



Inside Hyde Park

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Strong, Smart, Bold, and Caring

written by Paul Wentz, editor *Inside Hyde Park* and HP homeowner



Strong, smart, bold. That is Hyde Park homeowner Lynette Mancuso. The red mug also reads “www.girlsinc.org” which translates to another characteristic – caring. Her upbringing in Tulsa both informed and formed Lynette into the person she would become. Her mom, for example, advised her to fulfill her potential: “Don’t be the nurse, be the doctor. Don’t be the law clerk, be the lawyer.” As a university psychology professor, her dad demonstrated scholastic achievement. Her three brothers, on the other hand, provided practical experience. As the only sister, Lynette demonstrated an ability to mediate disputes. She learned to be a peacemaker and mediator very early on, whether at home, at the sorority house, on the job, or among friends.

All these external influences helped define a successful career path. After graduating from the University of Tulsa with a bachelor’s degree in psychology in 1981, Lynette would then graduate from TU College of Law in 1984. That same year, she accepted a position with a law firm in Sarasota and passed her Florida bar exam. Now a licensed attorney, Lynette’s 38-year law practice would lead to professional excellence with board certification in two major areas of law: family/marital law and real estate law. She would also achieve certification by the Florida Supreme Court as a family mediator and circuit court mediator. Her mediation skills were further honed as a graduate of the Harvard Negotiation Project.

As impressive as these achievements are, one particular accomplishment stands out. In 2009, at the age of 50, Lynette entered a bodybuilding competition in Tampa, Florida, with 80 other female contestants, some in their 20s, and won. Wow! Yes, 50!

So why start bodybuilding? At 50, Lynette needed a new challenge. Being a gym rat most of her life, she focused on her interests and strengths. Growing up with three brothers, sports and exercise were the norm. Her dad was an influence as well. She and her brothers would see their dad exercising in front of the TV following along with fitness guru Jack LaLanne. Her strengths that enabled her to become a successful lawyer played well in her new challenge. The same disciplines applied: the four D’s (drive, discipline, dedication, and determination)

and sacrifice. Failure was not an option. Lynette approached bodybuilding with a will to win.



Facing a new challenge and stepping out of one’s comfort zone can be exciting, compelling, and strengthening. I am of the opinion that one is always a winner when facing a fear. Whether you win or lose, whether you succeed or fail, the fact that you put yourself out there shows that you have accomplished something very significant and personal. And as a result, you are a winner. Taking home the trophy is the icing on the cake. **HP**



Lynette with her dad, Cullen



Lynette with her son, Myles

Messengers of WW2 History

written by **Paul Wentz**, editor *Inside Hyde Park* and HP homeowner

Why remember World War II? According to the National World War II museum, there were approximately 85 million WWII casualties worldwide: 15 million battle deaths; 25 million battle wounded; 45 million civilian deaths. The cost of reconstruction worldwide was staggering, trillions of dollars.

Though these numbers are intellectually disturbing, the most unsettling cost must be endured by the living. War is about loss and destruction: the loss of a loved one, the loss of a home, the loss of friends, the loss of innocence, the destruction of a city, the destruction of a way of life. War is about pain, both emotional and physical. War is about extremes: buddies sharing a smoke one morning and then the death of one of them by the end of the day. Yes, war is replete with tragic irony. War is horrific.



But, again, why remember such a disturbing part of human history? Why learn about loss, about pain, about destruction? The events of war must be learned to prevent the repetition of the horrors of war. One of Hyde Park's homeowners, Fred Burki, now 96 years old, experienced the horrors of World War II. A brief article about Fred's wartime experience was published in the September 2021 *Inside Hyde Park* newsletter which can be found on the Hyde Park homeowners website. I return to Fred to briefly share with you his collection of wartime hats and their significance.

Fred's collection of hats is about sharing his wartime and postwar experiences. The first few years following the end of World War II, Fred did not see a need to speak about the unspeakable. Then he realized that at some point in the future, no World War II witnesses would be left to tell their story. According to the National World War II museum, in 2021 there were approximately 240 thousand World War II United States veterans living and about 234 dying each day.

The motivation to speak up was not just about the dying, but about the living. One day, a high school student approached Fred and asked him if he would talk to his class about World War II and his experiences. Thus began Fred's thirteen year peacetime campaign to teach middle and high school students the facts of a time they knew little or nothing about. He would start his presentations with Pearl Harbor and then weave his experiences into his narrative.

At the end of each presentation, Fred would hand out to each student a "Recognition Award" that included the student's name. The award states in part, "For today you had the opportunity to hear the personal experiences and views of World War II from someone who actually was there during that war." It also states, "You are hereby appointed a Messenger of WW2 History."

During Fred's presentations, the hats provided tangible evidence and a tactile experience of the war which was much appreciated by the students. While traveling with his wife, Myrna, in postwar countries such as France, Germany, and Russia, Fred would find World War II hats at war surplus stores, flea markets, as well as hats provided by friends and contacts.

I asked Fred what the hats meant to him personally. He stated, "They make me feel that I was part of it." He also said, "Sometimes I sit for an hour and look at the hats. Can't believe I did that, fought in a world war." And, "The hats remind me of history." And, finally, "The hats remind me of people." **HP**