



Atrium
Medical Center

FOUNDATION

LEGENDS

FROM THE HILL TO THE ATRIUM

*A Tribute to the Men and Women
Who Made It Happen*

*Profile: Paul Galeese
One of the First Babies Born
at Middletown Hospital*



He is No. 3 – and Proud of It.

Born in May 1918 and delivered by T.A. Dickey, MD, Paul Galeese was the third baby born at Middletown Hospital. His debut was preceded the previous month by Jeanne Sebald Bauer, No. 1, and Georgiana Freeman Combs, No. 2. Even though the new hospital had been open a year, in those days, most births still occurred at home. In fact, Paul's grandmother was Dr. Dickey's nurse for home births.

As the new 28-bed, seven-employee Middletown Hospital established itself on high ground close to downtown, people began to refer to visiting the facility as "going up on the hill." The Middletown Civic Association (which later became the United Way) was very supportive as the hospital began to grow.

Today, Paul Galeese is 94 years of age. He and his wife, Sara, reside at Mount Pleasant Retirement Village in Monroe. In addition to their children being born at Middletown Regional Hospital, both Paul and Sara have used various hospital services over the years, and they are supporters of Atrium Medical Center Foundation. After Sara had to have bypass surgery elsewhere, she shared her story with the community. The Galeeses became generous donors to the **Advancing Care for a Healthier Community** campaign, which raised more than \$5.1 million to create the Heart Center at Atrium Medical Center.

Deep Middletown Roots

Both Paul's and Sara's families have distinguished histories in Middletown. Paul's father owned a grocery store in the East End shopping area. His two brothers had a grocery at Webster and Manchester near Little Dublin.

Paul attended Holy Trinity Elementary School and Roosevelt Junior High and graduated from Middletown High School. He met Sara Lawler when both were juniors in high school.

Sara's father, Bert Lawler, had moved from a sports writing job in Lebanon, Indiana, to a Columbus, Ohio, newspaper where he was approached by James Cox to join his gubernatorial campaign. After the campaign, Cox sent Bert to seek a job with his brother-in-law, newspaperman J.Q. Baker. Bert had a long career in Middletown, becoming editor and publisher of the *Middletown Journal*.

Sara's mother died at an early age, and Bert later married Alice Lloyd, a popular columnist for the paper. Sara's family funded the Lawler-Galeese Scholarship for Excellence in Journalism at Miami University.

Paul Galeese's long and distinguished career at Armco began after high school graduation. He worked in the open hearth office while studying metallurgy in night school at the University of Cincinnati. Meanwhile, Sara earned a degree in English from Miami University in Oxford and taught in Clarksville (Clinton County).



The Challenges of War

In those days, as Sara recalls, a woman could be a wife *or* a teacher – not both. World War II years saw this change. After the Galeeses married in 1941, Sara set aside her teaching career.

Paul enlisted in the Army Air Corps in December 1942. His acceptance and orders to report came on Valentine's Day 1943. Sara went back to teaching, this time at Roosevelt Junior High School.

Later, she joined Paul as he received his flight training. He earned his wings in June 1944 in Pampa, Texas. His assignment was to Big Spring, Texas, where he served as a pilot for flying bombardiers in training.

By this time, the Galeeses had started a family and would eventually have three daughters – Sharon, a librarian; Betsy, a reading specialist; and Janet, a corporate training specialist. Today the Galeeses have three adult grandchildren and a 4-year-old great-granddaughter. As her children grew, Sara went back to teaching, working at Roosevelt, St. Mary's and Fenwick. She also served as principal at St. Mary's.



Long Career at Armco

In 1946, Paul returned to work at Armco. He transferred to industrial relations and became director of activities at Armco East Works. He was involved with many of the family activities that distinguished Armco as a community leader, including the Saturday morning “Kiddie Show” at the Paramount

Theater and the annual company extravaganza at LeSourdesville Lake amusement park. In addition, he oversaw the Armco war vets baseball team and the company's golf tournaments and was active in the Wildwood Golf Club.

In addition to his experience as an Air Corps pilot, Paul held a commercial pilot's license. After he received a request from Armco president Charles R. Hook to fly as co-pilot on a flight to Washington, DC, Paul began to serve the company in this capacity as needed, while also carrying on with his usual responsibilities. Although tempted to accept a full-time pilot position with Armco, Paul opted to remain "on the ground."

In 1953, Paul was approached about going to the Armco-owned Manchester Hotel as assistant manager; he became manager the following year. He changed the facility's name to the Manchester Inn, added a beautifully landscaped parking lot and spearheaded other updates that made the Manchester Inn the preferred venue for area events from weddings and galas to high-powered corporate meetings and lunchtime strategy sessions. In March 1981, Paul retired, but not before he had served year-long terms in all offices of the Ohio Hotel Association and the national American Hotel and Motel Association.





Fond Memories

Having spent 31 years as Florida residents, Paul and Sara Galeese find life quieter these days. Looking back, they fondly remember a Middletown where the leaders of local industry were local people with a deep commitment to the well-being of the community. Taking a cue from the Galeeses, Atrium Medical Center Foundation seeks to be a catalyst for creating local and regional partnerships that build a healthier community.



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This article is the first in a series of profiles celebrating the 2017 centennial anniversary of Atrium Medical Center (formerly Middletown Hospital and Middletown Regional Hospital). The series honors men and women whose civic-mindedness and genuine caring for others helped Middletown grow and contributed to establishment of the first-class medical center the region boasts today.