

Don Reid interviewed by David Bledsoe



Don was born at home in Hayden Alabama on September 25, 1941. In the rural community of Hayden, all grades, 1 -12 were in the same school building. His mother was his 4th, a cousin his 5th & an aunt his 6th grade teachers. Don's father was his teacher for at least 1 class each year in grades 9 – 12.

When Don was growing up, his home, church & school were literally just a few hundred feet apart. "I never had an excuse to miss any related event or activity". "If the church doors were open, we were there". His participation in the Boy Scouts was about the only activity in which he did not have a family member in a supervisory role. "During this time in rural Alabama, there simply was not a lot of motivation to do much other than going for a regular job after completing High School". This was not the case in the Reid household with Don being one of only three in his High School graduating class of 50 to go on to college.

Don's after school work involved activities on the family farm, primarily in the production of beef cattle. He especially enjoyed working with the animals where the family did most of the tasks typically reserved for veterinarians. "The costs associated with professional veterinarian services could quickly outweigh the animal's market value".

In 1964, Don graduated with a BS in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Alabama. While employed with the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Don received his Masters in Engineering Management in 1982 from the University of Tennessee. As one would imagine, math & science were always two of his favorite subjects. However, he did very much enjoy the political science lectures.

Don grew up in a close-knit family & community. He & his brother Lowell felt it worked so well as kids, they would keep it that way as adults as well. The brothers became brother-in-laws as they married sisters. Don met his lovely wife Margaret for the very first time at Lowell's wedding to Margaret's sister, Janet in West Palm Beach in 1964. The couple had much in common with both being members of West Palm Beach First Baptist Church. They dated for 3 years & upon Margaret's college graduation, were married in August 1967. The couple moved to Newport News, VA for one year where Don worked on the design of the USS Nimitz aircraft carrier's reactor compartment.

The Reid's returned to South FL in 1968 where Don worked for Pratt & Whitney for 6 years. With their move back to this area, Realtors kept showing them homes close to high schools. Don finally asked why they were doing this. It was funny in that the Realtors were thinking since Margaret was so petite & young that she was Don's

daughter & assumed the need to be close to a school. From 1968 to 1974, Don served as Sunday School Director & a Deacon at First Baptist Lake Park, FL.

In 1974, Don & Margaret moved to Oak Ridge, TN where Don worked at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory until his retirement in 2004. Don's primary responsibilities at the Laboratory was for design and construction of new facilities. During this employment, he worked for four different operating contractors, Union Carbide, Martin Marietta, Lockheed Martin, and a partnership between the University of Tennessee and Battelle Northwest Laboratories. Though the different contractors administered retirement benefits, thankfully the benefits & most employees remained with the facility with each contractor change.

Don's hobby is photography. With all the incredible framed waterfalls, sunset beaches, etc. prints that adorn their Thompson Station home on Bunbury Dr, one quickly realizes that these works are most definitely not the work of an amateur.

Don enjoys doing short term mission works, which included the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina, and church construction in Mexico & Brazil. His most recent work was in South Africa where he & other members of Brentwood Baptist Church, where he serves as a deacon, served the needs presented by Cape Town South Africa's King of Kings Baptist Church Pastor, John Thomas. Don's involvement with this project was primarily in providing upgrades to the church's facilities that serve the needs of those affected by the AIDS epidemic. An interesting fact that the church has observed & accordingly applied: With the scourge of the AIDS epidemic in South Africa, the church provides life skills educators who go into the communities to work with children as young as 4 or 5. There simply is no alternative to waiting until a child is 12 or so years of age at which time they may become accountable for their decisions. This is due to the fact that so many children by the age of 12 have already contracted the AIDS virus. The church's proactive education & the services provided through their medical clinic has helped save the lives of countless individuals.

The most awe-inspiring thing Don can think of was in seeing his & Margaret's two daughters & two of their grandchildren baptized.

Don became active with Habitat projects with his Oak Ridge, TN employer & church's sponsorship of homes beginning in the mid 1990's. Upon retirement in 2004, Don moved into a volunteer role of Co-Construction Manager for HFH of Anderson Co. Don shared the construction manager position with another gentleman, John Caton for two years constructing 6 – 7 homes per year. Their goal was to do 10 homes per year.

With the Reid's move to Thompson Station, TN in 2005 to be closer to their children, Karen & Leigh Ann & their 4 grandchildren, Don has become involved with HFH of Williamson County. He enjoys working with other Crew Leaders, seeing homes completed & our family partners realize their lifelong dream of home ownership.