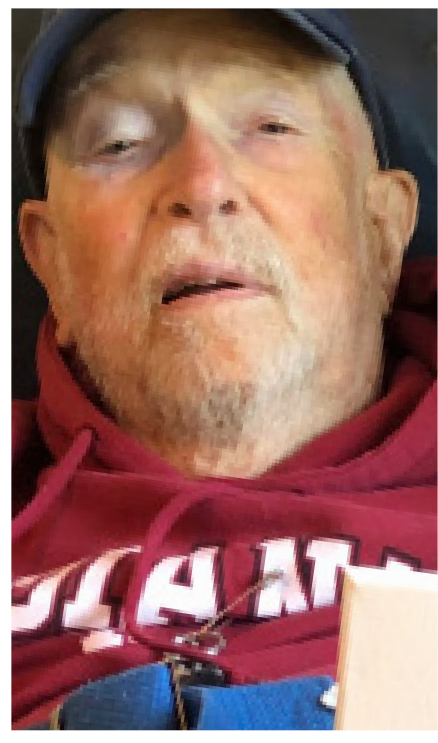




firefly family STORIES

Meet Donn and his Firefly Caregivers



Donn turned ninety years old this past July. The father of five, and grandfather of “more than I can count,” enjoyed seeing his family on his birthday. Donn was so happy that he wished he could turn and say to his wife Mary, who passed away four years ago, “Mom, look what we created.”

Donn was born and raised in Elkhart, Indiana. He met Mary when he took a cousin visiting from out of town, to Newell’s, a women’s clothing store in downtown Goshen. He really didn’t want to go, but he’s glad he did, because that’s where he met Mary. He jokes that it was unacceptable for an Elkhart boy to marry a Goshen girl, but it was her beautiful voice that captured his attention, and he was hooked. They dated during Mary’s last

year of college and his first year-and-a-half in the Navy before they married in 1953. When he got out of the service, they moved to Bloomington, Indiana, where he attended Indiana University School of Dentistry. After graduation, they moved to Osceola, Indiana, where Donn set up a dental practice, Mary worked in the front office, and together they raised their five children.

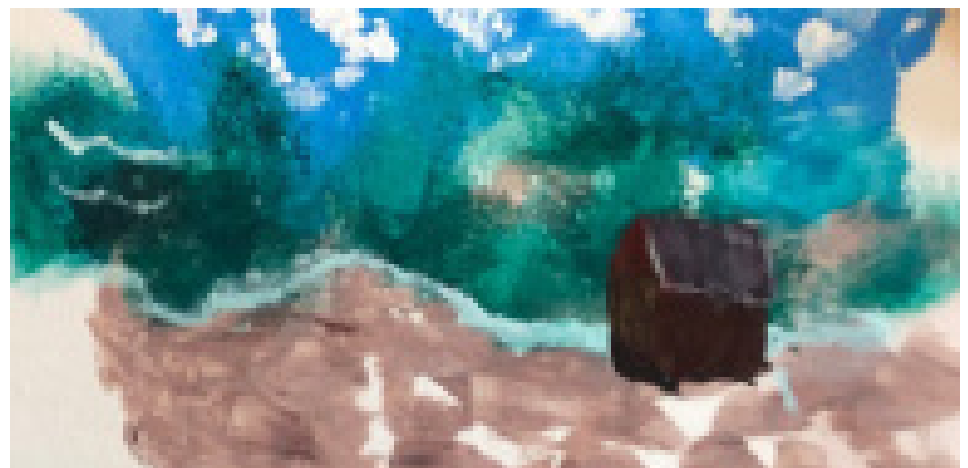
Donn and Mary both retired in 2000 and moved to Goshen. They lived in the home where Mary grew up, and where Donn picked her up for their first date. They later added onto the home, and this addition is where Donn lives now, while his son Bill lives in the original part of the house with his wife and mother-in-law.

When Mary became ill before her passing in 2016, she had home hospice care. In addition to hospice,

the family contacted Firefly to set up caregiving services. They were happy with the care Mary received from her Firefly caregivers.

A couple years after Mary passed away, Donn required more help at home. As a veteran, Donn was eligible for VA benefits. For him, this included respite, aide, and skilled nursing services. That’s where Jessica, a Firefly nurse and Navy veteran herself, entered Donn’s life. Jessica is passionate about working with veterans. “I love what I do. I do it because they (veterans) are my family . . . we are brothers and sisters in the military.”

Donn is one client Jessica visits regularly. During her nursing visits, Jessica assesses Donn and sets up his medications in a pill box. Donn and Jessica have developed a special relationship. Donn is a wonderful storyteller, and



This is a recent painting of Donn’s. He used a technique he called “slash painting.” Large, bold strokes of paint fill the canvas with unpainted areas adding dimension—creating his vision for the piece.



Jessica

he shares stories with Jessica about his family, his time in the service, and the things he's done in his life. Donn and Jessica have a lot in common with their shared military backgrounds, and he looks forward to the days Jessica comes to see him. "Jessica is wonderful. She's doing her job, sorting my medication, and she's carrying on a conversation with me the entire time. She's amazing—I like her very much."

In addition to the skilled nursing services Jessica provides, Donn receives aide and respite care through VA benefits, fulfilled by Firefly caregivers.

Following a time spent in the hospital and a rehabilitation facility last year, Donn needed more help at home. He and his family came to Firefly to increase his level of support to around-the-clock care, paying privately for the added time.

One of Donn's caregivers is Debra. She works twelve-hour overnight shifts beginning at 7 p.m. On one of her shifts with Donn, Debra noticed pictures, memorabilia, and artwork on the walls. She asked Donn about them. Soon he was telling her stories about his family. She learned that he was a Cubs fan, and they began watching night games together. "When the Cubs won, we'd put the Cubs flag out on the back deck, and if they lost, we'd take it back in," she said. "If the Cubs were going to play when I wasn't going to be with Donn, I let him know when the game is going to be played, so he could watch it."

Debra also noticed Donn has paintings on the wall that he had made years ago. "I told him I recently started painting," she said. When Donn heard this, he proclaimed, "Whenever Debra appears, we shall paint!" She laughed and told him she'd bring painting supplies and they'd have a painting party on her next shift. Now, painting is something they often do together.

Donn is blind in one eye and has depth perception issues in the other one, making detailed painting a challenge. He uses broad strokes that he calls "slash painting." If he needs it, Debra helps Donn with finer details on his painting. One painting lesson that Donn learned is that you don't have to cover the whole canvas with paint. He'll even show you some of his work to show the technique.

In addition to painting with Donn in the evenings, Debra makes sure he takes his medication, takes care of his personal needs, and helps him get ready for bed. She then stays near his side while he sleeps. Donn said, "It's reassuring to know if I wake up in the middle of the night, Debra is there for me."



Deb