

Pierce County

## Chuck Stillman

Anabelle Stillman recounts the first encounter with her future husband, Chuck Stillman. “I was in the library studying like a good college student should, and a young man, whom I had never seen before in my life, sat down and said, ‘Now, won’t this be a funny way to tell our grandchildren how we met?’”

A deeply spiritual man with a sense of humor, Chuck Stillman was raised on a farm in North Dakota. He attended Valley City Teachers College and earned some extra money by driving a car across the country. Chuck applied for a job with the railroad as a telegrapher, but jobs were limited, so he enrolled in Washington State College (now WSU) to get his degree in agriculture economics.



While in college he met Anabelle, who was also a student. Anabelle graduated in 1940 with a degree in business and sociology. Chuck’s degree, however, was put on hold when he took a job with Burlington Northern as a telegrapher during WWII.

Chuck worked for the railroad and rose rapidly through the ranks, retiring in 1977 as chief dispatcher in Tacoma. During this time the Stillmans raised three children. Their two daughters motivated the Stillmans to purchase 52-acres of partially forested land for a pony ranch. Anabelle, “We did a lot in 4-H. At one time we had 50 ponies down on that farm. As the girls graduated and went off to college, we sold the ponies and horses. About half of the land was pasture, the other half trees. That was really our first tree farm.”

The Stillmans purchased 93 acres of clear-cut land in 1976 as a project for Chuck during his retirement years. They realized the potential in tree farming and cleared the weed trees to plant conifers. Anabelle remembers, “Chuck could plant 1,000 trees a day and lost 6 inches off his waistline when he was planting. We also had a crew and planted 85,000 trees.”

This was the beginning of a newfound love. In the next 25 years, the Stillmans acquired 650 acres in Orting, McCleary, Centralia, Olympia, and the Middle Satsop River area. They have been awarded the Pierce County Tree Farmer of the Year, Weyerhaeuser Tree Farmer of the Year (scoring a helicopter ride over Mt. St. Helens), and State Tree Farmer of the Year. Chuck and Anabelle also helped re-establish the Pierce County Chapter of the Washington Farm Forestry Association through word of mouth promotion. Anabelle comments, “We knew people in the state organization who lived here. Even if you didn’t live here, but owned tree farm land here, you could belong. I just telephoned people.”

Their enthusiasm for growing trees has inspired their three children to invest in their own forestland.

*“This occupation has brought Chuck much joy as he watches the trees growing, anticipating that they will some day be tall forests.” – Anabelle Stillman*

**CG STILLMAN TREE FARM**

Chuck Stillman, born September 5, 1918

Anabelle Morrison Stillman, 1917- 2005

Co-Founder Pierce County Chapter WFFA

Pierce County Tree Farmer of the Year, 1980

Weyerhaeuser Tree Farmer of the Year, 1982

Washington State Tree Farmer of the Year, 1984