

POINTS OF VIEW

Farmington Hills man designs his own retirement

To put it bluntly, we were downright worried. I mean, the man lives alone, doesn't golf, doesn't like Florida, doesn't surf the net, and don't even talk to him about using a VCR. What would Dad do when he retired? That was the question my brother and I, as well as other family members and friends, pondered.

After some 40 odd years of dentistry, my father finally retired two years ago and I have been so impressed at how his retirement has evolved that I wanted to let others know that there can be quite a full retirement for those whose parents fit such a description as my dad's.

During his 40 some years of general dentistry, my father used to tell us he was really a frustrated architect and designer. Now that the grind of the day-to-day work week has been lifted, that side of my father has blossomed. In fact I would say that during those 40 years, ideas have been percolating and now he seems to be brewing up a whole houseful of wonderfully creative ideas.

Today my father lives in a Farmington Hills condominium. He has always been interested in contemporary design. Herman Miller and Knoll were familiar names to my brother and I as we were growing up. My dad had put together several tastefully decorated households in the various places in which he lived, with furniture of his favorite designers.

My father also developed a fascination and appreciation for Japanese design, including

Japanese gardens, as well as architecture and interior design. I think it might be the sleek and simple lines of both contemporary and Japanese design that attracted my father to both. I remember calling home from college years ago and having my father answer the telephone out of breath from having just run inside the house. He had been outside moving rocks and clearing away the brush in the back yard to make a Japanese garden. The garden included areas of small, white, well groomed stones as well as huge rocks specifically placed (don't ask how) amidst bonai-like trimmed bushes. He even built a wooden Japanese-like structure in the middle of his garden that later would serve as the chupah for my wedding. It was beautiful. This garden would turn out to be the precursor to his current evolving tour de force, his condominium.

He had dabbled in some furniture making years back and in fact built a wonderful piece that went at the foot of his king sized bed. It was the width of the bed and was made of blond wood. My father polished it until it was incredibly smooth. He added an Asian flare with the trim. It opens up and functions as a decorative item as well as storage space. He also built a set of dresser drawers that matched this bed-end. He went out and bought some lighter that looked like miniature shell screens and put them on top of the dresser to tie in all the pieces of furniture. The bed-end has since been modified and incorporated into a

sleek wall unit in the dining room.

My father started out making several trips to Pier 1 buying a number of bubble light fixtures. At the same time, he was collecting cattails at the side of the road and putting them in large black vases. It was always the simple look of it all that he liked. One thing seemed to lead to another. He arranged small stones on an end table in his living room - Japanese garden style; he hand-painted Japanese symbols on strategic pieces of furniture. I particularly liked the story about a bonsai plant that someone gave him that later died but "came back to eternal life" when my father spray painted it green. He carefully placed a three-foot-tall samurai statue that a close friend gave him at an entranceway into the living/dining room of his home.

Then came the phone call telling me about the tuna noodle casserole. I'll never forget it. We were talking about my father's condo when all of a sudden he started talking about tuna noodle casseroles and the black trays in which they are packaged. What on earth did they have to do with the interior decor of his condo? An idea came to my father to turn them into a window treatment in his kitchen. He outlined the window with these black tuna noodle dishes, cut a red dot about the size of a quarter and put one in each dish. On the top of the window, centered he designed his version of the mounted swordfish wall hanging, which was not of a swordfish but of that rare breed

of fish, the "tuna noodle," made out of red and black felt, one of the casseroles, dishes and spaghetti noodle tentacles coming off the back end of the fish.

As my father has commented to me several times, it almost seems like the tail is wagging the dog as far as his condo is concerned. One idea leads him to another.

When my father is not busy working on one of his interior design projects, usually he can be found at the Jewish Community Center playing racquetball and working out. He has been a staunch member of the center for years and has recently expanded his almost daily workout program to include weight training and a 1-2 mile walk. He has also become somewhat of a personal trainer for a close friend of his who suffered a partial stroke. He also enjoys reading, playing a good game of gin rummy, meeting periodically with a group of his friends who formed a supper club some 30 years ago, coming out to visit my brother and me in Chicago and Boston, respectively, and being with his grandchildren.

I am not so worried anymore about what my father will do with his life now that he is retired. He is designing and fashioning his life and environs in a fulfilling, engaging and creative way and all without any of the usual accoutrements of retirement as many have come to know it - rounds of golf or winters in Florida. It can be done and I couldn't be prouder of him if I tried.



Enjoying: Julius Feld, a retired dentist, has discovered a new life with his interests and grandchildren, such as Raphael.

Deborah Fabiszewicz is a former Farmington area resident, now living near Boston, who asked for the opportunity to write about her father, Julius Feld, who lives in Farmington Hills.

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nightspot Sept. 24.

During the conversation inside of his pickup truck, Kuchciak suggests "Ice" carjack the intended victim on I-696 near his Milford workplace because he typically carries large sums of cash.

She also proposes "Ice" follow D'Annibelle for a couple of days from work to his Commerce Township home before committing the murder. Halloween would be a good time to do the hit since there is a lot going on, she offers.

Mekoosi assures her not to worry about the body. "I'll chop that m----- up. He won't be seen again," he says.

The pair agree on a price, \$3,000, with \$1,500 paid up front. However, Kuchciak doesn't give the undercover officer the money.

Afterward, Kuchciak's attorney said she got caught up in the undercover officer's bravado.

She likely went along with the plot to appease the 6-foot-3, 242-pound officer posing as a dangerous assassin. He put the idea of murder in her head, her attorney said.

"You're talking about a lady who has a very ruptured past whose child was just taken away from her. Our argument is you're talking about a woman who is very susceptible to suggestions."

Neil Rockind
—Defense attorney

her," said Neil Rockind, Kuchciak's attorney. "Our argument is you're talking about a woman who is very susceptible to suggestions."

In an earlier conversation between Kuchciak and the informant, she stated she didn't want any involvement, Rockind said. The prosecuting attorney dismisses that as her being coy since she believed the jailhouse phone call was monitored.

"The tape speaks for itself," said Brett Chudler, Oakland County assistant prosecutor. "... She didn't have to take the pager number. She didn't have to call the hit man. She didn't have to get into the car with him."

A court-ordered forensics report deemed Kuchci-

ak fit to stand trial. She was charged with assault in 1988, 1995 and 1996, the latter two involving dangerous weapons.

D'Annibelle had a "stormy" relationship with Kuchciak, her attorney said. D'Annibelle filed a protection order against her.

The forensics report might explain why she appears on tape as a willing participant in a conspiracy to murder D'Annibelle, Rockind said. "Paula is capable of that, hiding emotions and playing a role," Rockind said. "That's what she was doing here."



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRECKEN

Consoling: Paula Marie Kuchciak's family has been in court for support.

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