

July 2009



PEMBROKE TELEPHONE COMPANY

Volume 9 Issue 4

A Newsletter For Customers & Employees



Miss Ivey, Remembered

Several years ago, the employees of the Pembroke Telephone Company got together with friends and members of the Beardslee family and assembled a charitable cookbook as a tribute to Ivey Bacon Beardslee, owner of the company, storyteller and extraordinary Southern cook. The book is titled *Miss Ivey and her Circle of Friends*, which aptly describes what Ivey found so important in her life. Ivey passed away on Sunday, June 21, 2009 in the home where she had lived much of her life. Hers was a life built on friendships and the circular continuance of those relationships. Ivey knew that what you did today would affect you tomorrow, or at very least by next week.

Ivey was born in Pembroke on December 6, 1924, the youngest of U.J. and Lillian Carter Bacon's four children. She was educated in Pembroke and graduated from the local high school in 1941. On the cusp of World War II, Ivey strongly wanted to serve her country, but was too young. Her father decided instead she should attend college, which she did in Statesboro. Following college, Ivey enlisted in the Women's Army Air Corp. She wanted to serve overseas, but the War was coming to a close and her services were needed stateside. During this time she met an Air Force tail-gunner named Paul Beardslee. Having flown multiple combat missions in Europe and served time as a prisoner of war, Paul had the added interest of being from "near home," in north Florida. They were married September 1945. With the War's end, service men and women were beginning to flood back into civilian service and Paul took a job with Western Electric in Orlando, Florida. However, life was about to throw the young couple a curve ball. Back in Pembroke, Ivey's father communicated to them that the local telephone company was for sale.

(cont'd on back page)

Dates & Details

Independence Day
Pembroke Telephone
offices will be closed on
July 3, 2009.

Employee Birthdays

Jenny Miller 7/14
Sharon Geiger 7/16
Mary Anna Hite 7/26
Angie Fountain 8/8
Charles Beckworth 8/21
William Rumsey 8/22
Shalah Beckworth 8/23

Contact Us!

Pembroke Telephone
Company, Inc.
185 E Bacon St.
PO Box 10
Pembroke, GA 31321
www.pemtelco.com

Business Office

Monday-Friday
8:30 am- 4:30 pm

Drive-thru Window

Monday-Friday
8:30 am- 5:30 pm

Closed Weekends
(912) 653-4389

Technical Support

Monday-Saturday
7:00 am - 10:00 pm

Sundays
8:00 am - 10:00 pm
(912) 653-4000

The Liberty Bell sounded from the tower of Independence Hall on July 8, 1776, summoning citizens to gather for the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence by Colonel John Nixon.



Clockwise from left: Mother and daughters - Mary Anna, Ivey, Carol and Jeanne; The Bacon siblings Ivey (in stroller), Ralph, Aileen and Gerald; Ivey letting Matt Lanier in on a story; Ivey and Hank Locklin, Ivey in uniform; Ivey and Charles Edwards; Ivey; Ivey at Pembroke Christmas Parade in 2007 with Jeanne and Mary Anna; Four Generations - Mary Anna, Ivey, Hannah Anderson, Joanna Anderson (and Mac); Ivey receiving Lifetime Membership with Telephone Pioneers from Ben Bennett of Pineland Telephone; (opposite) Ivey with at fellow student at her graduation from Georgia Teacher's College.





(Ivey, cont'd)

On March 21, 1946, Paul and Ivey Bacon Beardslee purchased the Pembroke Telephone Company with their meager savings, a loan and a work ethic surpassed by few. During the next few years, the young couple worked side by side to build a sleepy company with a few more than 200 lines and a switchboard located in their living room above the business office into a bustling enterprise. Along with the company growth was the growth of their own family. Their daughters Mary Anna, Jeanne and Carol joined them in quick succession. Ivey did the books, switched the calls and partnered with Paul to oversee the operations, all while tending the children and occasionally tracking down the doctor on the phone for patients in need.

Paul was accidentally killed on November 29, 1951 while removing overhead wires. It was one week before Ivey's 27th birthday. With three small children, she did what few women of the time would consider. Turning to her parents, family and friends, Ivey not only kept the telephone company operating, but built it into a thriving operation. During the next six decades, she shepherded the company through many changes. The "extinction" of party lines and rotary telephones and the advent of direct dial long distance. More recently, Ivey continued to oversee the company's development as the premiere provider of Internet access, digital television and builder of the first fiber optic, all digital communications network in Bryan County.

However, with all the advances in communications Ivey's leadership brought to the Pembroke area, most everyone knew that Ivey was definitely not all about work. There were many sides to Ivey Beardslee. She, along with best friend Laverne Scott, was a member and president of the Hank Locklin Fan Club. Hank, who himself passed away in March of this year, was at that time the oldest member of the Grand Ole Opry. Ivey and Hank were close friends for more than three decades, and Ivey and Laverne made frequent road trips to Nashville to visit him. Ivey was active in many local organizations including the American Legion, the Lions Club and several professional organizations. Ivey was also integral to many local charitable organizations, among them were the Pembroke Public Library, the Relay for Life and toy drives for local children. With her children, she established the Paul and Ivey Beardslee Scholarship fund at Georgia Southern. The first scholarship was awarded this year to Joseph Ferreira, a graduate of Bryan County High School. Rarely seeking recognition, Ivey did consent two years ago to be the Grand Marshall of the annual Pembroke Christmas Parade, an honor which she cherished.

And Ivey could cook. Until very recently, there was rarely a week when at some point a pot of soup or a casserole would not appear in the break room of the telephone company, ready to feed the employees. For every Thanksgiving and Christmas, Ivey would personally select a menu for the company celebrations and would make sure no one went away in the least bit hungry. Ivey's kitchen was always open and her pantry always ready. About the only thing that Ivey did better than running a telephone company, raising her children or cooking was bending your ear. Didn't matter if it was your right or left ear, just whichever one was closer. Ivey had tales that made you laugh, made you cringe and occasionally made you turn a little red. Her memory for the details about those whom she knew was phenomenal and if there was something you wanted to know about, all you needed to do was ask. Actually, sometimes you did not even need to ask - she would gladly tell you what she thought you might need to know.

On Tuesday, June 23rd, Ivey Bacon Beardslee was laid to rest in Pembroke next to her husband, parents and siblings. She was escorted by her daughters, her grandchildren, her great grandchildren, the employees of the Pembroke Telephone Company



and a host of friends. The United States of America paid homage to her with full military honors. Songs were sung, stories were told. The many tears shed were quickly overshadowed by quiet laughter as everyone remembered this great woman, her life, and the humor and joy that she bestowed on everyone. In life, what Ivey wanted she made happen. Even in her passing she still made things clear to those around her - make this final event short. And happy. It was truly a remembrance of a great life that had passed. Hers was a life that brought changes to all those around her and pioneered new directions for the community where she lived. To Ivey, everyone was part of her great circle of friends.



Ivey, thank you for sharing. We will always remember you.