

The Honorable Charles R. Hilty Moves On

Chuck Hilty, a quiet and steadfast leader at Foundry for four decades, today leaves his beloved church to relocate to his hometown of Bluffton, Ohio.

A longtime source of wisdom and inspiration at Foundry, Chuck served in various leadership roles, none more valuable than his service as chair of the Board of Trustees. An unceasing voice for inclusion and openness, Chuck was an early and strong advocate for joining the reconciling ministry movement and for Foundry's statement of apology to Asbury AME. He was among those urging accessibility improvements like the ramp and pew cutouts, and was the first to anticipate Foundry's bicentennial, establishing a fund to finance the event and urging early planning.

Bluffton is a small town in northwestern Ohio founded by Mennonites, German Reformers, and Irish Catholics. Chuck was one of the Bluffton Mennonites. He married another, Carole, the daughter of a Mennonite missionary who during World War II had been interned in the Philippines by the Japanese. (For those who are true crime fans, you might be interested in knowing that a year before Chuck was born, the infamous John Dillinger robbed the Bluffton Bank of \$6000.)

Chuck attended Ohio Wesleyan University for two years before graduating from Bowling Green State University. His ambition was to become a journalist, and his dream was to work for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, at the time considered one of the three best newspapers in the country. St. Louis also was the home of Chuck's favorite baseball team, the St. Louis Cardinals.

After working for his university newspapers, Chuck first joined the staff of the *Bluffton News*, then the *Bloomington Pantagraph*, and finally, realizing his dream, he joined the *Post-Dispatch* as its night wire editor. He would form life-long connections at each of these stops.

While working on *The Transcript*, Ohio Wesleyan's student newspaper, Chuck first met then-university president Arthur Flemming, at the time on leave to head up the Office of Defense Mobilization. Chuck's job was to contact Dr. Flemming monthly and ask him when he would be returning to Ohio Wesleyan. What Chuck did not yet know was that Dr. Flemming's home church was Foundry UMC in Washington.

Working at the *Pantagraph*, Chuck became acquainted with Ed Madigan, a businessman and local politician who would later be elected to Congress. In 1978 Chuck left St. Louis and moved to Washington, first as administrative assistant to Congressman Madigan and then as minority staff director of the House Committee on Agriculture. When Madigan became Secretary of Agriculture in 1991, Chuck moved to the department as an Associate Deputy Secretary and then was confirmed by the Senate as Assistant Secretary for Administration and Chief Financial Officer.

When Chuck and Carole moved to Washington in 1978 they sought a church home. Their principal requirement was that it must have an excellent choir. Their realtor, Foundry member Mary Wise, suggested they take a look at Foundry. On their first day at Foundry in 1978, the choir was in top form. Arthur Flemming, whom Chuck had badgered as a university news reporter, was seated only two rows away. Chuck and Carole were hooked. Two weeks later, Carole joined the choir and later became its assistant director.

Chuck, when you return to Bluffton, we suspect that you will split your time among the Mennonites, the Lutherans, and the Methodists. Or perhaps you will stay in the Maple Crest community, where you will be living, and attend services there. Wherever it is, they will be lucky to have you, as we have been. We have been blessed by your service, your thoughtfulness, your inspiration, and simply by your presence. You have been a gift to us all, unstinting in your support, your friendship, and your kindness. Thank you, Chuck, from all of us. We will miss you.

By Larry Slagle
Foundry Member