

Arlington Count Civic Federation

Arlington, Virginia

92nd Year

Civic Voice of Arlington

SUN GAZETTE TROPHY

LAWRENCE R. MAYER

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Omaha, Nebraska. St. Louis, Missouri. New York, New York. Cambridge, Massachusetts. McLean, Virginia. Clearwater, Florida. Arlington, Virginia. Wanderlust? Or job opportunities? Perhaps, a bit of both.

Our honoree was born in Omaha, Nebraska. He became the responsible adult in the lives of his younger siblings when, before he finished school, both of his parents died. He has a Bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering and Applied Mathematics from Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri. While attending college, and for several years thereafter, he worked as a plant engineer for Westpac Corporation in a plant that made corrugated boxes.

Then, still working for Westvaco, he moved to New York City where he was employed in Corporate Engineering in the company's paper mills and converting facilities. It was there that he met and married Judy Keslensky, a lady who possessed advanced degrees in economics and law. With her encouragement, he applied to, and was accepted to, the Harvard University Business School. He graduated as a Baker scholar.

In 1973, after graduating from Harvard, he and Judy moved to McLean, Virginia where he started American Management Systems, an information consulting firm of about fifty employees located in Rosslyn. In 1974, Judy died in an accident.

He stayed with the firm for eighteen years. When he left the firm, he was a Vice President. The primary focus of his work was on Business and Information Processes for Commercial Companies. However, he did some Government projects for the Federal Energy Office, the Congressional Budget Office and Navy industrial activities.

During these years, he traveled extensively. One destination was San Francisco, California. It was there that he met Jody Barlerin who became his second wife. In San Francisco, the company apartment was on Nob Hill. Jody's apartment and Swenson's Ice Cream Store were on Russian Hill. He had no car. Every night that he was in town, he would ride the cable car between the two hills. Was it his desire to see Jody or to savour that ice cream?

The couple married in 1986 and bought a home in the Lyon Park area of Arlington. Jody, who had had brain surgery for Epilepsy began to focus on giving back to the community and the "world." She worked at the Virginia Hospital Center, the Whitman Walker Clinic terminal care facility and the Brighton Gardens Alzheimer floors.

After his retirement, Larry became active in civic affairs. It was in September 1996 that he was asked to become an officer in the Lyon Park Citizens Association. His answer: “Only if I can be President.” And President he was. Soon thereafter, he found himself testifying before the Arlington County Board about a controversial use permit change for Whitey’s Restaurant. That September, he also attended his first Arlington County Civic Federation meeting as a delegate from the Lyon Park Citizens Association.

For two years, he served the Lyon Park Citizens Association as its President. During those years, he focused on developing outreach and inclusionary policies to parts of the Lyon Park area that had not previously been active. His involvement with Lyon Park continues to this day and he continues to serve Lyon Park as one of its delegates to the Civic Federation.

Because he lives close to the Rosslyn– Ballston Corridor, he joined the Clarendon Alliance, an organization on which he served for a number of years. He became an active member of the Civic Federation’s Planning and Zoning Committee. That is an involvement that he still maintains.

In June 2005, he was elected to the Civic Federation Executive Committee and, as the “junior” member was elected to the Chairmanship of that body. This was a difficult time for him. Jody was seriously ill. The Civic Federation became his escape valve. It offered him the opportunity to bury himself in civic activities during his wife’s last days. Jody died in October 2005.

He served one year as Chairman of the Federation’s Executive Committee. And then he was a President again. He is now completing his second year of that Presidency. What next? Time will tell.

His focus has always been on balance. While often impatient, his focus on outreach and inclusion irrespective of background, position or circumstances continues with the recognition that it is a lifelong process. He first gained that insight in a highly urban high school. The realization continues today and will continue beyond his term as Civic Federation President.

Politically, he remains fiercely independent. His focus is more on issue resolutions and pragmatic solutions. His enjoyment of reading began in childhood when he stayed awake at night reading by the light of a flashlight tucked under the blankets with him. He has been involved with computers since college. He purchased his first personal computer in 1981. Except for his laptops, he now builds all of his personal computers. He continues his financial activities by running private and personal funding vehicles.

He looks forward to spending time in his Florida home so that he may “regroup” and regain perspective. Arlington is his home and he intends to maintain an active involvement in Arlington life.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is with great pleasure that we present the Sun Gazette Trophy to Lawrence R. Mayer.

Frances M. Finta
Vice President
Chairman, Awards Committee

Scott McCaffrey
Managing Editor
Sun Gazette newspaper