In Memory of Wanda Parsons
"Parsons Seafood"

Tuckerton Seaport proudly hosts an exhibit at the Parsons Seafood building that showcases Wanda's and the Parsons Family story.



Photos compliment Tuckerton Seaport

Wanda Parsons passed away on July 3, 2014. She was a great friend to Tuckerton Seaport & Baymen's Museum and the Ocean County Decoy and Gunning Show, and we mourn her passing.

She enjoyed sharing stories of growing up in Tuckerton and had a deep love of our town's heritage and her family's history of clamming on the bay and running Parsons Seafood. In 2012, Wanda developed a display in Parsons Clam House at the Seaport on the five generations of the her family who have run the business for the past 100 years. We had the wonderful opportunity to interview her about her life when she and her son Dale received the Hurley Conklin Award in 2013. Here is an excerpt from that interview, written by Victoria Ford for the 2013 Decoy & Gunning Show program.

"Wanda was born in Orbisionia, PA and moved to Tuckerton with her family as a little girl. Her uncle, Harry Dorman, who already lived in Tuckerton, had written a letter to his father, David Chilcoat, a poor coal miner, enticing him to relocate to the coast.

As Wanda recalled, the letter read, "'Dave, come on down to Tuckerton. I'm out in the bay clamming, in the nice fresh air, there's plenty of clams, and the people are wonderful.' And so my father packed everything - I was one and a half, my sister was two years older - and we moved to Tuckerton.

Once resettled, the resourceful and hard-working Chilcoat went to work for E. Walter Parsons, who owned Parsons Clams at the time.

As a teenager attending Tuckerton High School, Wanda met and fell in love with John Mathis "Jack" Parsons, E. Walter's son.

After high school, Wanda attended nursing school at West Jersey Hospital in Camden, and Jack joined the Merchant Marines. While he was stationed in New York and she was affiliating for psychiatry at Greystone Park Psychiatric Center in Morris County, they continued their courtship through frequent visits. They married in 1948. Dale was born the following year, and a second son, Jack (now deceased), was born 15 months later. Wanda and Jack were married 62 years until he died in 2009. Jack received the Hurley Conklin Award in 1996.

Though Wanda had a 35-year career as a school nurse in Southern Regional School District, over the years she also kept a hand in just about every aspect of the clamming business, from the bookkeeping and banking, to hiring staff and waiting on customers, "anything where I was needed."

Wanda was predeceased by her husband Jack. She is survived by her son Dale of Little Egg Harbor, grandchildren Elizabeth, Dale Jr., Jaclynne, great grandchildren Caroline and Natalie.

We'll miss you, Wanda