



Mr. George Forbes, the Butcher at Shea's Market

BY JACKLYN MCQUARRY



Kurt (Kirk) Settler, Doris & George Forbes,
James McDonald 1968-69



Shea's 17th St. Market, 1970s



Frank Hawk & Mrs. Snyder, July 1950

In an age of Shop Rites and Acmes, we have become accustom to large selections and huge stores that can seem overwhelming. When we do come across smaller establishments, we tend to enjoy the personal atmosphere that they have. George Forbes is a man who knows the private side of owning and managing a store, and he has chosen to share his life experiences with us.

Mr. Forbes is the former owner of Shea's Market, which was located on 17th street in North Wildwood. Before the building was ever used as a store, it was a hotel. The foyer of the hotel was even used for school. Eventually the building housed "EZ Market." Bill Shea was a grocery man in the store and Mr. Forbes was a meat cutter. The store became "Shea's Market" when Bill Shea made an offer for the store and bought it in 1950. George Forbes managed the meat department, and then bought the store from Bill Shea in 1968. George and his wife, Doris, had to sell their house in order to put a down-payment on the store. They rented the Wildwood residence they now live in, which is over a hundred years old.

Mr. Forbes said the store was like, "a small supermarket ... it had the aisles and the produce thing, and we had a large meat case, 30 feet. We were always noted for our good meats, that was the thing that drew the people in." One day he was cutting steak and was putting it on a scale. Bob Hannah, a police officer, stopped in to have a cup of coffee. Bob said, "How do you do that? How do you make them all 8 ounces?" George laughed as he remembered what his friend had said. "Years of

experience, that's all, just doing it over and over and over again," he said.

Mr. Forbes has positive memories of the people they served. "We had a good cliental. We had a good time." He said [former] Mayor Pumbo was a customer, and many people involved in show business were also patrons of the store. Even his memories of his employees, who are not always a sweet topic for employers, were generally positive.

The Forbes owned a small cabin in the mountains, where they had 300 feet of land on a lake. "The store allowed us to be able to have that. We wouldn't have been able to do that just working for someone else," George said. At the cabin they had a sailboat and could ski in the winter time. They also generously allowed people from their church to use the cabin for their honeymoons.

Mr. Forbes has an active personality. In the past, he and his wife Doris both owned motorcycles, he was an instructor at a gym, an Olympic weight lifter, played basketball and was also a ski instructor, performing 360's in the air. Once, he tried to do a move while skiing, and one of his skis got caught and tore off. He was left in the air with just one ski. Those riding the nearby ski lift went from sounding upset at his impending fall to cheering as he managed to land safely on the remaining ski. He credits this feat to his experience in ballet skiing. "Fortunately enough, I never broke a leg," he said. At 80 years old, George still enjoys working out at the Gym at 10th St.

Mr. Forbes eventually sold the store in 2002 after operating Shea's Market for 34 years. There are now condos in its place. "In my Father's house there are many condominiums." That's the Wildwood version of John 14," George says in his own witty way. When asked about changes in Wildwood, he said, "It was mostly small cottages and things. Condos have changed it quite a bit here." However, he also says, "Wildwood's still the beach, still the boardwalk."

People haven't forgotten the market on 17th Street. George said, "... when I'm shopping, I meet people that [say] how much they miss the store. I meet people all the time that say, 'Ah man, I really miss the meats and all you had.'" "Looking back on it, it was a wonderful time," he said. Mr. Forbes hasn't completely left the meat business. He continues to work at Bonelli's Market on Pacific Avenue in Wildwood during the summer, where he is employed as a butcher. George celebrates his 81st birthday on August 27th, while coincidentally, Bonelli's Market turned 81 this year as well. Wishing you both many more!

George Forbes is a man who has lived life and taken risks. He has also acquired an important gift - the ability to laugh at the now trivial matters of the past. Mr. Forbes has learned some very valuable life lessons, and we can only benefit from his easygoing attitude, which has enabled him to live life to the fullest.

Jacklyn is a homeschool graduate living in Upper Township. She enjoys writing, reading and spending time with friends. She is pursuing a Communications degree through Thomas Edison State College.



2010, Rich Bonelli (L) & George Forbes (R) at Bonelli's Market
where George makes the BEST Italian Sausage... ever!



George Forbes, the butcher



Mr. Oscar Meyer Weener with Clair Hubbard at Shea's