

Catholic War Veterans honor St. Rita's 'do-gooder'

Webster senior cited for faithful service

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

WEBSTER — Staff members at St. Rita's Parish know who to call about a leaky faucet.

Or if they need to wallpaper the rooms at the rectory, 1008 Maple Drive.

Or if the church and school's parking lots need repaving.

Or if a fund-raising effort needs a willing worker.

As soon as a need arises at the parish, more often than not, the phone at Ted Adamski's house will start to ring.

Indeed, according to his wife, Phyllis, parishioners say of the 72-year-old Adamski, "If you want to know anything, call Ted."

Adamski was honored for his efforts at St. Rita's with a Mass and breakfast on April 26, when he received the Catholic War Veteran's award as Catholic Layman of the Year 1992.

Father John T. Reif, St. Rita's pastor, said what stands out most about Adamski is "his constant willingness to serve in a way that's low-key and behind the scene. He sees all kinds of things that people just overlook, and he gets them done."

"Anything there is to do, I can do it," Adamski acknowledged. "And if I can't do it, I can get somebody to do it. 'You gotta know who to chisel,' he added with a smile.

The brother of the late Father Henry Adamski, Ted brought his "chiseling" skills to St. Rita's Church in 1953 when he and Phyllis bought the Webster



Ted Adamski peers through the band saw in his basement woodworking shop. The 72-year-old Adamski crafts several varieties of wooden birds (pictured in foreground), which he sells from his front lawn.

S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

home in which they still live.

In the years since, Adamski has served as a church usher for 39 years; been president and an active member of the Mens' Club; and has participated in various parish fund-raising and building efforts. The couple was also busy raising two daughters — Patricia and Mary.

Ted and Phyllis met through parish-sponsored dances and social events at St. Stanislaus Parish in the 1940s. They were married at the parish on July 19, 1944, while Adamski was on leave following basic training for the U.S. Navy.

Until the couple's move to Webster, Adamski had been a member of St. Stanislaus Parish, 1124 Hudson Ave., since his birth on March 17, 1921.

The couple's 1944 honeymoon was short after Adamski was selected to be a member of the initial crew for the U.S.S. Guam, a cruiser on which he saw action in the Pacific Ocean during the last days of World War II.

After he was discharged from the Navy in December, 1945, Adamski returned to Bausch and Lomb, Inc., where he had worked following his graduation from Edison Technical High School in 1939. After remaining at Bausch and Lomb until 1976, Adamski worked at Eastman Kodak Company until his retirement in 1983.

Adamski's retirement has been anything but leisurely.

"When you retire is when you're real busy," Adamski remarked. "When you're working, you come home and you're too tired."

In addition to his regular efforts on behalf of the parish, Adamski tends a large garden, fishes when he can, and tinkers in his well-organized basement workshop. He usually has several projects going on at once so that if he has to stop for some reason — whether its allowing paint to dry or the weather turns bad — he can move on to something else.

"Sometimes I wish there was 26 hours a day," he quipped.

Adamski's latest project is making what he describes as his "critters."

These critters are wooden birds with wings that whirl in the wind. Adamski cuts out the parts, hand paints them, and attaches them to wooden poles so they can be used as lawn decorations.

Adamski explained that he got the idea when one of his daughters gave him one such bird for his birthday in 1992. After looking at the bird, he thought, "I can do that."

Adamski bought a book about birds, created patterns based on the pictures, and began building the creatures,

which he offers for sale on his lawn.

He accrues some of his materials to make the birds — as well as some of his tools and supplies for his shop — at garage sales and discount stores.

Such frugality is typical of Adamski, Father Reif observed.

"He has an eye for saving money, and for utilizing resources and goods to great advantage," the Webster pastor noted.

As for the Catholic War Veteran's award, Adamski said it was a nice way of recognizing "do-gooders" who help their parishes in some way.

But Father Reif said Adamski more than deserved the recognition.

"He's just a humble guy who does his duty — and more than his duty," the priest said.

Immaculate Conception class plans its 72nd, final reunion

ROCHESTER — Members of the Class of 1921 at the former Immaculate Conception School in Rochester will hold their 72nd and final reunion on Monday, June 21.

The event will feature a Mass in the church, 445 Frederick Douglass St., followed by a brunch in the convent. Organizers said this will no doubt be the last time this class will gather for a reunion.

Members who have not been contacted or would like more details on the event should call 716/244-1929 or 244-9244.

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