



Dick and Jill Beardsley: Bringing People Together through Generosity

By Ethan Larson

Photos by: Image Photography & Courtesy of Beardsley Family

Despite hectic schedules during their long and illustrious careers, the Beardsleys have been able to bring people together in various ways. They are leading figures in our community and the hospitality industry. They make everyone who walks through their door feel special and welcome. Guests range from far away tourists on a once in a lifetime vacation to the many citizens of Bemidji whom they serve volunteer meals to each month. This is the amazing and heartwarming story of Dick and Jill Beardsley.

Since he was a small boy, Dick Beardsley has loved the water and fishing. He recalled how he started as a guide, "I've been a fishing guide since I was 12. I started on Lake Minnetonka down by the Cities. My true calling was the north woods, though! I spent a lot of time growing up fishing with my dad in the Bemidji area. My dad had a good friend in Bemidji, Bernie Bachman, who was a fishing guide. He was my mentor growing up and I learned so much from him! I've been guiding in the Bemidji/Park Rapids/Detroit Lakes area for 30 years. But since we moved to Bemidji almost two years ago, most of my guiding takes place in the Bemidji area, but I still do quite a few trips every year to the DL area. Over the years, I have had folks from as far away as China and England as guide clients."

The passion for marathon running grew in college for Beardsley. He ran his first marathon in Wisconsin in 1977. He has raced in close to 100 since then, which includes his favorite, the Grandma's Marathon in Duluth. Jill started running in February, 2000. Her favorite marathon is the London Marathon, in which she ran in a Cinderella gown, with her son, Christopher.

Dick graduated college with an Associate Degree from the University of Minnesota-Waseca. In addition to being a fishing guide, he also owned and operated a very successful dairy farm from 1982-1992. He currently is a world-renowned motivational/inspirational speaker. Jill has a paralegal certificate. She worked for a law firm for over 22 years and Geosyntec Consultants for 10 years, both in Austin, Texas. They both own and operate Lake Bemidji Bed & Breakfast. She also works part-time for the Bemidji Area Chamber of Commerce and negotiates all of Dick's speaking opportunities.

They met in 2004, while Dick was speaking at the Austin, Texas, Marathon. They were married in November 2007. They have three grown children, Christopher (21), Matthew (20) and Andrew, an Army veteran, who passed away in October 2015, at the age of 34. Christopher and Matthew live in the Austin, Texas, area and visit





Minnesota several times a year. They also share their father's love of fishing and the outdoors.

The Beardsleys are proud owners of Riley, a seven year old male Pekingese and Scarlet, a year and a half old female Golden mini-doodle.

In their free time, Dick likes to run and snowshoe. He is also very active in the community and an avid sports fan. He volunteers at Visit Bemidji, the Bemidji Area Chamber of Commerce and takes folks out fishing from area nursing homes. Jill volunteers for the United Way of the Bemidji Area, the Bemidji Rotary and the Chamber of Commerce. She also likes to bake, run, lift weights, read and puts up a free lending library for residents.

They explained how they give back to their community, "We host a monthly breakfast for the police department and all the major holidays, we cook a turkey dinner for all the city police, firefighters, sheriff's department, state patrol and first responders who are on duty that day."

"The homes along Lake Boulevard are beautiful. Lake Boulevard is a small one way street which is part of the Paul Bunyan Trail that circles Lake Bemidji. There are very few cars, but lots of folks walking, running and riding their bikes. Our neighbors are the best! We help each

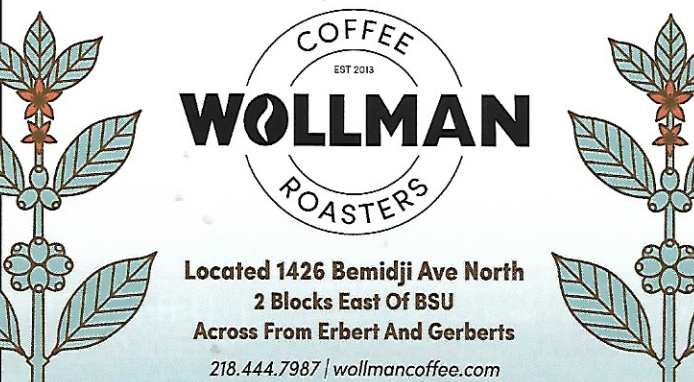
other; we share food, get together and are always watching out for each other. The Bemidji community is awesome," they said, describing their neighborhood.

The Beardsleys' special message for Bemidji residents is, "They have all been so welcoming to us. They made us feel right at home from day one!"

Jill explained her life-long dream of owning a bed and breakfast and meeting some wonderful guests, "In the back of my head, I always thought I'd like to own a bed and breakfast. I love the idea of creating a place that people can relax and be pampered and be treated with kindness and feel extra special for a period of time. Dick is from Minnesota, living here for 50 years and moved to Texas for nine to marry me. When we started the conversation of having a bed and breakfast, he immediately started looking for an inn for sale in Minnesota, or maybe in Bemidji. He has wanted to live in Bemidji since he was a child fishing in Lake Bemidji with his father. The guests we

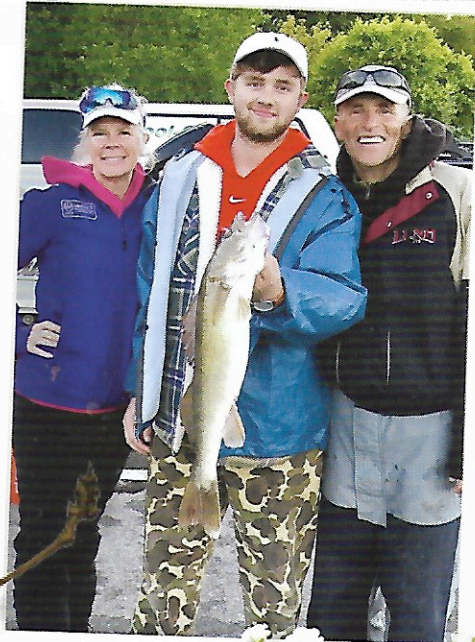
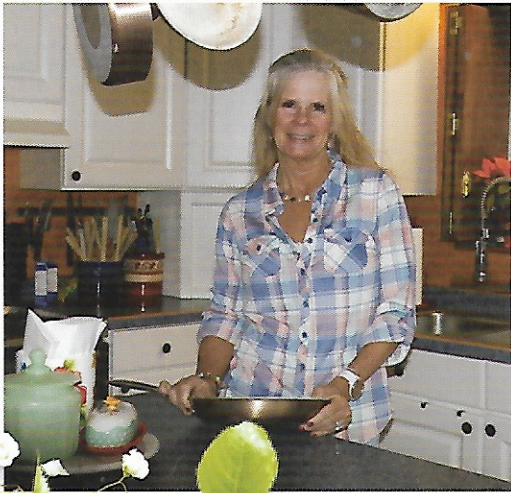


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have met have always a good story, of either why they are traveling to Bemidji or what the house reminds them of.”

Beardsley owns Dick Beardsley Fishing Guide Service, a year-round service not only for guests, but tourists and area residents who would like to experience fishing our gorgeous lakes. For more information, contact him at 218-556-7172.

Dick explained a particular poignant inspirational speech he gave recently, “As for a favorite place I’ve spoken; there has been so many, but the one that stands out the most and is most memorable was the one I gave last spring in Minneapolis. It was the Suicide Awareness Memorial. There were probably 300 people there and everyone has lost a loved one to suicide. All the loved ones had their picture on the wall, including my son, Andy. It was without a doubt the most emotional, heartfelt talk I’ve ever given.”

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