

George and Eileen Falkenthal

“We do a little bit here, a little bit there,” says George Falkenthal about his and his wife Eileen’s participation in their 55 years in the parish. You’ll soon see that those little bits have added up to a large, lasting legacy.

George and Eileen have known each other since they were classmates at St. Vincent High School in Vallejo, where both were born and raised. They went to different universities, then Eileen worked as a schoolteacher while George served in World War II before going to work as an electrical engineer at Ames Research Center.

Within the parish, they sat on the parish council, taught CCD, served as lectors and Eucharistic Ministers, and were members of the Christian Family Movement. As original members of the Men’s Club and the separate Women’s Club, they, as George states, “helped to get the parish functioning.” “It was the youth of our parish,” he says, “and there were jobs to be done.” Another job they’ve done together is serve as Eucharistic Ministers at Stanford Hospital.

George was the second member of the parish’s original St. Vincent de Paul Society. He jokingly states that he considers George Chippendale, another long-time member of the society, the “very good George,” and he the “not so good George.”

George, along with John Martin, was an original member of the parish’s first choir. In fact, George has a recording on a 78 rpm record of that initial group singing.

Eileen has volunteered with the funeral reception ministry which, she states, is “very important,” adding, “people need to feel some sort of closure, and this helps.” Eileen has also volunteered at Cubberly.

Both George and Eileen have served the parish as mentors for couples planning marriage. Years ago, they began hosting in their home engaged couples for six sessions of marriage preparation. Using materials from the diocese, they helped the young adults to prepare for the lifelong commitment they were soon to make. “It was very worthwhile,” says Eileen. “It strengthened our marriage, as well.” The Falkenthals were joined eventually in their ministry by Bob and Justine Franklin, whom they trained. Even now, George and Eileen are in contact with some of the couples they mentored. In fact, currently on their bulletin board is a photo of one of those couples whose smiling faces, they say, energize them whenever they look at them.

And who better as exemplars of marriage commitment than George and Eileen, who last August were feted by their four children, Greg, Ann, Ray and Bob, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren and others at their 60th wedding anniversary.

The time has now come, they’ve decided, to relocate near two of their children, so George and Eileen will be moving to Oakmont Gardens outside of Santa Rosa. In summary, Eileen says that she has enjoyed the friendships they’ve made at the parish, and George says, “I will quietly steal away.”

But before they do, I would like to present them with this certificate of our appreciation for all that they’ve done for St. Thomas Aquinas Parish and their worship site, Our Lady of the Rosary. I would also like to present them with these flowers as a token of gratitude.

God bless you for your service and generosity to the parish, and may your memories of your time here bring you joy for the rest of your lives.



The Falkenthals receiving the certificate from Fr. George.