Pat Flaherty of 585 Hickory Nut Avenue about her late husband, Dale Flaherty, during a recent visit to the Flaherty home. “He was always calm, kind, not a mean bone in his body. And he had the best laugh. Everybody loved Dale’s laugh – so hearty.”

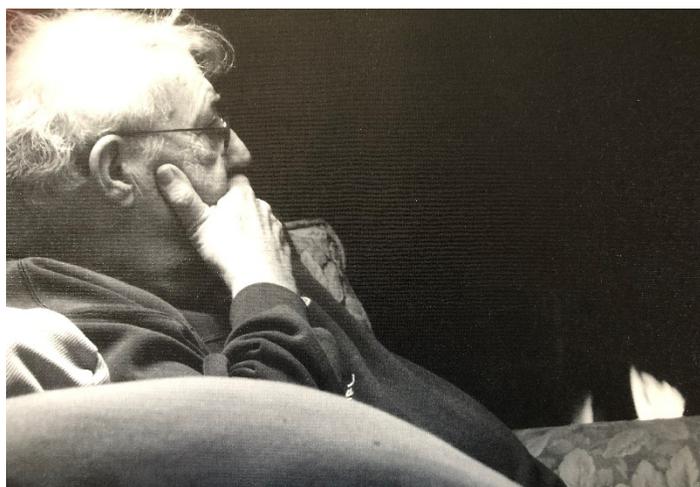
Dale Flaherty passed on May 21, 2021, just one day before what would have been his 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday and two months after suffering a stroke. He and Pat had been married for 58 years. During his last three weeks, he was at home in a hospital bed facing the lake, where he could see “Big Blue” (the blue heron rescued by neighbors last year when her beak pierced the top of a fast-food cup, and the animal could not eat or drink) and other water birds. “We opened all the doors so that he could feel like he was outside,” recalled Pat.

He could also see the television set, which was usually tuned to one sports event or another. “Dale was a sports fanatic. He watched every sport,” said Pat. He also went to all his grandsons’ games and school events.”

He went to his granddaughters’ plays and sports events, as well. “Dale loved being a grandpa. His grandchildren called him ‘Papa.’ He really loved people and being with them.” He went to the Family Y regularly before the pandemic lockdown. And he went to the pool at least five times a week – more because he liked talking to people than to get exercise.

Characteristically, when the Street Captains program started, Dale enthusiastically agreed to be the Street Captain for the western half of Hickory Nut – another chance to meet and talk with neighbors. Earlier he was one of the volunteers who covered the pool at night.

Dale was also a voracious reader – history, fiction, everything. He read three newspapers every day: the LaSalle, IL paper from his hometown, *The Chicago Tribune* and the *Tampa Bay Times*.



But his favorite pastime was thinking, adds Pat. “Our favorite photo of him shows him sitting in a chair and thinking.”

Raised on a farm in LaSalle, IL, west of Chicago, “Dale learned to be a thinker on a tractor while helping to manage the family farm. He would solve mathematical problems while tilling the fields.” He earned his BS from Marquette University, where he met

Pat, who was from Chicago. After college he went to work for Motorola as an electrical engineer and later earned his MBA from Northwestern University. As a young engineer he

helped develop the color TV tube. After 40 years at Motorola, he did consulting work until retiring.

Pat and Dale lived most of their adult lives in Chicago, raising three children: a daughter who has recently moved to Dunedin, another daughter in Chicago and a son with grown children who is moving to Florida.

Pat's late father and stepmother owned the house at 585 Hickory Nut Avenue from the 1980s, and the family loved visiting. When Pat's stepmother died, the Flaherty's said, "Why are we in Chicago?" They purchased the house from the estate and have made Quail Forest their permanent home for the past 10 years. "Dale loved Quail Forest and often said he lived in 'Paradise,'" notes Pat.

Pat is planning a small celebration of Dale's life in her home and another up north in their old neighborhood. She is grateful that two Quail Forest neighbors have offered use of their homes for visiting family and friends. "That's what it is like living here. The people are wonderful." Friends have also made gifts to purchase a red crepe myrtle tree in the Flaherty front lawn. "We always wanted one," said Pat. "Now we have one, in memory of Dale."