

# RAY & GEORGIA KAUFFMAN

Members since 1948 & 1954

## Ray Kauffman

### Birth Date:

August 1, 1935

### Place of Birth:

Quincy, PA

### Military Service:

U.S. Air Force (Cold War)

## Georgia Kauffman

### Birth Date:

April 12, 1934

### Place of Birth:

Hagerstown, MD

## Did You Know?

After high school graduation, Ray and Georgia followed in the footsteps of Georgia's parents, taking jobs with Fairchild Aircraft Division. There they built C119 and C123 cargo planes that were used to carry tanks and troops during the war. Later, Ray would fly in one of these planes when he was deployed to Alaska.

## Favorite Hymns:

Blessed Assurance

How Great Thou Art

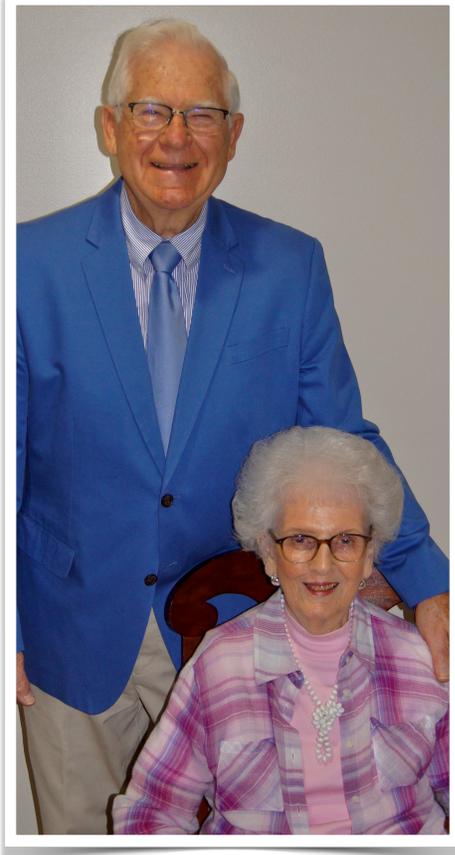
Ray's family moved around a lot when he was young. He says that each of the six boys in his family were all born in a different place, because Ray's father 'farmed on the half.' He farmed land owned by someone else, forfeiting half of the yearly harvest as rent. When Ray was four years old, his father was finally able to purchase a 25-acre farm, located near the Letterkenny Army Depot.

Georgia grew up in a family of five children, including Georgia and her twin sister, Dorothy. Georgia remembers facing many challenges as she grew up. Her father had only completed a 4th grade education, and struggled to find a job that paid enough to support his family. Although both of Georgia's parents worked for Fairchild Aircraft Division, there wasn't ever enough money, and Georgia remembers that she and her siblings would sometimes be forced to beg for bread.

Eventually, Georgia's family moved to Chambersburg after they were evicted from the home they were renting in Hagerstown, when the landlord decided that he no longer wanted to rent to a family with children. As a teenager, Georgia remembers walking past our church and hearing the children singing inside. She says she desperately wanted to be allowed to join them. Within a couple of years, this wish would be granted, when she started dating Ray.

Ray's family had joined First Evangelical United Brethren when they moved to Chambersburg. Ray remembers attending faithfully: "When Sunday came, we knew where we were going. There was no debate." Some of Ray's earliest memories are of Sunday School in the sanctuary, where all six different children, youth, and women's classes were assigned to a section of pews, and the mens' Bible Class met off to the side. Ray also remembers his catechism class with Rev. Christman, which he would walk to from Central High in the afternoons.

When Ray and Georgia started dating, they often attended Sunday evening services together, or went roller-skating at Red Bridge. They were married by Rev. Ernst one year after their high school graduation. Then



Ray enlisted in the Air Force in 1957 and was assigned to ground radar at a base in Alaska, followed by airborne radar at Otis Air Force Base in Massachusetts.

It was during his time in Alaska that Ray had his first ministry experience. The base didn't have a chaplain in residence, and when Ray and a friend found out that the traveling chaplain wouldn't be available for Easter services, they went to their commanding officer with a proposal to hold their own. Ray says the men took turns praying, leading hymns, reading scripture, and giving the message. During this time, Ray began to sense a call to full-time ministry. After being discharged from the service, Ray worked at the Chambersburg Post Office, while he prayed about entering the ministry. He was then recommended for ministry by FUMC and became a student pastor at St. John's UMC, while also pursuing a social sciences degree from Shippensburg University. When it came time for his senior year internship requirement, Jenny Kohler, who was working with the Franklin-Fulton County Agency on Mental Health, helped to arrange it. Ray later returned as the prison's full-time chaplain after he graduated from seminary. He held this position for eleven years, working to befriend the prisoners, helping them work through the problems they were facing, and coming alongside them as they transitioned back into regular life after serving their sentences. Ray organized church ball teams to play games at the prison and arranged for inmates who were interested in singing in the church choir, to be released for Sunday morning worship services.

Eventually, Ray moved from prison ministry into migrant ministry, where he worked to build connections between the churches and migrant workers in our community. As Ray and Georgia spoke about their experiences in these two ministries, I couldn't help but think that they have walked in the footsteps of Jesus, who always seemed to be moving toward the outcast and downtrodden. Sadly, like Jesus, Ray and Georgia were also misunderstood for their decision to minister to underprivileged populations. Ray remembers the response he received when he first announced his plans to go into prison ministry: "Some people asked if I was leaving the ministry, but I explained that I thought ministry was needed outside the walls of the church just as much as inside of it."

Ray and Georgia are grateful for the support that they received from their Share Group at FUMC, which helped them through many of the struggles and difficulties of life and ministry. This group included Ted and Margie Heckman, Jack and Mary Lou Williams, Les and Betty Stouffer, Dorothy Witter, Martha Spear, and Evelyn McClaren. And Ray says that John Ile has always been a great friend and colleague in ministry, who continues to offer support and encouragement even now.

Ray could also always count on support from Georgia, as she worked faithfully alongside him in ministry. And he remembers the times that his daughters, Michelle and Angela, helped to provide music as some of the highlights of his ministry. Georgia shares a story from one of her visits to the prison, when a man who had just been convicted of murder sat down beside her at dinner and asked, "Aren't you afraid to sit beside me?" Georgia said that she pretended to be unaware of any reason that she should be frightened, all the while shaking in her boots knowing full well who he was. She talks about the power of prayer to get you through difficult moments like this.

Georgia recalls a few of the many other times when God has answered her prayers. Once was when she was asked to speak and pray in front of the congregation for the first time, she remembers telling God, "I don't have it. But You do. You can come through me." And He did. Another time, she remembers asking God to send the people He wanted for their prison small group, which ended up being a wonderful collection of parents of the incarcerated. Remarkably, Georgia learned how to pray in the workplace rather than the church. While she worked as a receptionist for Dr. Him, Georgia says that every day started with the staff kneeling together in prayer.

Ray and Georgia have both had health issues, but they feel that God has blessed them in many ways over the years. Now, Georgia's health issues have brought a new struggle. Georgia misses their ability to be active in helping others: "We were both go-getters, and now we can't do the things we once could." She misses serving with Hungry Hearts, a ministry she helped with for 24 years. And Ray adds his own sadness: "It's hard watching Georgia suffer when I can't do much about it. She has always been my support. So this is a challenge for me." But the story that Ray and Georgia tell of their life and faith is testimony to this certainty: God sees their need and will walk with them now, as He always has.