

Daniel Kish – Leaving a Legacy

Dan Kish's family immigrated to America from Hungary in the late 1800's. They were hard working, cared for other family members during difficult times and found their way to Cleveland to begin a new life among other Hungarian settlers.

Dan met his beloved wife, Maryann, at a family party when she was still in high school, and immediately fell in love. His interest in Maryann was highly scrutinized by her mother, aunt and godmother, but he passed the test and they became engaged. Several years her senior, Dan worked hard saving as much money as he could to buy a house in Highland Heights. He was only 21 when Maryann finished high school and they were married.

An intelligent and talented hard worker, Dan was hand-picked by Fisher Body Motors while attending Fenn College. Dan came from a family of coremakers, who specialized in creating iron molds for manufacturing. Some products like car engines must be cast or milled from iron for strength and durability. At only 19, while in his first year at Fenn College, his ability was so desired that Fisher Body hired him, and trained and mentored him themselves, instead of him finishing at Fenn College. Dan spent his entire career with Fisher Body until they were dissolved in 1984.

Dan's passion for the automotive industry and cars has never waned. He began collecting antique cars in 1965, with a dark green 1939 Cadillac. It is his pride and joy. "They only made 1,000 of them.", Dan said. "It was made by Fisher Body. It has an extremely heavy body and the frame is made of 6" I-beams that are crossed." Originally, it had a hardtop, which Dan cut off to remake the car into a convertible using a Cadillac LaSalle top. Also, among his collection is a 1950's Chevrolet Deluxe convertible with a "power-glide" transmission. Dan recalled, "The power-glide was very desirable in the racing world because racers could reconfigure it to make it lightning fast for the track."

Following his career at Fisher Body, Dan and his son Daniel, began buying houses in surrounding communities and renovated them to rent or sell. Dan said, "My skills and training in tool and die making taught me how to do just about anything." At Maryann's request, Dan built a magnificent Victorian dollhouse to Maryann's detailed specifications. Completely outfitted with lighting, handwoven oriental carpets and furniture, it is a work of love. Their home is a testament to their interest in antique furniture and Dan's support of Maryann's passion for collecting.

Maryann and Dan's children were both talented as well. Daniel was trained in the trumpet at an orchestral level but chose to impact the lives of children through teaching. Danae, their beautiful daughter, was a financier with Shearson Lehman Brothers. Sadly, Dan's wife and both children have passed, but Dan continues to have an impact on the lives of others and the Gates Mills community. His warm, accessible and down to earth demeanor makes him immediately endearing. Dan represents the best of what Gates Mills is all about.