



New Hampshire Veterans Home

139 Winter Street
Tilton, NH 03276



Paul "Woody" Kimball

Resident Spotlight - May 2020

**Editor's Note: We are publishing this spotlight while sadly acknowledging Woody's passing on May 24th.*

Paul Woodman Kimball was a valued New Hampshire Veterans Home resident. He was born in 1928 in Exeter and welcomed by his only sibling, Robert, who was three years his senior. Paul's middle name, Woodman, is an old family name he converted to "Woody" upon his arrival here at the Home. He surmised there would be several Pauls, thus, making his request, and answering to 'Woody' thereafter.

His earliest memories were of time on their farm, bordering Exeter and Kensington, N.H. It boasted one hundred acres plus off Kimball Road, initially settled in 1736 by his Great-Great-Grandfather. In addition to the hard working Kimball family, their farm housed cows, chickens, pigs and more. Growing up alongside Robert, there was never a shortage of things to be done around the farm. As they grew, so did their level of responsibility. Being born in the depression era, Woody realized at an early age the importance of good decisions, especially in a farming family. "You couldn't afford to make mistakes!" he recalled. Registering their Holstein cows was critical in building the farm's value, garnering more money for milk and future breeding interests. They also took advantage of their cool cellar by stockpiling sweet corn and potatoes in fall, using bins his father improvised from repurposed wood allowing air to circulate, extending the life of their goods. He recalled hopping into the truck alongside his father enroute to Boston's Fanueil Hall, vegetables in tow, during open market days. Those memories put a glimmer in his eye, as he recollected some trips home saw Howard Johnsons luring their truck off the roadway for a rewarding ice cream or plate of clams. Woody's father was hampered by arthritis but always managed to keep their farm running on an even keel. The boys considered his mother, a strong woman, to be the disciplinarian in the house in those days. She worked for U.S. Farm and Home Administration, in addition to the demanding rigors of family life on a farm.

Woody shyly admitted to being a hyperactive young lad, who just could NOT stay seated in classrooms. This led to his being held back his first year of school, possibly a blessing in the long run in a memorable one-room schoolhouse in Kensington. He later attended Tuck High School in Exeter, developing a keen interest in electricity, knowledge he would put to use the rest of his life. After graduating in 1947, Woody studied at the University of New Hampshire Thompson School of Agriculture and Wentworth Institute, a Technical College in Boston's Back Bay. He recalls struggling in drafting while there and shortly thereafter, a decline in Woody's father's health demanded his return to the homestead. Woody stepped up, filled the gap, and carried on the Kimball Farm.

Looking for more income, Woody broadened his horizons by servicing and selling Fordson and Masse Ferguson farm equipment throughout all of Rockingham County for the next couple of years. Woody proved proficient at repairing field choppers and hay driers, staple machinery in those days. Another piece in high demand, he recalled, was a tractor capable of accomplishing workloads while in reverse.

Woody's life changed in a big way in December of 1949 when he enlisted in the United States Air Force. He completed basic training at Sampson Air Force Base in Auburn, New York. With a natural aptitude in mechanics obvious to his superiors, Woody envisioned auto mechanics in his future. His first assignment was at Vance Air Force Base in Enid, Oklahoma, where unfortunately, health complications required a six-month hospital stay. His health misfortunes had a silver lining, however, as he managed to marry his wife, Marian, while on convalescent leave on June 15th that year. They met some time ago at his father's haberdashery while Woody replaced the points in a Ford tractor, no surprise. His Dover Business School background enabled him to make the necessary shift to a clerk typist position, his primary duty in months ahead. Later, Woody was reassigned to F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming. His service record included Vehicle Operation and Maintenance-9, Clerk-7 and Technical Support-7. His last stop was Pine Castle Air Force Base in Orlando, Florida, where Woody was honorably discharged, having served three years and nine months of his four-year commitment.

He returned to Marian and life on the farm, assuming full responsibilities, while Marian worked intermittently in the Home Health industry. Together they raised three children, firstborn Charlie, middle child Martha and youngster Mark, who proved to be a handful. They were as active a couple there was in Kensington, pursuing interests and positions on Planning Boards, School Committee, 4-H Club, Masons, Volunteer Fire Dept. and American Legion - to name just a few. Marian, active at First Congregational Church in Kensington, savored as much time would allow at the ocean. One of her best meals was baked fish; that wasn't around long after leaving the oven. When asked for one word that best described Marian, Woody said she was just happy to be a "homebody."

Woody enjoyed any event at the NH Veterans Home involving history, documentaries or science. He also took great interest in the courtyard planters, flexing his green thumbs. Asked what advice he might offer to a new resident, he said, "Make sure you know what you're doing." One thing is certain; we are all pleased that Woody Kimball "knew what he was doing," when he became a valued family member and a New Hampshire Veterans "Homebody," in his own right.

You are missed, Woody.

