

All About Us...

Epworth Villa has some very distinguished residents, and Mildred and Ferdie Deering certainly fit that description!

Mildred was born and raised in Denison, Texas, and they met at the Baptist Church in Denison while Ferdie was working on a newspaper there in 1932. Mildred invited Ferdie to a New Year's party at her house, intending to pair him with another young lady also named Mildred. As it happened, Ferdie preferred our Mildred and they were married in 1935. They have been married for 55 years!

Also born in Texas, Ferdie and his family moved to Ada, Oklahoma, where he attended East Central State College (now East Central University) and was Sports Editor and Business Manager for the college newspaper, the *East Central Journal*.

This was just the beginning of a long and illustrious career in journalism for Ferdie. In 1931, he became a reporter for the Ada Evening News. Ferdie served as Editor of the *Farmer-Stockman* magazine for thirty years. During that time, the magazine reached an all time high circulation of 435,000! Ferdie was contributing regularly to the news and editorial columns of the *Daily Oklahoman*. He also served as a member of the Board of Directors and the OPUBCO Management Committee.

Ferdie retired in 1975 and was honored as a Distinguished Alumnus of East Central University. He also received the Reuben Brigham Award of Agricultural Communicators in Education and in 1983 received the Henry G. Bennett Distinguished Service Award, the highest honor given by Oklahoma State University.

Throughout his career, and in his retirement, Ferdie has authored an impressive collection of published books, several of which can be found in the Epworth Villa library. Titles include, "USDA, Manager of American Agriculture" (1945); "Look at Oklahoma" (1975), a bicentennial project; "From the Grassroots Up" (1980); "Work Can Be Fun" (1978); "History of Oklahoma Farm Bureau" (1981).

Ferdie's accomplishments are impressive, to say the least, but Mildred's are equally impressive. While Ferdie was away on business a great deal during the early stages of their marriage, Mildred kept



Mildred and Ferdie Deering

everything going on the home front. She feels her primary assignment was raising their two children (Ferdie claims she did an excellent job of that!). Mildred is an accomplished artist, painting in oils and in acrylics, and they have many of her works displayed in their beautiful apartment here at Epworth Villa. She has given away some of her paintings and has sold some as well.

One of Mildred's biggest projects was starting and completing the genealogy of her family, publishing it and getting it distributed to her family. The title is (referring to her father): "Mr. Henry: A Twig on the Jennings Family Tree". There is a copy of it in the Epworth Villa library.

Mildred also started a fine library in their church, the Nichols Hills Baptist Church (now the Quail Springs Baptist Church on May Ave.).

And as if all these accomplishments weren't enough, both Ferdie and Mildred have, since retirement, purchased and learned to play a Kimball organ, now a fixture in their Epworth Villa apartment. Although their modest claims that they only play for their own enjoyment (no concerts, please), neighboring residents will attest to their growing talent.

Ferdie and Mildred have two children. Their son Robert is a Supervisor in the Regional Office of FAA in Fort Worth. Recently, Robert was recognized for 15 years of error-free work. He and his wife have sons. Ferdie and Mildred's daughter, Cheryl Wilson, is a Dietary Consultant for eight nursing homes in the Ponca City area. Her husband, Dick, is an Accounting Supervisor for Conoco. Cheryl and Dick have four sons and one daughter.

The Deerings lived just two miles south of Epworth Villa, and



Ferdie Deering relaxes in his private study surrounded by his awards and Mildred's paintings.

were able to watch it being constructed. "In the fall of '89 I was very sick and had to have two emergency operations (both critical)," Ferdie recalls. "I was in intensive care for two weeks. My doctor gave me a plastic aorta and a 10% chance of survival. He told me I had to take it easy and no yard work!"

So he and Mildred looked at all the different retirement communities. It didn't take them long to select Epworth Villa.

"We like having everything under one roof," explains Mildred. "The relaxed lifestyle and the Life Care were the determining factors in our choosing Epworth Villa."

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