Schlaefke Family



he year was 1952 and, at that time, Frankenmuth Public Schools only offered the first two years of high school. Those who wanted to continue their education were bussed to Arthur Hill High School in Saginaw, Michigan. Robert H. Schlaefke, of

Saginaw, attended Arthur Hill High School and met one of the Frankenmuth students, Doris Scharrer. This led to a romance, a marriage, and the Schlaefke name coming to Frankenmuth.

Robert H. Schlaefke was born April 16, 1934 to Hans Karl Otto Louis and Emma nee Arnst Schlaefke. He was baptized at St. John's Lutheran Church in Zilwaukee and confirmed at Zion Lutheran in Saginaw. After Robert graduated from Arthur Hill High School in 1953, he attended Central Michigan University for one year during which he joined the Naval Reserves. This led to active duty in the Navy aboard the U.S.S. Outpost with radar picket duty in the Atlantic for two years.

On April 7, 1956 he married Doris Scharrer, the daughter of Herman and Lydia nee Zehnder Scharrer of Birch Run. The ceremony was performed at St. Lorenz Lutheran Church where the Scharrers were lifelong members. They lived in Frankenmuth since 1961, when they bought the first lot in Parkview Subdivision across from the high school.

Robert and Doris had four children:

Kathryn married Jerry Trusty of Indianapolis, Indiana and had two children, Taylor and Michael. They live in Howell, Michigan.

Karyn married John Campbell of Kansas City, Kansas and they had five children: Barrett, Kirby, Rachel, and twins Holly and Laura. They reside in Leawood, Kansas.

John married Debra Wichmann of Homestead, Iowa and they had three children: Sarah, Lydia and Jonathan. They reside in Lombard, Illinois.

Jonathan is the only Schlaefke to carry on the family name.

Leanne married Scott Davis of Frankenmuth and they had three children: Travis, Layne and Jared. They reside in Frankenmuth.

Robert Schlaefke started working for Bronner Lumber and Millwork as an estimator and salesman. This eventually led to a position as salesman for a masonry and brick supply company in Saginaw – Acme Block and Supply. He later joined Frankenmuth Kitchens as a kitchen and bath designer. He pursued his career as Manager of the Kitchen Department at Vassar Building Center where he retired in 2005.

Robert's grandparents, Karl Schlaefke (August 11, 1873-July 3, 1942) and Caroline nee Ott (September 13, 1879-July 3, 1963) lived in Guestrow Mecklenburg, Germany. They had five children: Hans, William, Heini, Otto and Ella.

Heini was killed during World War II on the Russian front. Otto was wounded in the same war and remained in East Germany. Ella lived in Hamburg, Germany until her death.

Robert's father Hans came to America on the "Dampfer Deutschland" in October 1929. He was sponsored by his uncle, John Schlaefke, and his wife, Helen, who owned a shoe store on Lapeer Street in Saginaw.

Robert's uncle William came to America in 1930, sponsored by another uncle, Otto Schlaefke, and his wife Lena who lived in Zilwaukee. William married Irma Schwarz and they had one son, Kenneth. Kenneth married Sandra Kern of Saginaw and they had two daughters: Michelle, who married Kim Klein and Heidi, who married Kenneth Hagle III; they have a son, Kenneth Hagle IV.

