

## **The YMCA Moment**

**By Dave Markoe**

In the fall of 1954 at the age of 12, I received a letter from the YMCA of Frederick County telling me that I had gotten a scholarship. At first, I didn't think it was true, but the invitation was real. As a young boy in junior high school, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to go to the YMCA with many of my friends and classmates.

My parents were modest people and didn't have a lot of excess money to pay for a Y membership. My dad was a driver for the local fire department, my mom was a homemaker and my older brother was attending Frederick High School. While we had a good life, it wasn't one where there were a lot of funds beyond the essentials. This scholarship was the beginning of a long, wonderful relationship with the YMCA of Frederick County.

At that time, the YMCA was located on the corner of West Church Street and Court Street. While the building is no longer there, several plaques mounted at the location recognize Alvin G. Quinn and Mary Motter. Mr. Quinn was the Secretary and coach and Miss Motter was his chief assistant. This facility was the only place where boys and young men could socialize and hang out. While girls were always welcome, they couldn't become members at that time. All his boys loved Mr. Quinn. He taught us sport skills, discipline, and respect, and was a great mentor for all of us.

You would find me every Saturday morning at the YMCA playing all sorts of organized games. We had an upstairs playroom that had billiards, ping pong and tables for board games. I believe I learned how to play chess at the Y. I would go swimming, usually on Saturday and one other evening during the week if I had my homework done. At that time, we were not allowed to wear swimsuits; all of us were in the buff. We didn't give this requirement a second thought; it wasn't any big deal.

As I entered into my high school years, my participation at the Church Street YMCA increased. After football season was over, many of us would visit the Y after school to play pool and just hang out with our friends. We always had to have coke with peanuts in it. There was still the Saturday intramural basketball league around the time of the Christmas vacation that I always participated in.

Frederick High School sponsored a Hi-Y and Tri-Hi Y chapter for the YMCA. Coach Hal Moser was our advisor. We held monthly evening meetings at the YMCA. In fact, the two organizations were so popular, there were two other chapters formed. Coach Jack Molesworth was the advisor for the other club. Both coaches Moser and Molesworth have been inducted into the Alvin G. Quinn YMCA Sports Hall of Fame. At this point in my life, the YMCA was my main social outlet.

After high school, it was off to college, and I wasn't able to go to the Y that much, but did stay in contact with many of my YMCA friends over those years.

When I returned to Frederick after college, I immediately reactivated my YMCA membership. Of course, by then the new YMCA was relocated to its current location on North Market Street. Now, I was heavily involved in weight training, fitness and racquetball. While the YMCA had changed some, it was still the place for people to meet and socialize. Many more young children were actively involved, and it had become very family-oriented.

I was working for Frederick County Public Schools and had become a coach myself. Many of my students and kids I was coaching were Y members, so I had the opportunity to interact with them at a different level.

As the years passed, I retired from the public education experience. It was nice to relax and to catch my breath. But, one Saturday morning, I received a call from the YMCA of Frederick

County asking me if I would consider returning, on a short-term basis, as the President, CEO. This position would last until they were able to find a replacement.

I accepted the challenge and went back to work. While I said it was work, it wasn't work for me. I had returned to the place where I grew up. I thought now this will be a time when I can give something to the YMCA. Basically, there was a young staff and a lot of kids. There was so much energy and enthusiasm everywhere that when they asked if I would consider remaining on full-time, I said yes. The next five years in this position allowed me to see another whole aspect of the YMCA movement. It was still about kids and helping people fulfill their dreams, young and old alike. This current YMCA had come to be so much more than the YMCA I was involved with in 1954.

Then it occurred to me that I had been a member of the YMCA of Frederick County for over 60 years. It gives me great satisfaction to look back over those years and realize that the YMCA is still a great venue bringing all sorts of people and families together.

My YMCA moment has spanned over 60 years, and I'm pleased to say while much in the Frederick community has changed, the YMCA of Frederick County is still true to its Christian values and sticks to its mission. I am and will always be an avid YMCA supporter. "Leaving a Legacy: Charitable Gifts as Part of Your Estate Plan" is a wonderful way to maintain the legacy of this valuable Frederick institution.

*Should you or a loved one be interested in learning more about planned giving options at the YMCA of Frederick County, please contact Tom Clingman at (301)663-5131 or [tclingman@frederickymca.org](mailto:tclingman@frederickymca.org)*