

A Diamond Legacy - 74 years later on the payroll – and 100 years of marriage – it's quite a story.

Ed Cieslinski and the Polish Brady Bunch

My 17th birthday was February 13, 1945 and I walked through the clock-room at 8 a.m. for my first day at Dow," explains Edmond Bernard Cieslinski. "I originally went in on February 6th and they told me I was too young. When I said I'd be 17 the next week they said 'come back then,' so I did. Here it is, 74 years later, and I'm still on the payroll. It's really something."

"World War II ended in September of '45 and as the new year rolled around they said anyone under 18 had to go, but my boss knew I would be 18 in five weeks and he wanted to keep me so I stayed right straight through. Then I was drafted. On May



6, 1946 I went with the very last draftees out of Bay City for WWII and was stationed in South Carolina in the Signal Corp. I got out May 1, 1947 but that was six days short of the required year of service. The Army told me they were done with me for the time being but I would be the first called up for the next war. They said you have to get married or something but my girl was in nursing school so that wasn't going to work. So I came home to Dow to work and joined the Michigan National Guard, otherwise I was going to Korea or Vietnam or whatever the next one was – we didn't know what it would be at the time. I was Grayling for two weeks out of the next six summers. And I believe I put in a weekend a month at the Midland Amory for those six years, too.

"At Dow I started out on the sewer crew and worked my way up to pipefitters and I when I was in training with the real pipefitters I made my way all the way around the plant. I was there through the strikes, including the big one in 1974. I worked about seven years on afternoons just to get a job in the shop.

"About that time I got my high school diploma and got in a little bit of college, too, through a program Dow had. I took 19 classes and the lowest of all was a C in "Slide Rule." I didn't use a slide rule at all. That was when calculators and computers were coming in and I knew I wouldn't need it but it was just part of the classes you had to take to finish the diploma. To tell you the truth I went through a couple of years of that and I quit. But then the kids got into high school and I figured I'd better finish it up so I went back. I was 40 when they took the picture – that was 50 years ago in 1968. The college work was in speech classes at Delta.

"The last 15 of my 40 years I was on supervision in the pipe and boiler

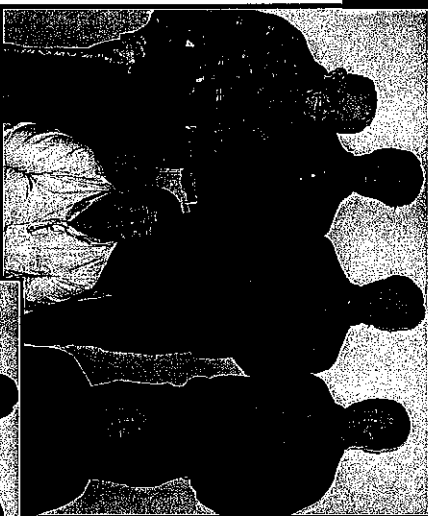


Above: Ed Cieslinski, farthest left, receiving his diploma from (farthest right) Dow's Lowell Thomas. Between them are (from left, in back) Dennis, Jerry, Steve and Ed's wife, Rita; (from left, in front) Paul and Roger. At right: Ed and the boys recreate the photo 50 years later.

shop. Two shops were in one building. I was never in the union and many of my friends in the union told me I wouldn't make as much money but becoming a supervisor was a way up and when I added up my raises I was making the same money they were and I didn't have to work overtime. The guys told me if I treated them right, they'll treat me right. And I always did. All the way through to retirement in 1985.

And that's where the Polish Brady Bunch comes in. Ed married that nursing student, Rita Marlon Pitt on September 26, 1953 and they were blessed with five sons, Dennis, Jerry, Steve, Roger and Paul. The family enjoyed many weekend camping trips around Michigan with their pop-up camper. After watching their father complete his studies as they were growing up, all five sons became engineers, four graduating from Michigan Technological University – Dennis, Steve and Paul in mechanical engineering and Terry in metallurgical engineering -- and one, Roger, serving in the Marines then graduating from Northern Michigan University in Computer Technology. Sadly, Rita passed away after a valiant fight with breast cancer on November 21, 1985.

Just five days earlier, on November 16, 1985, Albin John Wasek, a 33-year Dow employee in Plant Security, passed away after a long battle with con-



gestive heart failure/diabetes, leaving Dolores, his wife of 36 years, and their four daughters, Bernadette, Marie, Janet and Pauline.

Acquainted through their church and the children's school, Ed and Dolores knew each other in passing but it only took a cup of coffee at McDonald's after mass one weekday morning to realize they had a lot in common. On June 20, 1987, they married, forming the Polish Brady Bunch.

The Dow connection continues with Dolores' family. Her oldest, Bernadette, is an Registered Nurse with a Bachelor of Science in Community Health and earned her Certified Occupational Health Nurse designation while working at Dow Corning. Her husband, Jerry, was a 37-year Dow Corning employee, retiring as Supervisor of the Service Department. Marie's husband, Rick Larroque, worked at Dow 2009-2013 as Food

Service Chef/Manager and her daughter Renae Ratajczak is currently a Global Compensation Administrator at Dow. Janet's husband, Mark Vennix, started at Dow Corning in 1997 and is with Dow now in Service. The only daughter without a Dow connection is Pauline Glaza, the writer of this article.

While 74 years is a long time to be on a company payroll, there's an even bigger accomplishment to celebrate here: 100 combined years of marriage. Ed and Rita Cieslinski were married for 32 years; Albin and Dolores Wasek for 36 years. Together, Ed and Dolores have celebrated 32 years of marriage. That's an even 100 years and truly quite a story.



The Polish Brady Bunch: From left back row: Roger, Paul, Dennis, Steve; center row: Pauline, Bernadette, Janet; front row: Jerry, Ed, Dolores, Marie.