

Gerry Marnien



First I would like to say how honored I am to be chosen for this quarter's profile.

I grew up in a small town on the outskirts of Philadelphia. I moved to California with my mother and family between my junior and senior year of high school when my father passed away. My mother wanted to be close to her family who had steadily migrated from Philly to California following World War II.

I met my wife Tina in January, 1972 while employed at my first full time job. We were married in September, 1973, and we will be celebrating our 42nd anniversary this year. We have two children, Janine and Michael.

Janine is a USC Graduate with degrees in Print Journalism and Political Science. She earned her Master's in Theology and is now the Elementary Faith Formation Coordinator at her Parish. She met her husband Ben while at USC and they have been married for 12 years. They live in the Twin Cities area where Ben grew up. Ben majored in Gerontology at USC and is now the Resident Services Director at an Assisted Living/Skilled Nursing Facility.

After playing baseball for a year at the JC level, Michael transferred to Cal State University Fullerton and majored in Kinesiology. He then pursued a degree in teaching, completing his Master's degree and credentials in Special Education and now is a Special Education teacher. He was also an assistant baseball coach at the high school level for 9 years. He met his wife Tonya, who is a Teacher's Aide assisting with special needs children, at the school where he teaches and they have been married for three years. In addition to Tonya's children, Justin and Skyler, Michael and Tonya have blessed us with our granddaughter, Chelsea, who will be turning two this month.

I landed my first job in December of 1971 at a manufacturing company specializing in high performance exhaust systems for motorcycles. I started out as a sheet metal lay-out mechanic and eventually worked my way up to be the Plant Foreman in charge of production, shipping and procurement. Although I was enjoying what I was doing, I always aspired to go to work for a large company. That dream was fulfilled when I was offered a position with the Los Angeles Times in January, 1977. I enjoyed a wonderful 34 year career there starting out as an Account Executive calling on Retail Accounts and eventually becoming the General Manager of their newsrack and retail display manufacturing facility a position I held for over 25 enjoyable and rewarding years. At the high points we were responsible for over 40,000 coin operated newsracks and over 12,000 retail outlets and had a crew of over 60 full time employees and temp help. Along the way I had the opportunity to work with many wonderful people both within the Los Angeles Times as well as externally including retail partners developing new retail displays for our product, City Councils developing newsrack ordinances and protecting our First Amendment rights and, of course, being introduced to the Illuminators by my good friend Bob Paul. I am particularly proud and honored to have been selected as a Highlite and extremely enjoyed my time serving on the Board. Unfortunately, the newspaper industry has been in a steady decline for quite some time and in 2009 it was decided to close down the manufacturing facility. I remained on with the Times for two more years but in 2011 I retired from the Times to pursue another dream and started a business with my wife Tina and son Michael specializing in metal and wood display refurbishing as well as the design and production of new display requirements for the retail industry. It's been a great four years working with Tina and Michael doing something I really enjoy.

On the recreation side, as a family we enjoyed camping in our travel trailer and camped up the California and Oregon coast, Rogue River, Port Angeles Washington, Yosemite National Park, Las Vegas and Yellowstone. I love road trips. Tina and I have made a few to visit Janine and Ben in Minnesota and friends in Colorado. I also enjoy sports (I am still a diehard Philly fan), golfing and woodworking.