

DIAZ,

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The tree-shaded, pleasant park is dedicated to Donna's father, Claude Beck, who ran a service station on that spot for many years.

Donna's grandmother once owned a large farm which was taken when the Wolf Creek Dam was built, and Lake Cumberland sprang from the banks of the Cumberland River.

"If you go to the (Lake Cumberland) State Park and go to the overlook and look to the right, that was her farm," Donna said proudly.

"As long as my dad lived, he could go to the overlook," she said - and her father would point out where people lived, and explain the location of various landmarks buried underwater many years ago.

"When they (government) were buying land for the lake...she (Donna's grandmother) used that money to purchase this house," Donna said, mentioning about the home in which she dwells.

"When Grandmother Beck passed away in 1950, (Donna was four years old) "the family put (the house) up for auction, and my dad bought it," Donna said.

"I basically always lived here, and grew up here," she said.

As a young adult, Donna found herself pursuing a teaching degree when "circumstances changed the vision of what my life would be."

She ironically found herself back in the house

she knew as a child.

"I brought all my babies here...pretty much filled the house with little girls," she said with a smile.

Little did she know, she was about to embark on an incredible journey.

Donna dismisses the thought of being a trendsetter.

"At the time when I grew up, it was 'Stay at home and raise the kids,' " she said. "After I was the mother of four daughters I went back to school."

While attending Western Kentucky University, Donna's career path took a drastic detour.

"I was coming out of finals, ready to graduate with an Elementary Teaching Certificate, a professor said to me, 'Do you realize that you have a strong minor in Geography?'" Donna recalled. "I said, 'Really?'"

She had a chance to pick an extra class, "and for whatever reason, I chose that department. Those were the classes I found interesting."

It was suggested Donna pursue a Masters in that department.

A long drive home one day provided inspiration and an epiphany.

"I thought about it on the way home," she said. "I didn't have a (teaching) job...and knew I wouldn't in the immediate future. I went back and took my GRE (Graduate Record Examination) and

enrolled in the Master's Program."

"It came time to do a whole semester of what they now call job shadowing," she recalled.

There was discussion about placing her at the Barren River Area Development District, which was reasonably close to the WKU campus.

"The professor said, 'I realize you travel quite a ways (from Russell County to Bowling Green).'" Donna said "He got in contact with Pat Bell."

At that time, Bell was director at the Lake Cumberland Area Development District (LCADD), and he agreed to accept Donna as an intern.

"So I did January to May that semester at the (local) area development district," she said. "At the end of that time, they asked me to stay on through the summer through a project application process. So, I got to go out and do door-to-door surveys and do things like that to... get applications for water projects and such."

Summer ended, "And I never left," Donna laughed.

A rising star, Donna became involved in Community Development.

"I did mostly water and sewer applications at the time, and some housing rehab projects," she said.

Donna's expertise as a Community Development

Specialist was evident in the burgeoning field of grant writing.

"I'd write the applications, get them funded, and then administer them," she said.

Donna worked hard, easily made friends and important connections, and eventually became director at the LCADD.

In what some deem an impossible task, Donna was respected among both sides of the political aisle for her neutrality and fairness.

"I've tried to act and respond in such a way where nobody knew how I was registered," she said.

With a stellar work ethic, and desire to continue moving the entire ten-county area development district forward, she would still be in her office thinking, planning, doing, however...

"I was there until I had a stroke in 2016," Donna said. "I went to work on a Friday, then..."

She remembers going to church on Sunday, and "feeling funny" afterwards.

Donna recalled the holiday weekend she suffered the stroke, and the honest realization afterwards.

"I had to call my board chairman and say, 'Here's what's happened,'" she said.

Donna was challenged with "being in a wheelchair...and being retaught how to step up on a step with a leg you don't have feeling in."

With a heavy sigh she remembers deciding "it looked like I was not going to be able to go back" to work.

"I retired as soon as I got out of the hospital," she said. "I called my chairman and said I needed to clean out my office, or whatever."

"It was a God thing... just like with so many other times in my life," she said.

Faith has been a reoccurring theme in Donna's life.

She thought back to the time she felt overwhelmed with "juggling" a career and caring for her young children.

On another long trip home from Western, Donna was "driving on the parkway, the only car...you never saw another car on the parkway at that time."

"I was driving, and I said, 'God, I can't do this,'" she said. "It was almost like I heard a voice that said, 'You don't have to.' It was so emotional. It was like there was this sense of peace... that everything was going to work out, and I wouldn't have to worry about it. And that's part of my faith."

"I saw that play out when that professor put me at the ADD," Donna said. "Pat (Bell) saw something in me as an intern, and they asked me to stay on. I never sought any of it. I never applied (for that job), they asked me apply. I didn't seek it, I didn't know it was part of my future."

When she needed a job to care for her four children...that internship led to a full-time job.

She also never

expected to have an opportunity to be director of the prestigious LCADD.

"I was close to being eligible for retirement," she said, "...and that all came together pretty fast. I was given a chance."

"God has never failed with the timing of my needs," she said. "I'm grateful for that."

"I have recognized... many things are not of my doing," she said, "it truly was a God thing."

Looking back on her illustrious career, Donna fondly recalled such things as seeking and promoting unity across the entire LCADD service area.

"It's all about trying to get people to work together," she said.

Using Russell County as an example, Donna related how the cities of Jamestown and Russell Springs once both acted as separate entities in regards to industrial development.

She considers former LCADD Director John Phelps as "a man with vision," and credited long-time Russell County Judge Executive Terril Flanagan as "having enough nerve to try" - along with then Jamestown Mayor Dr. H.K. Popplewell, and former Russell Springs Mayor Kuthbert Eastham - in developing an inclusive Russell County Industrial Authority.

"I worked in other counties trying to do the same things," she said, "trying to get people to look at basic structure, and help them get chambers of commerce started, things like that - the foundations of developments."

A point of pride was helping Wayne County get six, badly-needed water projects funded.

She found it ironic several of the counties in the Lake Cumberland area "were surrounded by water...but good, clean water and service was needed by so many."

"Seeing basic needs of people met" has been rewarding, she said.

Donna recalled the efforts extended when Lake Cumberland was at historically low levels several years ago.

"We worked with the state," she said. "Funding is everything...and we got water stabilized all around the lake. All of the counties around Lake Cumberland had water intake issues. We pulled all the public officials in at the ADD office... and got a basic workplan figured out for all these folks in one day. That was a big moment."

One thing very near and dear to Donna's heart is the Lake Area Foundation - a "resource central" for ideas, information and inspiration to help make a difference in communities through charitable gifts and endowments.

"Donna was instrumental in establishing the Lake Area Foundation," friend and civic leader Janet Clark said.

Clark said she remembers being with a group when Donna "shared her vision."

"I kept hearing from my fellow ADD directors across the state," Donna said.

She said different areas of the state had foundations established which funded projects and benefited communities.

"But we were a black hole of nothing," she said. "At one time, our area seemed to be somewhat underdeveloped. So, the idea of Lake Area Foundation (LAF) was born just to serve purposes that couldn't be served other ways."

After much research and networking, Donna was instrumental in helping launch the foundation.

"I got some names of people who could help," he said. "I took that seed....and I began thinking this was possible."

Employees of the ADD received training, and the project took hold in 2012.

She regrets she "didn't get far enough along with it" before she suffered her stroke, but the foundation is bearing fruit.

A member of Cross Creek Church, Donna said she looks forward to returning to post-COVID, in-person worship.

Her aforementioned friend, Janet, has the unique opportunity of knowing Donna personally and professionally.

"I originally knew her as a (Bank of Jamestown) customer," Janet said, "and she was always pleasant."

Janet appreciates Donna's personality and perseverance.

"She worked long hours and was always concerned with the comforts of others and making everyone feel comfortable," Janet said. "She got up early and stayed up late working whether in the office or on the road. We rode together sometimes going to conferences. She was always bouncing ideas off me and others and asking our opinions on what might work best. She was always thinking out of the box as far as new ideas and what would best serve the LCADD best. It was a pleasure to serve with her."

Janet praised her friends's practicality and patience.

"I was setting beside her in a conference out of state," Janet said. "I got a call from someone that had an extra ticket to a major league baseball game box seat. I bailed on her and went to the game. She never criticized me for it."

"Funny story," Janet reminisced. "(Donna) forgot her hairbrush on a trip. My sister had accompanied me, so she called to ask to borrow my hairbrush since my sister could share with me. I could Donna as a good friend who has a good sense of humor."

At her nearly life-long home at the top of the hill in the city and county she loves and so wonderfully served, Donna Diaz maintains a practical and progressive philosophy.

"I have always felt like, and still do, that anybody who focuses and works hard can do anything they want to do," she said. "Whether you're male or female, your work ethic, your focus, your ability to go the extra mile, if you will, is really what equates to success."



ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICES TO THE DISABLED

It is the Company's policy to ensure that services are accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities where readily achievable. If accessible service is not readily achievable, the Company will ensure that its service is compatible with peripheral devices or specialized customer premises equipment ("CPE"), if compatibility is readily achievable. The Company will undertake all reasonable effort and expense to meet the telecommunications needs of its disabled customers and will work cooperatively with disability-related organizations as the opportunity may occur. The Company will evaluate accessibility needs at every opportunity, and as early as possible in the process of upgrades to existing services or establishment of new services.

A. Readily achievable accessible services will include the following:

- Basic telecommunications services and equipment;
- Computer-provided directory assistance;
- Optional calling services such as call waiting, speed dialing, call forwarding, caller ID;
- Interactive voice response systems (caller receives menus of choices)
- Voice Mail
- Access to information and documentation for products or services, including instructions and user guides;
- Access to technical support, customer service and billing services;
- Design of network architecture, including hardware or software databases associated with routing telecommunications services

B. Readily achievable compatibility will include peripheral CPE devices or specialized equipment that help make telecommunications products and services accessible to the disabled. These devices and equipment include any equipment on the customer's premises used to originate, route or terminate the Company's telecommunication's services. Such devices and equipment include, but are not limited to, compatibility with the following:

- Teletypewriters (TTYs)
- Visual Signaling Devices
- Amplifiers

The following criteria will be evaluated to achieve compatibility:

- External electronic access to all information and control mechanisms
- A connection point for external audio processing devices
- The ability to connect with TTYs
- The ability to use TTY signals.

C. Assessment of Achievability

To determine if accessibility of services or compatibility with peripheral devices and CPE is readily achievable, the Company will balance the costs and nature of the access required with available resources. "Readily achievable" means easily accomplishable and able to be carried out without much difficulty or expense. The following factors will be considered in assessment of achievability:

1. The nature and cost of the action needed;
2. The Company's overall financial resources, employee resources and the effect on these resources, or the impact otherwise on the operations of the Company.

D. Company Contacts

The following person is authorized to resolve and facilitate the resolution of accessibility and usability concerns or complaints reported by Company customers.

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