

meant to be

DC WAS A GREAT EXPERIENCE

Mike and Kathy Paul look back warmly on DC and are excited about their upcoming retirement

by Michele Tinker, Director of Annual Giving

E.T. Paul Co., the tire business on Parsons Avenue, has been a fixture in Columbus for more than 100 years and is now being operated by the fourth generation of Pauls, DC graduate Mike Paul '73. Mike is married to the former Kathy Didovich, also a 1973 DC graduate.

Mike told the story of his great-grandfather Edward Thomas Paul, who was a blacksmith and veterinarian. One of the services "Eddie" Paul provided to his customers was putting rubber-covered pads on horses' hooves, thus muting the "clop-clop" of the carriage horses for his more particular customers. E.T. Paul transitioned from horse-drawn carriages to horseless carriages, as soon as the vehicles came to Columbus. The company he founded has been providing high-performance tires and wheels ever since. Throughout the history of the business, it was a father-son operation. After college, Mike worked with his father up until 1983, when Big Mike passed away.

Mike and Kathy have two sons, ages 29 and 26, but they don't see a fifth generation coming into the business. Their older son is in medical school in Grenada. The younger son sold real estate in Costa Rica for two years, which sparked such an interest in ecology that he hopes to incorporate in his future career.

However, there are no plans to close the doors on this long-established business. Mike has developed a transition program for his managers to buy the tire company by 2010.

Kathy, a New Jersey native, was connected to DC by a college referral service. She firmly believes that DC was where she was meant to be, and Mike echoes that sentiment. Both of them call their time at Defiance a great experience, and they discussed how DC differed from



other campuses. Across the nation, colleges were experiencing anti-war riots and demonstrations, but Defiance didn't have a lot of radical influence and was relatively isolated from the unrest of the times, according to the Pauls.

"It was a wonderful place to mature, a very nurturing atmosphere where people took the time to help each other," Kathy said. An example of that was when she needed a history credit but couldn't fit the class into her schedule. Professor Eugene Andrews agreed to work with her individually. Each week she read a book he assigned, they would meet and discuss it, and she got the credit she needed.

Greek life was important to both Kathy and Mike. She was an Alpha Xi Delta, and

Mike was a Theta Xi, and they've maintained many of their college friendships.

After graduation, Kathy went back east and taught fifth and sixth grades in New York for a couple years before she and Mike were married. Since then the two of them have been active in a wide range of civic and educational organizations in Columbus. Mike is also involved with Defiance College's efforts to build a new field house.

The Pauls' plans for retirement include indulging their love for travel. This year, they spent a month in Naples, and Mike took golfing trips to Ireland and Quebec.

Talking about their years since college, Kathy smiled and said, "It's been a great journey." And it sounds like it's just beginning. ♦