

# Clark & Shirley Bates

The 2009 Otsego County Fair is dedicated to Clark and Shirley Bates; who are long time supporters and volunteers of the Otsego County Fair and the Community.

Clark was born in Coldwater and attended elementary school there and his high school years were spent in Farmington. After graduation he attended Alma College and then transferred to the University of Michigan.

Shirley was born and raised in Port Huron. She attended school there and after graduation she went to Port Huron Junior College and then transferred to the University of Michigan.



Clark and Shirley met on a blind date at U of M. They are both strong supporters of the maize and blue. Shirley began her career in Battle Creek and moved to Gaylord in 1958 where she taught elementary education. They married in 1958 and resided at the Walker Funeral Home where Clark was employed. They later purchased the funeral home and it was renamed Walker-Bates Funeral Home. Shirley continued teaching until they started their family.



They are very proud of their sons Jeff and Eric. Just ask them. Their two daughter-in-laws are Susan and Joan and they are the proud grandparents of Michael, Kharl, Savannah, Ellianna, Olivia and Joshua.

Clark and Shirley are active in the Methodist Church where Shirley was the organist for over thirty years. They have been active members of the Gaylord Community. Some of their accomplishments have been the Red Cross swimming program, at the County Park for thirty plus years; this provided swimming lessons for over 2,500 youngster of Otsego County. Shirley is a former Burgermeister and until recently played the bells for Alpenfest's opening ceremony. Clark was Mayor of Gaylord for twelve years and is presently a county commissioner. These two fantastic people have been involved with the Otsego County Commission on Aging, Board of Community Mediation, City Planning Commission and working for the Associated Press reporting the vote count at all elections.

Their interest in the Otsego County Fair began over thirty years ago when it was suggested by Mary Barnt that Shirley enter her bake goods; of which she won the most blue ribbons. For many years they both worked in the Eastern Star Kitchen during the Fair. Their interest in the Fair peaked, so they started attending board meetings that was when Jack Deming was president. When Ray Kucharek was president it was suggested that Shirley run for a position on the Fair Board, which she still holds. Shirley has been an auditor for the Otsego County Fair Queen's Pageant for over twenty five years.

Clark and Shirley have played an active part in making the Fair a vital contribution to the community. From the opening day of the Fair until it closes you will find Clark and Shirley in the Information Booth. They are there to answer all questions or to give directions. If you need something done, you can count on it handled without a complaint. One of their favorite parts of the Fair are meeting and greeting all the people and especially for Shirley seeing her former students from St. Mary's where she retired after many teaching years.

The Otsego County Fair Board and Associate Members salutes Clark and Shirley Bates for all their years of dedication to the Otsego County Fair and our Community.