

## “Living Life to the Fullest”

Don Forte



Donald was born in Woodbury N.J. in 1943. Only two when he contacted Polio, he was sent to the Philadelphia Contagious Disease Hospital for treatment. Just a toddler, he was there for 3 ½ weeks . Polio left him with a short left leg and walking on the ball of his foot. Beginning at the age of eight he spent a lot of time in and out of the University of Pennsylvania Hospital where he had three operations to correct a heel lift; making his drop foot less significant. This left him with a slight limp, but it did not stop him from running around, playing games with his friends, playing baseball, hose ball and half ball.

At his elementary school he took a liking to woodworking in the schools woodshop. Through the guidance of a favorite teacher, Mr. Jones, Don became his best student. One day, Mr. Jones told Don’s Mom that if he ever gets in to woodworking he would be really good. These encouraging words went with him, and he continued to take metal shop and woodshop throughout junior high and high school; both of which would help him later in life.

Don also loved art class, he was allowed to draw anything that he wanted, while everyone else had to focus on what the art teacher had said. He was asked numerous times to draw covers for the Handbooks and Yearbooks for the new school term.

He genuinely loved sports as well; he was a hardball pitcher in the American Legion, fast pitched softball (B) league, and when he was not pitching he would play first base. He also played first base and pitched for his work and church leagues.

After graduating from Upper Darby High School, Don decided to attend Spring Garden College to become a Toolmaker. In 1966, he married his loving wife, who has always given him great support in everything that he does. They were blessed with a son & two daughters.

After graduating from college he worked at small machine shops, then larger ones like Jade Tool & Die, AT&T. At Bristol Myers Squibb he was a Lead Man Toolmaker Engineer, in charge of the metal shop and woodshop then was promoted to Injection Mold Coordinator. He then worked for Princeton University where he was in charge of their metal shop and woodshop until he retired.

The PPS symptoms became significant ten years ago. Now he wears a full leg brace to keep him from falling. Even so, he does volunteer work at Abington Hospital for the rehab department, is a Standardized Patient for Villanova University and serves on the Board of the Delaware Valley Post Polio Support Assoc.

As a hobby he enjoys woodworking in his basement making picture frames and the matting for the frames, cabinets, table’s etc. and repairing broken furniture and antiques for dealers. Don is his happiest when he’s at home with his wife, his children and 7 grandchildren.



Don’s advice to us all?

Live life to the fullest and don’t be afraid to take a chance on something you just might be good at. You’ll never know until you try.

