

Two Friends We Miss

In the last two months of last year, we have lost two good friends and ardent organizers of their respective communities at opposite ends of our state. Both were veterans who did not dream that they would be spending the last years of their lives fighting new battles for decent housing and fair treatment. Both were men with a strong sense of justice and a willingness to speak up despite great personal risk.

JOHN

John Roderick passed away in November. He was one of the founders of the Chelten Apartments Resident Association in New Castle.

When he saw things that weren't right around him, he stood up and spoke up, encouraging others to do so, as well. John didn't back off. He was consistent in his pursuit of improving the quality of life for seniors at Chelten and for tenants of modest means everywhere. He not only worked for improvement at Chelten, he joined with other tenants across the state through his work with the Statewide Association of Tenants, understanding the importance of a unified voice.

One of the highlights of his involvement came at a regional HUD "Eyes and Ears" meeting in the Summer of 2001. The purpose of the meeting is to have HUD officials hear directly from tenants what is going on at the field level. A group of HUD tenants from Delaware went to Philadelphia to participate. John spoke up and advised the officials of the various issues at Chelten; he had done his homework, knew what he was talking about, and persisted in his questioning, representing his tenant council well. We will miss John and tenants throughout Delaware will appreciate his contribution to the foundation of the tenant movement that he selflessly helped to build.

FRITZ

We lost Fritz Gottfried in December, the day after the residents of his beloved Morris Mill Pond won their legal right to remain in their homes in the community south of Georgetown.



Fritz Gottfried patrolling Morris Mill Pond

There was nothing diminutive about Fritz Gottfried. He was a big man with a huge heart, a booming voice, a keen eye, a strong passion, and now a great legacy. Fritz was the founding father of the Morris Mill Pond Cooperative, formerly known as the Dogwood Mobile Home Park near Georgetown. He and Irene were DHC's initial contacts with the community of people who were afraid they were about to lose their homes and their community due to the illegal action of the landlord. He took his lessons learned from being a life-long union man and ably applied them to saving his community. He identified and collaborated with other leaders within the community and worked to get the right people on the community's side. Though Fritz was not physically present in Court 17 on December 29 to hear the stupendous victory overturning the evictions, his presence could not have been more palpable and his contribution to this victory can not be overemphasized.



Doris Bolgar and John Roderick with Dorothy Medeiros, DHC Board President, October 2002.