

Our Board – Dave Butz, Honorary Director

David Butz had wanted to be a veterinarian, “I grew up in Chesterland where almost everyone lived on a farm.”, Dave said, “We had horses and cows and I raised pigs.” Dave attended Bethany College, with a vision of becoming a veterinarian, but eventually changing his major and received his B.S. in Chemistry and Biology. He began his career as a chemist with Union Carbide and worked in their ‘space program’, originally set up through large contracts from NASA to build engines. But after a few years Union Carbide dropped the program.

Dave’s friend Dennis Frattiani told him about an opening at Diamond’s Men’s Shop, and Dave and Dennis ended up running the Southgate store for several years. At the time another friend, Rolin Loujan, who owned restaurants in Akron/Canton, had gotten involved selling car wash franchises in Cleveland, but wanted out of that business. So, he sold a car wash to Dave, who soon found other franchisees wanting to sell their businesses, and Dave bought up those as well. The name of the business was MacCleens. In the end, Dave owned 36 car washes across 4 states. His businesses were very successful and at the age of 56, Dave sold all of his franchises and took early retirement.

This gave Dave more time for his great passion, boating. He became Commodore of the Put-In-Bay Yacht Club, where he also served as a member of the Put-In-Bay Historical Society. After owning several boats, in 1973, Dave had a custom wood boat commissioned from a yacht builder in Boston who had been building wood cruisers for 100 years. “Phi Kai Phi” was a 45’ double cabin wood power cruiser with a 16’ wide beam, a flybridge, (2) V-8 diesel engines, its own light plant generator, (3) AC units, two private cabins, (3) bunks, and (2) toilets and baths. The family took 1400-mile trips every summer to Mackinac Island and the Michigan east shoreline. Later Dave also planned trips to Green Bay, WI and east to the St. Lawrence Seaway through the Welland Canal. Dave did all his own maintenance to the cruiser, cleaning and repairing engines, all the mechanical and electric work, right down to refinishing the wood decks.

Dave and his wife Louise “Lou” have been married for 63 years. They met when Dave and a college friend crashed a party at her father’s home in Gates Mills. “I fell in love with her at first sight.” They got married and built two houses in Gates Mills, had four children, twelve grandchildren, and now one great grandchild.

Both Lou and Dave have been active in the community serving on Village Committees and organizations. For many years they both were part of the Gates Mills Players. Dave served as past president of The Players, Cub Scout Master, headed 4 Little League teams, and served for 20 years as Director on the Gates Mills Land Conservancy Board. Dave always brought his valued knowledge and hands-on abilities to assist the Land Conservancy in a much-needed way. When you drive by GMLC properties you can bet that each fence was built by Dave. We are so grateful for all Dave’s work and cherish his continued support.

