



2024 Influencer **The Chesapeake** *Tom Sayre*



Born in the town of Bridgehampton on Long Island, New York, Tom Sayre grew up on a potato farm with his older brother, sister, and parents. In high school, Tom met his future wife, Nancy. They were married in 1958, raised two children, and spent 62 wonderful years together until her passing in 2021. Those who call The Chesapeake home knew Nancy as a personable caregiver who was never a complainer and who was an instant friend to many.

In 1955, Tom, at age 17, joined the Navy and left New York in hopes of getting the GI bill to pay for his education. His illustrious career in the Navy, spanning over 20 years, would take him up and down the East Coast, from New York to Florida, Maine, Rhode Island, Mississippi, Virginia, and even a 13-month stint in Antarctica where he worked on Operation Deep Freeze.

Tom worked for the Air Force Civil Service as an auditor and then retired after more than 20 years of civil service, totaling almost 41 years of total federal service. Tom finally finished his degree in accounting at the University of West Florida in Pensacola after years of being encouraged by Nancy to never give up on his education. This conviction is one he instilled into his children and grandchildren who he would later help support financially in completing their degrees without student loans.

When asked who influenced him as a child, Tom says that his dad instilled in him the motto, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Led by that

Golden Rule, Tom has lived a life driven by hard work and service to others. He has been involved with several volunteer organizations. In 1997, upon retirement, Tom created a toy ministry in which about 60-70 wooden toys are distributed to children through St. Luke’s UMC every year. He also crafts bowls and cutting boards out of exotic woods that he sells and donates a majority portion of the profits to the VBH Foundation to support The Chesapeake Benevolence Fund.

Tom and his wife Nancy moved to The Chesapeake in 2017. He is influenced today by the guidance of The Chesapeake’s Executive Director David Loop and Director of Administrative Services Paula Harrison; his “woodshop buddies” and “the folks who give their time to help their neighbors and friends.”

Tom has served as Chair of the Wellness Committee, Chair of the Activities Committee, and President of the Resident Council. He says that he is a firm believer in making change by participating in one’s community. Above all, Tom says that he is influenced most by his children as well as his grandchildren who support him in every way possible. “They inspire me to do as much as I can, especially for other people.”