

Richard and Doris Alaimo Biography

Years from now, when the history of the County Seat is written, the Alaimo name will certainly stand prominent. Situated on High Street in Mount Holly, Alaimo Engineering has certainly established itself as a local institution over the past few decades.

But when it comes to the Alaimos, that alone barely scratches the surface. The untold story about Dick and Doris Alaimo is their community service work. For as volunteers, they have functioned in relative obscurity, contributing to organizations and local efforts so familiar to us all- and a couple of groups, which, quite frankly, are rather obscure themselves.

Consider the Female Benevolent, a little-known Mount Holly organization that dates back to the mid-1800's. Doris is a past directress, and one of its 24 members who lend a secret hand to the working poor people who are ineligible for other assistance. The group meets monthly and members take turns visiting local families with a monetary donation. There is no fanfare, no press event. It's done quietly and kindly. And never discussed outside the group. Funds come from dues, donations, and bequests.

Then there is Dick. By our count, you could probably link him with past or present involvement in a dozen organizations – the Rotary, the Elks, youth baseball teams, the Burlington County Chapter of the 200 Club- but there is nothing flamboyant about his volunteer activities or his generosity.

It is against this backdrop that the Volunteer Center of Burlington County has chosen to make the Alaimos – Dick and Doris – the recipient of our 5th Annual Community Service Award.

We didn't set out to honor a "couple." In fact, some have suggested this may be a Burlington County first. But you can't talk about Dick without talking about Doris. You cant talk about Doris without talking about Dick. Each is worthy of the honor. Some of their good deeds are joint ventures.

For example, both are past chairs of the Memorial Hospital Foundation's Ambassador Ball. Both are active in the Burlington County Chapter of the Boy Scouts of America, as well as the Rancocas Valley Education Foundation, and the Lenape Regional Foundation, a non-profitable and charitable organization founded in 1997 to raise funds for the Lenape Regional Performing Arts Center. Both also serve on the committee for Mount Holly ProDay, an event when illustrious sports figures like Franco Harris are brought into the limelight, all in an effort to raise funds for Mount Holly children in need.

Fact is, children's needs are a cornerstone of much of Doris' volunteer work over the years. She spent eight years as a board member of the National Adoption Center in Philadelphia, an organization that seeks homes for hard-to-place children. She spent an equal amount of time on the board of Crossroads, a county agency that focuses on helping teenagers with problems.

Says Doris: "I don't think someone learns to be a volunteer except by example. And my example was- who else- my mother. Not that she was a member of a bunch of organizations. She wasn't. But she took us to church three times a week, and that is where I first has a notion that there were people less fortunate. The seed was planted."

A product of 4-H Club values, "to make the best better," Doris joined a club in high school called the Mount Holly Sub Deb, which was affiliated with the General Federation of Women's Clubs. The club focused on community needs and raised funds through everything from bake sales to "tag" sales to dances to meet those needs.

It led her to membership in the Junior Woman's League of Mount Holly, ultimately becoming president, but still dealing with community causes. Not surprising, virtually all of Mount Holly's merchants would get to know Doris.

The one-time Mount Holly Herald (remember Herald?) reporter, who also wrote for the Trenton Times, has left her name other places. She did her part for Mount Holly Day, the Friends of the Mount Holly Library, and for the Mount Holly Holiday House Tour. She remains active

with the Mount Holly Historical Society and the Burlington County College Foundation auction.

What else haven't we mentioned about Dick? For starters, he continues to serve on the Rancocas Valley Regional Board of Education, the South Jersey Port Corporation, the Board of Overseers for Rutgers University, and The Mount Holly Urban Enterprise Zone.

His investment in the 200 Club goes a little deeper. He was a co-founder of his organization, which dedicates itself to recognizing "first responders" - that is, the police, fire and emergency folks who watch over all of us.

Seven years ago, a venture unrelated to volunteering - Deerwood Country Club - began to demand a great deal of attention from both Dick and Doris, and still consumes much of their time. (In fact, owning a golf course has reduced their "playing" hours, both say.)

Dick and Doris are so ingrained in the community that some may be actually shocked to learn that neither is a Mount Holly native. Dick came here from Passaic County in the 1950's to work for a local engineering firm. You'll find Doris' early roots in Ithaca, New York.

He was doing engineering work and she was doing her newspaper work when they ultimately found one another. They married (each for the second time). It's now been 27 years together.

Between them, you will find a family that would stretch any Thanksgiving table. Dick's children include three daughters, including Peggy (Mrs. Terry Mulligan), Susan (Mrs. James Ferrelli), and Donna (Mrs. Lawrence Clarke), and son, Rick. They, in turn have offered up five grandsons and four granddaughters. Doris' children include three sons, Brian, Leigh, and Miles Powell (and their respective wives: Michelle, Jennifer and Susan). Add eight more grandchildren, three boys and five girls.

The Volunteer Center is proud to honor Dick and Doris Alaimo. Successful in their careers, in business, and in life, they have generously shared their success, and their time, money, and energy with others.