

A PIONEER IN OUR MIST

If a touch of the pioneering spirit is needed to live in the "wilds of northern Michigan", then Frank Stulen is Traverse City's answer to Harvey Crockett. His enthusiasm for charting new courses of direction and action is endless.

"Living in Traverse City is an adventure all by itself," said Mr. Stulen over a cup of coffee in Munson's cafeteria. "There is so much going on in our community. In some ways we're like a frontier outpost, with a strong pioneering spirit. People who move to Traverse City often do so at a great sacrifice. They then become involved in the community to make it a better place to live, and discover they have fun doing it. That kind of spirit is what makes this area such a great place."

Frank Stulen has forged many trails in Traverse City. Arriving here in 1946 after earning a degree in aeronautical engineering from Carnegie Tech and "guarding the coast of Florida" for Uncle Sam, Mr. Stulen went to work for the Parsons Corporation. He put his knowledge of aeronautics and computers to work and helped perfect the design of helicopter rotor blades. It was not until 1962 that he joined Al Belfour in the partnership that resulted in Belfour-Stulen, a data processing firm.

Business and community affairs have kept Stulen busy ever since his arrival. He was Mayor of Traverse City, a member of the Traverse City Planning Commission, the Chamber of Commerce Education Committee, the Northwest Michigan Council on Drug Abuse and the Mayor's Commission on Aging. He is currently a director of the National Bank and Trust and chairman of the Traverse Area Development Fund. He was appointed to the Governor's Council on Comprehensive Health Planning and is a member of Munson's Board of Trustees and served as President of the Board for one year.

While in service Frank Stulen did some flying aboard helicopters, not as a pilot but as the engineer checking out the early experimental "whirly birds". Today, his interest in flying is in the realm of soaring, and he hopes to become more than just an interested "wing watcher".

Belfour Stulen has also had a hand in the age of flight. The company is employed by the Department of Defense in compiling data on the strength of materials which included those used on the NASA Mercury flights.

A large part of Belfour-Stulen's business is in compiling information for the College of American Pathologists and for local firms throughout the area. Work done by the company keeps 1 computer and 57 people moving rapidly.

But all is not work at the office. Each employee looks forward to the annual celebration of Ambrose Bierce day. Bierce, a successful writer near the turn of the 20th century, packed up all his troubles and his money in his old kit bag and left New York. He was never heard from again. Once a year, an employee's name is drawn from a hat and the winner is given an extra two weeks vacation and some fun money by the company. The only stipulation made is that the winner must spend his extra time and money on a real vacation.

When Frank Stulen accepted the 1972 Distinguished Service Award, he accepted "for the many, who do so much." He wasn't kidding. He genuinely feels that there are many people who have done a lot to make Traverse City a good place to live. Frank Stulen would certainly rank high on the list.

Both a doer and a planner, Mr. Stulen has been involved in the community, especially in terms of health care planning. He was active in the decision regarding Munson's expansion plans and thinks that remodeling of the hospital was the best of all possible choices.

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"The success of the construction project was a great credit to all of the hospital's people who worked under a trying situation. Munson people allowed it to be successful," said Mr. Stulen.

"Good, sound planning for future health care needs is necessary right now," said Mr. Stulen. "We have the perfect opportunity here to take a position of strong leadership. We have seen both the mistakes and the successes of other communities, and I think we can learn something from it all. We do need more education in the schools on good health care, and that is a kind of preventative medicine. More emphasis must be put on maintaining health, and it requires discipline on an individual basis. Coordinated health care planning with input from all directions should give us good balance."

"All areas of care, not just acute care, must be scrutinized closely. There is a great need for extended care facilities and the MHO (Health Maintenance Organization) Concept has, frankly, impressed me a great deal. America's greatest resource is its people, and more must be done to insure that this resource remains strong."

If spirit and enthusiasm are necessary ingredients of the pioneering spirit, they are embodied in Frank Stulen. New trails will be blazed under his direction and guidance and Traveras City's, as well as Munson's growth, will be better for it.