

## ***Ruth Dietz***

Women's History Month article by Jo Ellen Litz, February 13, 2011

In the community, we have seen Ruth Dietz active in the Northern Lebanon School Board, Chamber of Commerce, Developmental and Disability Services (DDS), and Northern Lebanon Rotary Club where she is a founding member. She also serves on the PA Motor Truck Association and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Association Boards. She seems like a confident, sometimes tough and outspoken, lady. Have you ever wondered what makes her tick?

Well, if character is built by adversity, Ruth Dietz is solid as a rock. She has been widowed twice, the first time with three children at home, one with special needs. A devoutly religious person, she could have sat by and waited for her fellow Christians to take care of her as a widow. But this now 85-year old woman was college educated in a time when most women did not go to college. She studied to become a nurse, and took care of people like Maude Donmoyer, the widow of Jonas Donmoyer, who died in 1968. Two years later, in 1970, and two days after Monroe J. Bohn, her first husband, died from a heart attack, Ruth's daughter, Kristel Bohn, moved into a home for children with mental disabilities. At the age of 16, in 1971, Kristel succumbed to pneumonia. Such heartbreak and tragedy would be hard for any of us to handle. Then, in 2011, Ruth lost Dick Dietz, her second husband.

Instead of giving up and pitying herself, over forty years ago, she took the advice of her attorney, George Christianson, and took charge of JP Donmoyer, Inc., the business left to her by Maude. No, she didn't study business, but Ruth had character, determination, and common sense. She took over the reigns of the business, and diversified—running the Country Apple Restaurant, convenience stores, and a truck stop. Jeff Bohn, her son, joined her in running these businesses, but their success was both a blessing and a curse. Jeff's heart was music ministries, and he took on a silent partner role at the businesses in order to lead Shining Light, a well-known local Christian teen singing group who visits prisons as an outreach of his and Barb's, his wife's, ministry. By the way, Hans, her other son, plays the trombone with the Boston Pops Orchestra. To their mother's delight, in 2009 Jeff and Hans played a guest duet performance at former teacher Harlan Daubert's Performing Arts Center tribute at NLHS.

To stay on top of her game, Ruth did what any leader does, surrounded herself with the best, by hiring Fortune 100 company managers. Realizing the business with the most growth and profit potential was the trucking firm hauling dry bulk shipments like lime and coal, the other businesses were sold. To this day, Ruth is involved in the decision making of the business, meets with her 200+ employees, and opens all of the mail. What a great way to keep tabs on the bank accounts, delinquent bills, and any complaints or compliments the company receives. She also lobbies for better trucking legislation, and could expand the business as the economy grows.

Ruth is determined to be the best in both her field and personal life. Her vision is unwavering and everlasting. She says, "We must remember that there is no security, only opportunity." Ruth lives her life by the Rotary motto, "Service Above Self."

In closing, Ruth has received numerous awards, like the first Athena award from the Chamber of Commerce and the "50 Best Women in Business" award from the Central

PA Business Journal. Then there's her admittance to the Alpha Beta Gama Society of Business Advisory Board at Penn State, Middletown. Do not expect this trail blazer to retire anytime soon. Ruth Dietz is a role model for me and other women, not just in Lebanon County, but across the State and nation. I am honored to call her a friend.