

PEACE POLE DEDICATION

May 4, 2015

Presentation by Judy L. Price and Wendy J. Forrest, daughters.

Our family is honored to be here today to dedicate this peace pole in honor of Harold J. Limouze.

After WW II, Senator Robert Fulbright, head of the US Foreign Relations Committee, was instrumental in the passage of a bi partisan bill to create a fund that would open communication between students, scholars and teachers from the United States with people of other countries. He believed that the only way to world peace was to break down the barriers of fear of those who are different, through understanding, one person at a time. In 1948 the first lay ambassadors, now known as Fulbright Scholars, were sent to learn about other cultures and to bring back and share their experiences.

In 1998, fifty years later, English-born actor and movie producer Jeremy Gilley began production on a documentary titled *Peace One Day*. He then turned his peace-awareness efforts toward the United Nations, which unanimously adopted the first ever day of global ceasefire and non-violence as September 21, 2001. This resolution drew on a 1981 UN resolution that had declared the third Tuesday of September as “international day of peace”. World Peace Day has been recognized yearly since then.

The South Country Peace Group, part of the Suffolk Peace Network, has been planting peace poles throughout the area honoring men and women who exemplify peace, with the belief that seeing a peace pole will raise awareness of the need for peace in our world.

Harold Limouze was a peace-loving man who touched people’s hearts and lives in many ways. He was hired to teach general science in Sayville High School in 1946, coached the first freshman football team, taught health and biology, became assistant principal in 1956, and then served the students as principal from 1966 until his retirement in 1975. He and our mother built our home on Benson Avenue in 1950, and he lived there until last summer.

Some of you knew Harold Limouze as an educator. Some knew him through Rotary International, some through The Long Island Maritime Museum, St John’s Lutheran Church and Sunday School, the Sayville Library, the Cabinet for the Sick, or as a neighbor. He was always an involved member of the Sayville community. My sister and I knew him as “Dad”. All of you who have taken the time to be here today can agree that, like Senator Fulbright and Jeremy Gilley, Harold was a strong, principled man who followed his convictions. He never used words to tear people down, but to guide them and build them up. He believed all life is valuable.

When we say 'all life' that is exactly what we mean. The biologist in him knew that all life has a purpose. Therefore, when a spider made its way into our house, he caught it and set it free outside.

One day when we were young our Dad used an impromptu science discovery for a lesson in the uselessness of bigotry. We were young and a neighbor called us over to see an 'ant war'. With acres of land to use, an army of red ants wanted to go east and an army of black ants wanted to go west over the same two inch strip of land. The ants fiercely fought and killed each other, as they tried to march forward. Black ants sent out workers to find fallen black ants and brought them back to their side, as did the red ants. It appeared to us that they battled simply because of a different color exoskeleton and smell, neither were willing to move six inches to the side in either direction. Expensive futility.

Years later, the day after Martin Luther King Jr was murdered, Harold held a school assembly during which he talked about the terrible event. He read a poem that was written by one of the students for the school literary magazine that brought to light the belief that young children are accepting. Therefore bigotry is learned. He believed that what is learned can be unlearned and changed.

Harold believed in Acceptance of each individual- changing the world for peace one person at a time.

Harold was always an educator. Many people came to honor him at his calling hours last August, and a great number of them were Sayville High School alumni, representing classes from 1947 through 1975. One woman told us that he had fought for her to attend college despite her dyslexia. She is now a retired teacher. School colleagues told us how Harold modeled the commensurate educator, and mentored them.

Harold believed in recognizing others' ability – changing the world for peace one person at a time

Although Harold didn't always agree with everyone, he treated everyone with respect. If he became upset with a person or situation, his integrity forced him to speak up. However he believed in the two letter process. Harold would type out one letter letting out all his frustrations. Then he would type up a second letter, respectfully explaining his position using facts and logic to make his voice clear. Then he would tear up the first letter and mail the second. Today it is so easy to press 'send' without considering the person on the other end.

Harold believed in Open Communication- changing the world for peace one person at a time

Believing that in order to move forward consciously we must understand our past, and with his love of sailing, history and the ecology of Long Island, Harold became involved with the development of the Long Island Maritime Museum. As a museum volunteer he visited Long Island schools, opening the eyes of hundreds of students to the geology and to the original

inhabitants, settlers and industries of Long Island. He talked about how LI evolved from a clamming/oystering/fishing industry over two centuries ago to the Long Island we know today.

Even before Harold joined the Sayville Rotary Club, he lived the principles of the 4 Way Test

1. Is it the Truth?
2. Is it Fair to all concerned?
3. Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

Through Rotary Harold left a mark, not only on people from local clubs as a member, President of Sayville Rotary and District Governor, but on people the world over. In 1976 he led a group of young American business and professional men to Denmark for eight weeks to learn about the professional, business, educational and family life there. Years later he and our mother Edna visited the Danish people he met during his trip. These Rotarians and their families have become lifelong friends.

Harold and Edna also hosted people at their home for similar Rotary exchanges. They met men and women from Australia, Chili, Denmark, Great Britain, Nigeria, The Peoples Republic of China, The Philippines and The Ukraine.

A Nigerian man was used to living in a very male dominated society. During his stay he was busy with other Rotarians during the day, as Edna and Harold were still working. After a nice dinner in the dining room, Harold picked up his dirty dishes and started to take them to the kitchen. Their guest was quite startled by this. Harold explained that Edna also worked hard outside the home each day, but when she arrived home, instead of sitting down and relaxing as he did, she made dinner. Helping to clean up was the least he could do. Their guest said that he had never thought about it that way, picked up his own dirty dishes and carried them to the kitchen. He said he would have to bring this idea home to his own family.

Harold believed in Cultural awareness- changing the world for peace one person at a time.

Our parents are blessed with wonderful, caring neighbors. We recently learned that when the younger couple who now live next door were looking at the house, Harold went over to meet them in the yard. He told them that this was a neighborhood and that neighbors help neighbors. That relationship has been going on ever since. Today these lovely people make sure that the driveway is plowed, the trash cans are at the curb and in return their son knows he can spend time with his neighbor when he gets home before a parent. It has always been a two-way exchange.

Harold believed in Caring and support – changing the world for peace one person at a time.

After retiring, Edna and Harold took trips to many countries of the world. They toured Canada, the Caribbean Islands, Denmark, England, Scotland, Wales, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Japan and Egypt. As they traveled Harold always found Rotary meetings to attend, and on Sundays he and Edna found churches in which to worship. No matter the language, they felt at home—and met many wonderful people. With their natural warmth and inquiring minds, they brought a different view of the stereotypical American traveler to many world citizens.

They also drove across our great country from New York to California and back four times on different routes, crossed Canada from coast to coast and also visited Alaska and Hawaii, completing all fifty states and the ten provinces of Canada. Each trip gave them opportunity to meet and talk with people. They also learned much about people closer to home by continuing to attend weekly Rotary meetings and church services, always enjoying people in groups and one on one.

As most teachers, they were always ready to learn. When we were young our vacations were learning experiences. We often traveled to Canada where we toured many industries. For months ahead of our vacations, Harold wrote to companies explaining that he and his wife were educators from the United States and would like to learn about their company. We were led onto floors with hard hats, often by the head of the company, and sometimes were able to speak with the workers. My sister and I know more about how a wide variety of things are produced than most people.

Harold believed in Learning, and making friends, changing the world for peace one person at a time.

As an educator, in 2006 I (Wendy Forrest) was fortunate to be chosen as a Fulbright Lay Ambassador to Japan. One of the many seminars I attended was entitled “Peace Education”. One speaker was an elderly retired school superintendent who, during WW II, was drafted into the military. On the day the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, he happened to be home on leave. He and his infant son were protected by a ten foot wall at the back of his property. His wife who was out shopping returned hours later “in a daze” and as she put their crying, hungry baby to her breast to nurse he saw that there was no skin left on one side of her body. His beautiful bride was disfigured for life. He told us that he speaks at these seminars to share the horror of this kind of warfare and to remind us all that we must work to make sure nothing like this happens again.

There was not a sound in the room as he spoke, and not a dry eye either.

The next speaker was a second-generation survivor of Hiroshima. She, like many other Japanese children of the war, was suffering from cancer. She started out by saying that her father usually spoke at these seminars but he had recently died. So to honor him, she was going to start her presentation the way he always did. Then she said “If any of you or any of your relatives were killed or injured due to the actions of the Japanese during WWII, I want to

apologize to you.” We were amazed after hearing what we, the United States, had done to them.

Harold’s three years of military service in the United States and Europe during World War II were very difficult for him because he was such a peace loving man. During this time, Harold’s sense of duty to his country was at war with his sense of love for his fellow man. To quote his own words from a letter to our mother during this time, “This war is awful. Not only for us but millions like us no matter whether they are Japanese or German or English or any other race. I pray that God would forgive us all and set us on the true path to happiness.What a glorious world we would have. Someday it will come and if either you or I aren’t here to see it perhaps our children or our children’s children will.” For most of his life Harold tried to bury these years from his memory and his heart. He needed time to forgive himself as he worked to honor and value all people of the world.

Harold believed in Forgiveness – changing the world for peace one person at a time.

So now, thanks to the South Country Peace Group we are here honoring our father’s beliefs for peace, understanding, and compassion just as that young Japanese woman honored her father by talking to us. The people I met in Japan are still with me, in me, just as I am sure the light of Harold’s spirit is still in people here and the world over.

Harold believed that the world could be changed and become a world of peace. How can we continue his legacy? Harold showed us throughout his life that if we accept each individual’s heart, recognize each individual’s ability, learn and make friends, be sensitive to cultural differences, and practice open communication, caring, support and forgiveness, WE CAN CHANGE, one person at a time. And our example will encourage others to do the same.

Our family thanks Carol Kolar and the South Country Peace Group for choosing to honor Harold Limouze with this Peace Pole, located in the courtyard of Sayville High School. He would be so very proud to know that he still is influencing the youth of the town he loved so dearly.

We thank you.