

## Our Board – The Honorable Daniel R. Collister (pg.1)

Dan's family had moved to Cleveland from Manhattan, Kansas by the time Dan was born on April 29, 1928. Dan's mother, however, only trusted her doctor in Kansas, and two weeks before Dan was born, she made a train journey back to Manhattan, KS (alone, leaving her husband and young son—Dan's older brother, Jim, at home), to deliver Dan safely in Kansas, loaded him in a wicker laundry basket, then took the train back to Gates Mills.

Dan's father was originally hired as a polo coach by Walter White for the Circle W Farm at the top of Old Mill Road. He lived in a room at the stables, and would walk to Willoughby on weekends to see his wife and Dan's older brother.

His father had been introduced to Mr. Crispin Oglebay who owned the very prominent iron and steel shipping/manufacturing business, Ogilvy Norton Company. Mr. Oglebay was impressed with Dan's father's knowledge and love of horses, and hired him to manage Mr. Oglebay's "Valley Stables". The family then moved into a gardener's cottage on the estate. "I had the privilege of growing up on the edge of the polo field, Dan said, "You can imagine that it was an idyllic way to grow up. The polo field, when I was growing up, was sort of the center of my universe."

Dan recounts, "There wasn't much traffic in those days, and people were "kindly", watching over the children. It was perfectly safe for a four or five-year old to wander anywhere in the village, sledding on the big hill by the polo field, going to the candy bar at the old Livery Tavern, getting groceries at Sandhills or going to Mike's garage." At the age of eight, Dan worked for the grounds crew at the polo field. Growing up steeped in this culture created Dan's love for horses and Gates Mills.

Lucy Lytle recalls, "Both Mom and Dan were divorced. Mom, (Lorinda Nash Collister), with me and my 3 siblings, moved back to Gates Mills to stay with her parents on Battles Road. Dan had a house just a few doors down. We went trick-or-treating there. Dan had a long gravel drive, and my brother, John, dragged his bag up and down the drive. As we were leaving, it broke and we had to turn back to ask for a replacement. The rest is history. Mom and Dan married in 1971 and celebrated their 50th anniversary two years ago."

"There were six of us. We're the classic Brady Bunch family. Dan had a son and daughter (Peter & Laurie) from his first marriage, and Mom had 4 kids (2 girls and 2 boys) from her marriage. They bought a big house on the corner of Deerfield & River Roads (now owned by Mary Adele & Doug Horner), and we grew up there." *(Lucy Lytle)*

In November 1950, with the Korean War raging, Dan was drafted into the US Army. He attended Officer Candidate School and completed flight training, which prompted his lifelong love of flying. Over the years, he and various partners owned several planes.

Dan was in banking, although he always wanted to be a professional writer. Early on in his career, he was offered a job with Cinecraft that would have involved traveling around Ohio researching and writing stories, but he was persuaded to turn it down because banking was a more reliable career path. At one point, he tried to redirect his career when he won an essay

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contest sponsored by *Flying* magazine on *What Flying Means to Me*, but his attempt was unsuccessful.

Dan's membership at the Hunt Club dates back to 1957, so he may be the longest enrolled member of the club. He served as the Mayor of Gates Mills from 1987-1995 and is a past president of the Historical Society, the Improvement Society, and the Gates Mills Land Conservancy. He also was head of the Gates Mills Elementary School's Parent-Teacher Club. Dan was an active member of the Gates Mills Players for many years, playing leads in *The Sound of Music*, *Brigadoon*, and *Fiddler on the Roof*, among others. He has a beautiful singing voice and sang in the choir at St. Christopher's for over 50 years.

Dan doesn't like to be credited as the Founder of Gates Mills Land Conservancy, but he was very instrumental in making it happen.

"Rik Bole is credited with proposing the idea of an Environmental Committee in the summer of 1988, having seen its success in New England. An organizing committee was formed under the leadership of Mayor Dan Collister and temporary chairman Fred Suppes. On August 24, 1988, a slate of trustees comprised of Fred Suppes, Ray Burke, Bob Reitman, Tom Quintrell, Peter Hellman, Don Perris, Larry Salibra and Lorinda Collister was proposed by Mayor Collister. A decision was also made to establish the new conservancy as a supporting organization of the Village." *(Dan Collister)*

"The first trustee meeting was held on February 13, 1989. The treasurer, Bob Reitman, reported an account balance of \$4,700 due to an anonymous gift of \$5,000 in seed funding for the Conservancy, which is credited to Don Perris. At a meeting on May 15, 1989, the board increased its trustees from 9 to 12 with the addition of Tom Liederbach, Bill Stepanek and Tink Veale. Tom Quintrell was elected President of the Board on August 7, 1989. Also at this meeting, a list of high-priority properties for protection was presented as part of the Village Master Plan by Councilman Chris Manners." *(Dan Collister)*

Steve Siemborski worked as village treasurer during Dan Collister's time as mayor; "I saw firsthand how Mr. Collister navigated establishing the Land Conservancy and securing its initial donations, dealing with downtown safety issues after the Red Fox fire of 1983, and bringing well water to the village for the safety and protection of its families and homes. Mr. Collister has always been passionate about his village and is a fierce protector of the Land Conservancy."

Dan believes, "The Conservancy preserves land in our lovely historic Western Reserve village so that it may continue to be the very special place it is both today and for generations to come. The only sure defense of our Village's rural character is the permanent preservation of the abundant open land within the Village and on its borders."