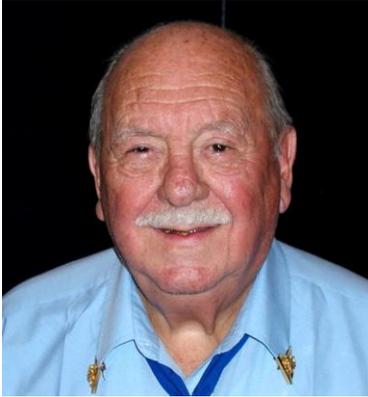


Chris O'Connor



Christian (Chris) O'Connor lived with his family in Brooklyn, NY. When he was 15, his parents bought a summer house at Kittatinny Lake in Sussex County, NJ. Chris loved the Saturday night and Halloween square dances sponsored by the lake club. "It was old-fashioned square dancing with live music by Dikey and His Hillbillies," said Chris.

Just before graduating from high school in 1941, Chris was recommended by the assistant principal for a position as a typist in a New York company specializing in sales to the U. S. government. He had become a keyboard expert by typing theses for several teachers after school hours.

On New Year's Day 1943, Chris had dinner with a group of young people in New Jersey. He had just been drafted into the Army and needed to find a replacement for his job. One of the girls in the group, Lorraine, was a telephone operator. Since she could type and wanted to work in New York, Chris recommended her to his boss. Lorie got the job and moved to the city.

Meanwhile, Chris spent two weeks at Fort Dix and then went to Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn. "We were free every night, so I would help Lorie with the job," said Chris. Labor soon evolved into love, and upon his discharge in 1946, Chris and Lorie married. They worked at the same company for about 30 years. For over 10 years, Chris had the contract that furnished the white paper in the middle of passports. He was eventually elected to the board of directors and became the corporate secretary. In 1982, when the company was sold, he became president of the Government Sales Division. He retired in 1999.

Chris and Lorie had bought a house in Fair Lawn, NJ, where they raised two sons and a daughter. Lorie's mother cared for the children while they were at work in the city. Chris enjoyed doing home improvements such as painting, carpentry, plumbing, and electrical. The couple also found time to pursue personal interests – Chris as a league bowler and Lorie as a competitive dance roller skater.

When the children were grown, the O'Connors decided to find an activity they could enjoy together. Remembering his Saturday evenings at Kittatinny Lake, Chris suggested square dancing. They took lessons with Paul Brody at Belles & Beaux, and joined the club in 1985. A few years later, they took Plus lessons with Dick Pasvolsky and Mickey McFarland.

After Lorie passed away in 2004, Chris went on several cruises with his brother, who is now 95 and lives in Colorado. But he also continued dancing. He is currently a member of Belles & Beaux and F.A.D. ("Fun at Dancing"), where he has been treasurer, delegate, vice president, and president – a position he has held for five years. Chris also served as Corresponding Secretary for the NNJSDA, and he runs "a free B&B for callers" at his home.

When he's not dancing, Chris likes to spend time with his seven grandsons, read mystery and detective stories, cook, and bake. In fact, he bakes all the goodies that are served at F.A.D. dances (cakes, cookies, pies, and his specialty, Irish soda bread).

When asked to describe his most memorable dancing experience, Chris said: "Every dance with good friends is memorable." Well, what was the best thing that ever happened to him? "Getting home safely from World War II." And what's the best thing he ever did? "Married my wife and bought my home – the same one I've lived in for 62 years."

Lise Greene