

Marty Medak designed "star war" toys for the U.S. Army

By: LaRAYNE WATTS

Martin (Marty) Mathew Medak was born in Raymond. As he puts it, "I was born at 135 Ninth Street, one block south of RHS, eight feet above mean high tide (grandfather's house was on stilts), in 1930." His father was Martin Medak, a local barber and an immigrant from Croatia. His mother was Martha Gailius, an immigrant from Lithuania.

He spent his childhood in Raymond. He says, "Since I lived so close to the high school for the first 13 years of my life, and the school property was the first 'dry land' leaving home, it was the neighborhood playground. Mr. William H. Raymond, the janitor of RHS for many years, was a friend to all of us in the neighborhood. Uncharacteristically, we were considerate of his school. We also considered the superintendent, Louis Bruno, a friend."

After his father died, his mother and most of his brothers moved to Aberdeen. Marty remembers, "For two years, I had been working for Ed and Annie Boland at the Star Bakery on Sixth and Commercial Sts. I had a strong desire to stay in Raymond. It was wartime and good help was impossible to find, so they requested that I move in with them and continue my employment. It took days to convince my mother that it would work out." But just after the completion of World War II, his mother learned of the long hours that he was working and summoned him to Aberdeen.

Marty spent his freshman year at Aberdeen, but he was missed in Raymond. He said, "Ada Pedersen, of Pederson's Variety Store on Third Street, tracked me down in Aberdeen and made me an offer to live and work with her and her husband, Joe. My next three years, living and working with them and learning the dime-store business was delightful. Ada was true to her word: not only did she put schoolwork ahead of the dime-store work, she encouraged extracurricular activities and a social life at the expense of hours at the store. That allowed me to fully enjoy my time at RHS, which I did."

Marty says his favorite teacher was Norma Cramer. He says, "When we finished an assignment ahead of schedule, she would read aloud to us, Robert Benchley or another humorist. It seems silly to think of juniors and seniors in high school sitting around in a reading circle (just like in the first grade), but she made it fun!"

Marty graduated from RHS in 1948. He had always been fascinated with mechanical and electrical devices and wanted to become an engineer. He had taken "college prep" courses in high school, but prospects of going to college were quite dim. His solution was to go into the U. S. Air Force and go to radio school. He said, "RHS had prepared me well for tech school: I 'aced' it, with the highest grade in my class."

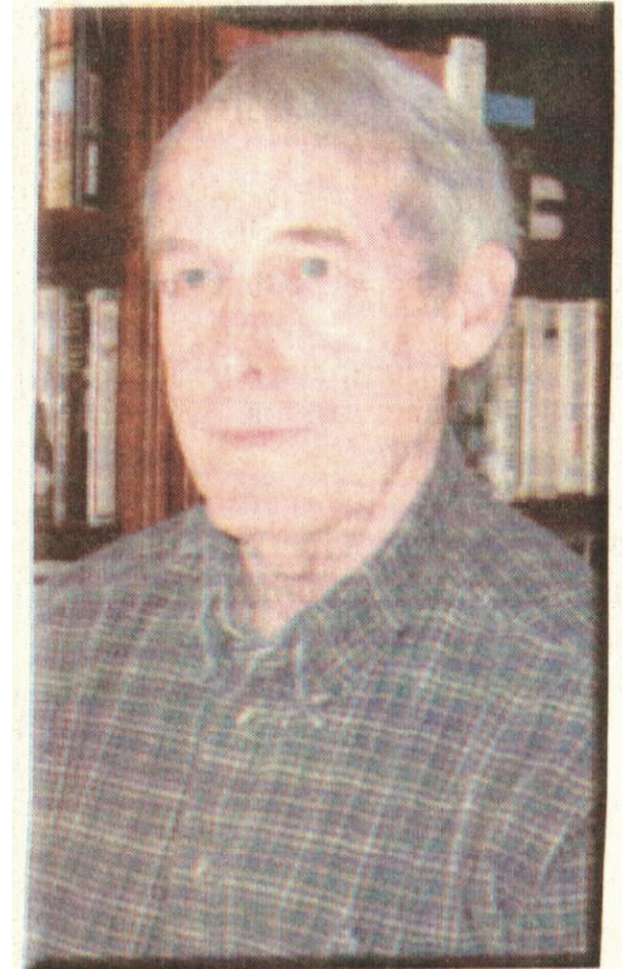
After getting out of the service, he took advantage of the G.I. Bill to go to college. He attended Grays Harbor college for two years and finished up at Washington State at Pullman. While he was going to Grays Harbor, he met and married Lareta Gabriel. They had two sons. They later parted, "amicably," he says. Marty later married June Dingle Bosch, a hospital administrator for the Los Angeles County health system. They have been married for 30 years.

Marty's first engineering jobs were in the Los Angeles area. He says, "The computer industry was in its infancy, and I was in the middle of computer and computer peripheral equipment design. I got involved in some hot military applications of computers and was selected to go to Washington D. C., and represent Hughes Aircraft Company with the U. S. Army. The Army was just starting to modernize, and we were in the middle of it with them." He stayed in Washington, D. C., for ten years.

For the next 18 years, up until his retirement, Marty returned to the Los Angeles area to manage some of the programs that he had helped to initiate during his time in Washington D. C. He said, "With foreign customers around the globe, there was much travel involved. I concentrated on Europe and the Middle East and 'farmed out' the Far East to others." For a brief period, he was involved in managing the conical radar development for the F-18 air-to-ground upgrade, the twin seater F-18, and a mish mash of 'star war' toys. Marty said, "During the Gulf War, I was entertained more than the average viewer, seeing many array of toys at work."

In 1989 Marty retired. He and June moved to Midlothian, Virginia a suburb of Richmond. Every other year, they load up their fifth-wheel trailer and drive to the West Coast. Marty says, "Raymond is always in our itinerary. One of our faith stops was to see grandfather's house on 135 Ninth Street, just some of the school. No more. Last year some was torn down to make room for a new field. Its ghost is somewhere beneath the fifty-yard line."

Marty's advice to this year's seniors is, "Be flexible. No matter what you do for, you'll be doing something different, sooner than you think."



RHS Alumnus Marty Medak, 1948