

Russell Van Doren Deats III

A really good singer has recently joined the Chordsmen and he may be found (where else?) in the Baritone section. Russ Deats sings with our president in the choir of Wrightsville United Methodist Church and the prez invited him to the holiday chorus. Russ enjoyed that experience and elected to keep ringing chords with the Chordsmen.

Russ was born and raised in New Jersey but as soon as he could make his own decisions in life, he came to North Carolina and has been in Carolina ever since. He was born in Dover and lived in Morris Plains and Ionia. He says the New Jersey guys would recognize Randolph Township. He is the son of Russell Deats Jr. and Cinthia Deats. His father served in the Army Air Corps in Europe in WW II and when he returned he married his high school sweetheart and they settled down in New Jersey. Russ has two older sisters and a younger brother.

Russ knew he wanted a career in the budding computer business when he graduated from high school. At that time there were only four or five universities in the East with meaningful programs and one of those was North Carolina State. He signed up for NC State sight unseen and, as a confident eighteen year old, flew to the Raleigh-Durham airport intending to grab a cab to his new home. He was surprised that the terminal was so small and he began to wonder when there was no baggage delivery system except a wooden rack on the sidewalk in front of the terminal. There was no such thing as a taxi and our bold adventurer was wondering what he had gotten himself into. About that time (sound the bugles) a deputy sheriff arrived on the scene, splendid in cowboy boots and hat. The deputy explained the geography and arranged a ride for Russ to the edge of campus, but he would have to wing it from there. He made it and had a great educational experience at State.

He did appreciate the Carolina weather and upon graduation he was happy to accept employment with Du Pont in Kinston where he had a career path that included safety engineering, line supervision, and process and control engineering. Du Pont transferred Russ to Wilmington in 1998. Shortly after his arrival in Wilmington, Du Pont elected to out-source their data systems work to Computer Services Corporation and Russ left Du Pont and joined CSC where he is currently employed. His work with CSC has provided him some very interesting assignments including stints with Shearing Plough and three years with Gulf Stream Aircraft Manufacturing. Exciting stuff.

While working in Kinston he became an active member of a Volunteer Fire Department. He served as Chief of the Lenore County Volunteer Firemen for fourteen years. One of his firefighters introduced Russ to his daughter and a fire was started that is still burning! Russ and Phyllis were married and are the proud parents of a son, "Rusty" and a daughter, Marti". Rusty and Marti both started dancing when they were about three years old and they are both professional dancers. Russ claims absolutely no dancing ability.

Russ was once an avid golfer and still enjoys the game. His life was interrupted by a severe bout with cancer in 2007 that halted his activities. Surgery, radiation and chemo have been successful in getting him back on his feet and he is thankful to be back in business.

Music has been an enjoyment in his life since he was young. He played the clarinet and sang in various groups in high school. He sang in the New Jersey All-State Choir. In college he learned to play the guitar and he sang with a band. Since college most of his singing has been with church choirs.

Russ is enjoying singing with the Chordsmen but he thinks we could be even better with some “young blood”. I think we all agree with him. Be sure to say “hi” to the new guy in the baritone section and join him in looking for some “young blood” for the Chordsmen!!