

4-18-2018

# Heart and Home: The Story of Ray and Shelby

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## eCommons Citation

Deck, Ray and Deck, Shelby, "Heart and Home: The Story of Ray and Shelby" (2018). *Facing Dayton: Stories*. 42.  
[https://ecommons.udayton.edu/facing\\_stories/42](https://ecommons.udayton.edu/facing_stories/42)

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# Heart and Home: The Story of Ray and Shelby

STORYTELLER: Ray and Shelby Deck

*Ray grew up in Dayton and has been here almost his entire life. Shelby moved here from Kentucky with her parents when she was eighteen. They have been married for fifty-seven years.*

RAY: In my younger years, I did all the things most children do. **I HAD A SCOOTER AND A TRICYCLE—MY FAMILY COULDN'T AFFORD TO BUY ME A BICYCLE—BUT I USED TO RIDE THAT TRICYCLE UNTIL MY LEGS HURT SO BAD MY MOM WOULD HAVE TO RUB THEM WITH LINIMENT JUST SO I COULD SLEEP AT NIGHT.** My family used to live between McGuffy School and Deed's Park. Growing up, we would always go up to McGuffy to play football and basketball, or we would go over to Deed's to play baseball. I loved playing at the park. Sometimes, it would be dark before I came

## OLD NORTH DAYTON



home. There was one time when my dad told me I had to stay home as punishment for being out too late. He locked the old wood gate in the back fence so I couldn't go. I wasn't too happy about that, so what I did was take a running start and jump right over that gate, and then I just went on running all the way to the park.

RAY: Now believe it or not, I was supposed to go to Miami University, but instead, I bought a car—a yellow and off-white fifty-five Chevy. It was a sharp car. And, well, that pretty much ended my going to Miami University. Not long after that my sister said to me, “I've got someone I want you to meet.”

SHELBY: His sister had married my brother, you see.

RAY: One time, we were both visiting them. I was sitting with my baby niece, just swinging her around a bit.

SHELBY: I was afraid he was going to drop her.

RAY: I was the third-oldest of nine so I was used to kids.

SHELBY: I went over there to make sure.

RAY: I don't know, when I met Shelby something just clicked right away.

SHELBY: I thought I already had my husband picked out. I guess I was wrong.

RAY: On our first date, we went to, oh I can't remember, someplace. Frisch's maybe. I think it was a Frisch's. It was kind of a short date.

SHELBY: My dad was strict because my sister had run off and married an older man.

RAY: Now me, I could have stayed there, but Shelby had snuck out so she had to get back. It wasn't long after that, that I knew I wanted to marry her.

RAY: When we got married, we moved over to Gunckle Avenue. 160 Gunckle Avenue. It's not there anymore, but when we lived there, it was apartments. A disc-jockey and his wife owned the place. He would always let us borrow the records he would bring home from his job because we couldn't afford them. It was all sorts of music, I don't remember all of it. I remember one thing. There was song called “I'm Thankful.” **YOU SEE, WE BOTH CAME FROM SINGING FAMILIES AND SHE PLAYS THE PIANO. AND THE ORGAN, AND WE LEARNED THAT SONG.** We used to sing it together.

RAY: We lived over on Lamar Street for a while. In Old North Dayton. We loved living there. We had great neighbors. There was one woman, Mrs. May, she was the best old soul. When our kids had their tonsils taken out, she walked down to the store on Troy Street, bought

those children ice cream, and brought it home to us. I used to love to just sit on her porch and talk to her. She really made a big impression on me. We moved away for a while, and it was a big mistake. I was under so much stress back then, I had a breakdown. I suffered for a long time with depression.

SHELBY: The house on Lamar Street hadn't sold so I told the kids, “we need to get him home.” So they helped me pack everything up, and we moved back. **THEN, SURE ENOUGH, RAY GOT BETTER. WE'RE PARTIAL TO OLD NORTH DAYTON, I GUESS. IT'S OUR HOME.**