

# THE LITTLE FAMILY, Newsletter 1

## *Then and Now*

A while ago we invited members of Transfiguration's "Little Family" (i.e., all the couples who were married here) to share some of their life experiences with us. We were thrilled to receive so many responses, especially from couples married here in the 1940s and 1950s, but also from other decades, even the new century. We quickly realized that we would have to devote more than one newsletter to our "alumni." This is our first! Still, we're surprised that we have not heard from couples married in the 1990s! We hope this will change as they see what fun it is to "catch up" with others who shared a special place on a very special day.

Let the fun begin...

### **April 9, 1938 Lois and Robert Lawson**

Lois and Robert had known each other from college days, but were separated because they went to different schools. When she graduated from college at nineteen-and-a-half, it took only months for them to marry. "I told Robert I wanted to be married at that church which had been good to theater people; I liked that story." Coming from her home in Butte, MT, for the wedding (Robert was already working in New York) Lois was very sick with flu. She could barely make the wedding—and many of her guests did not make it. "An usher took them to the Bride's chapel, and that's where they stayed, while we were getting married in the church. My parents couldn't make it either. My Mom was in the hospital. My sister and her family, quarantined with Scarlet Fever, couldn't make the reception at Jack Dempsey's restaurant."

Undaunted, Robert and Lois went on to share many wonderful years, including several in Calcutta, India, where Robert's firm sent him before he returned to the States and military service in WWII. A mining engineer, his career took the couple to 27 different places of residence in the United States. At one point, in 1969, while living in New Jersey, Robert came home to tell Lois that he had taken a year's leave from work, and that they were about to travel all over the world. "And we did," Lois says.

They also had two girls, Betty and Bobbi (Benson). After 71 years of marriage, Robert passed away on June 5, 2008, at the age of 93. When we last spoke to Lois she was living near her children on Mercer Island in Washington State

## **April 5, 1944 John and Bernice Erickson**

Bernice Erickson writes, “Obviously, we were married during WWII. John (Jack) was in the Navy aboard the destroyer USS Benson which was in the Brooklyn Navy Yard for minor repairs. John was given a 72-hour liberty. We were both from Cleveland, OH, had met in 12th grade English class. He called me and told me, if I met him in New York City, we could get married during his leave. He and a shipmate buddy would make all the arrangements. That year, April 5 was the Wednesday of holy week. After that day, no more marriages would be performed in the church until after Easter.

“I agreed and arrived in New York with my mother on April 4th. During the morning of the 5th, we went to get our marriage license. When the clerk found out Jack was under age (20), he denied the license. The groom had to be 21; if younger, he needed his parents’ consent. Of course, this incensed Jack. He had been in the combat arena for three years and certainly felt completely adult. Nevertheless, he called his Dad at the hotel who came to sign for him.

“We were to be married at 5:00 P.M. at the Bridal Altar. I arrived at the church at 4:45 P.M. as did Jack’s parents and sister, my mother and aunt as well as about 16 shipmates of Jack with their wives or girlfriends. When I entered the sacristy, Father Randolph Ray was admonishing Jack for neglecting to obtain a waiver of the three-day waiting period required in New York from issuance of license to marriage. Because we had no waiver, no ceremony could be performed. While Father Ray was scolding, his assistant, Father Weatherbee, was on the telephone with a lawyer friend who agreed to write a special waiver for us. Jack, his father and I went to the lawyer’s office and waited for the document. Then, it had to be signed by a New York State Supreme Court Judge, so off again we taxied to the home of the judge for his signature, and finally back to the church. We married sometime around 7:00 P.M. Two days later, Jack returned to sea.”

After his release from the Navy, Jack went back to college and received a degree in mechanical engineering. He was called back into service in 1951 and served an additional four years. After 25 years at the Human Factors Engineering Laboratory of the U.S. Army, he retired. He and Bernice have three children: Jennifer Anne Erickson Smith; Kimberly Jane Erickson Flodin; and Moira Faye Erickson Lawrence. When we last spoke with Bernice, she told us that Jack was in an assisted living facility. She was living nearby in Belcamp, MD.

## **February 4, 1950, Faith and Arthur Kaminski**

On a bright, cold February morning, Faith Maria Lambrides, a new graduate of the University of Maryland, married Artie Kaminski, an Army veteran who was returning to college there, and began a life together that lasted until his death in 2004. They had come from different cultures—Faith from Texas, Artie from Brooklyn—and different religions—Faith’s father was a Southern Baptist minister in the military, and Artie was a Roman Catholic—but, despite family objections, their love made it work. “We went to The Little Church because we knew they would understand. I was only 20, and I had to get permission to marry. My uncle came through for us. Of course, in no time, everyone in our families accepted us, and that was that.”

Artie transferred to NYU, becoming an industrial engineer, and the couple settled in Bridgewater, Long Island. Their first child, Diane, was born a little over a year after they were wed. Her brother, Ronald, arrived six years later in 1957. While Artie built his career, Faith was active as a Girl Scout Leader, Sunday School Teacher, and library aide.

Once her children were grown, Faith became employed as a Senior Citizen Center Manager.

When Artie retired in 1983, and they moved to Palm Beach Gardens, Faith planned trips for seniors throughout the world, sponsored by the city of Palm Beach Gardens.

“ It was wonderful fun,” she says. “Of course, Artie came. We went to China, Russia, Vietnam, South America. We went everywhere! We went on 45 cruises. I loved it!” That ended when the city turned the assignment over to a travel agent.

After Artie’s death, Faith’s children moved down to Florida. She spends her time today enjoying her family, teaching bridge, and staying connected to her church and friends.