

A Tribute to Robert Lowell Weiss
Wooster Rotary Club
June 5, 2006

It is truly a privilege for me to tell you a little about our distinguished, long-time member and Past President, Robert Lowell Weiss.

Bob grew up not far from here in Lakewood, Ohio, where he actually met his wife, Lucille, for the first time when they were both in the 7th grade. But Bob reports that he didn't realize the difference between girls and squirrels for about four more years, so they didn't begin dating until they were in the 11th grade.

The courtship lasted through six years and long periods of separation while Bob pursued his education. The couple finally tied the knot in 1942, with Bob in graduate school, and facing active duty in the Navy. Bob proudly points out that the vows have lasted 64 years, and adds, with a sly smile, that it looks like they're here to stay. Bob and Lucille have 2 children, Barb and Robert, Jr., 3 grandchildren, and 3 great-grandchildren.

After graduating from Lakewood High School, Bob went off to College at Colgate University in Hamilton, NY. An Economics major, Bob also had time for some extracurricular activities. He was a member of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity, and served as its President during his senior year. Bob was also the drum major in the marching band, after being "discovered" in speech

class, where he gave a “how to” speech on baton twirling.

Following his graduation from Colgate, it was off to graduate school at Harvard, where Bob earned his MBA.

(Pretty impressive for a guy who didn't know girls from squirrels just ten years earlier!)

Bob then entered the U.S. Navy as an Ensign in the Bureau of Ordnance. You will recall that Bob and Lucille were recently married. When the time came for Bob to report for active duty, the newlyweds set off cross-country by train for the naval base in San Francisco. Bob recalls, with a chuckle, that all was well until he and Lucille got to the upper berth to which they had been assigned on the train, only to discover that it was already occupied...by two young ladies.

Bob spent 18 months of active duty during WWII in the Kwajelein Atoll in the Marshall Islands. As the Base Ordnance Officer, his primary responsibility was arming B-24 bombers for patrol missions in the Pacific, but he also managed the canteen, laundry, barbershop, shoe repair and tailor shop as the Ship's Service Officer and Permanent Officer of the Day.

After completing his service in the Navy, Bob worked for the Glidden Company for five years, ultimately as paint production manager. At about that time, the Wooster Brush Company was interested in starting its roller production division, and Bob was

enlisted by Stan Welty to come to Wooster in 1951 to set up the production unit.

Bob enjoyed a long and distinguished career with Wooster Brush, rising through the ranks from Roller Division Manager to Plant Superintendent, Production and Inventory Control Manager, Purchasing Agent, and eventually, Vice President of Manufacturing and Secretary of the Board. Since his retirement in 1985, Bob continues to hold the positions of Board member and Secretary, and to serve as a consultant to the Company.

Along the way, Bob spent three years in the early '70's in Reno, Nevada, setting up a plant to service the Company's west coast customers. It was there that Bob's affiliation with Rotary began. Bob had been a member of the Wooster Lions Club before his stint in Reno, serving as its President shortly before his departure.

While in Reno, he was invited to attend a Rotary meeting by Harry Sands, another Wooster transplant, and long-time Wooster Rotary Club secretary. Bob found the Reno Rotary meetings, which were held in one of the casinos, much more interesting than the Reno Lion's Club meetings, and became a convert. Bob joined our Club upon his return to Wooster in 1973, and served as President of the Club in 1978-79.

In addition to being a wonderful family man, and a dedicated servant of his country, his employer, and his service clubs, Bob has a long and impressive list of

service to his community and his profession. He has been a member of the American Brush Manufacturers Association for 50 years, and served as its President in 1974.

He was a member of the Boys Village Board of Trustees for 28 years, and was head of its Foundation Committee. He was a member of the Board of Directors of Bank One from 1977-1984. He was also a Wooster United Way campaign leader in 1975, has served on the YMCA Board, was Cubmaster of Pack 66, and a member of the Toastmaster's Club.

Today, Bob and Lucille enjoy 6 months of the year in Pompano Beach, FL, and six months in Wooster.

Bob says of his life, to date, that if he had the chance, he wouldn't change a thing.

Bob, thank you for your service above self in so many capacities, and for allowing me to share your heart-warming and inspirational story with the Club. You are a perfect example of the extraordinary caliber of distinguished individuals we have been privileged to honor during the past year.