WICKED LOCAL WAYLAND
WITH NEWS FROM THE WAYLAND TOWN CRIER

Framingham pair marks 70 years

By Julia Spitz/Daily News staff
The MetroWest Daily News
Posted Sep 27, 2011 @ 12:00 AM
Last update Sep 27, 2011 @ 12:53 AM

A 1929 Essex led Milton "Mickey" Fieger to his future. When a friend invited him and his buddies to meet some of her pals at New York City's Central Park, "I had the car, so I got to pick" which girl he wanted to talk to. "I said to the guys, 'That young lady is mine.' "He made the right choice. Fieger and "that young lady," the former Ethel Krause, are celebrating their 70th anniversary today.

Like any couple, the Heritage at Framingham residents have had highs and lows since their first date in 1939. The death of their daughter, Joannie, about four years ago was particularly difficult. "I think it prompted making (Ethel) ill sooner," Fieger said, as the couple sat in the living room of their apartment in the assisted living facility yesterday morning.

Closing their business, Monique Lingerie, was also "a hard moment. It was very emotional going out looking for a job after owning a business" from 1970-85, he said. But as their son, James Fieger of Wayland, recalled, there was "frequent laughter" in the Long Island household where he grew up with older brother Hank and Joannie. He has fond memories of barbecues with family and friends, and throwing the football with his brother and dad when Mickey got home from work.

Family was always the couple's top priority, said Mickey Fieger, but the secrets to reaching the platinum anniversary mark are shared goals and compromise. In looking back, "we adjusted to whatever was," he said of the life he and Ethel have shared.

"We married. We had a family. We had problems, financial. We managed. She understood. She had chores and I had mine. We always discussed any problems we may have had and came to a conclusion we could both agree on. The success of our marriage is we always compromised.

"She wasn't demanding. She understood our financial position and we lived within that financial position. And when it came to the family, Ethel was more the steering instrument," he said of the woman he married when she was 19 and he was 21.

World War II separated the couple for four years soon after they said "I do." "I ended up in the (Army) Engineer Special Brigade. I don't know why. I was in the lingerie business," he said. He was sent to Bristol, England, and "we invaded Utah Beach on June 6, 1944."

Later, "I was in Dachau for a month," shortly after the liberation of the concentration camp. He was sent to help "because I had studied German in high school." Seeing and talking with survivors, "I'll never forget it," he said.

After the war, "I was stationed in Le Havre (France). As the boys were going home, I was informing them about the GI Bill and all the rights they could avail themselves of. Then I finally came home in 1946."

Contributed photo

Milton "Mickey" and Ethel Fieger of Framingham

Their first son was born the following year. They were active in the PTA when their children were growing up, said Fieger, and dancing was a shared passion for the couple.

"We did the cha-cha and the foxtrot and the waltz. When I was young and healthy, I used to tap dance. I used to try out for amateur hours in the Bronx. (Friends) used to come out and applaud loud enough so I got movie passes" as a prize. The Fiegers retired to Florida in 1986, and came to Framingham to be closer to their son's family last year.

Society has changed considerably since Mickey first spotted Ethel sitting on a rock at Central Park. "They seem to value completely different things. ... Greed. There seems to be more greed among people today." Still, he's optimistic about what lies ahead. "I feel I'll still see this country become great again," said the 91-year-old. And "I'm waiting to see what else new will be on the iPad."

(Julia Spitz can be reached at 508-626-3968 or jspitz@wickedlocal.com. Read the Spitz Bits blog at http://blogs.wickedlocal.com/spitzbits.)

Copyright 2011 Wicked Local Wayland. Some rights reserved