

The third honored mentor of the National Venturing Youth Cabinet Website is a husband and wife:

### **Donna and Larry Cunningham**

*"Manners maketh man."*

-- William of Wykeham (Motto of Winchester College and New College, Oxford)

My first memory of Larry and Donna Cunningham was during the 2004 - 2005 Venturing Cabinet orientation in Texas, when they served as trainers. Donna Cunningham was charged with turning the six of us, all youth adept in wilderness survival, into well-mannered adults within society. What a challenge! Donna's lessons of that weekend, both humorous and serious, will remain with me for a lifetime, and have contributed to my success as Western Region President and National Venturing President. Later, I heard stories about Donna's work during the early days of Venturing, when she was "all but locked in a room" developing ideas for the new program.



Initially I found Donna to be the more noteworthy member of the Cunninghams -- for who could compete with the quantity of etiquette trivia she has committed to memory? However, Larry Cunningham has emerged, during my tenure on the National Venturing Cabinet as one of the most beloved and respected of Venturing's volunteers. Adult Venturers I greatly admire claim him as a true "brother". Larry's Scouting path was determined at an early age. When he was a young boy, he attended a Cub Scout meeting. The Den Leader asked Larry for his dues - a dime. Embarrassed that he did not have the dime to pay, Larry never returned. As an adult, Larry has supported innumerable youth in Scouting, paying the dues for many, so they would never suffer the same embarrassment. When Larry served as a chaperone and team builder for the Korea and Spain Olympic Youth Camp, he paid, not only for his own expenses, but for those of three others. He arranged and funded a Scottish/BSA Scouting exchange for many years.

Stories about the dedication and generosity of these two Venturing mentors, but I would like to review a few of their many accomplishments.

Donna and Larry Cunningham (AKA Mother and Father Powder Horn) were instrumental in developing BSA's fastest growing program, Venturing. While Larry was serving on the Outdoor Exploring Committee, he became part of the team that conceived of the Venturing program. Individually and together, Donna and Larry Cunningham contributed to, wrote or edited many Venturing tools, including: *The Ranger Guidebook*, *the Venturer Leader Manual*, *the Venturer Handbook*, *the new Wood Badge Syllabus*, *The Climbing Merit Badge*, *Boy Scout Field Book*, *the Quest Award*, and *the Powder Horn Syllabus*.

Married for 41 years, Larry and Donna Cunningham are a team. They joined Scouting when their two sons, both Eagle Scouts, became involved in the program, over 30 years ago. Both have served as BSA/Venturing representatives to the United States Olympic Committee. Donna chaired the Venturing Sports Committee, while Larry served as a member and was National Powder Horn Director. Larry and Donna are both licensed boat captains, American Red Cross Instructors, SCUBA Divemasters, C.O.P.E. Instructors, Emergency Medical Technicians and NRA Instructors in 3 disciplines. Donna is a C.O.P.E. Director and Larry an NRA Range Master.

Regulars at national trainings, Larry co-chaired the Outdoor Program at Sea Base in 2000 and 2003; and co-hosted the Outdoor Program at Philmont in 2001 and 2005. Donna has served on the Philmont Training Center faculty for six years.

Larry and Donna Cunningham have both been recognized with the Silver Beaver, National Exploring Leadership Award, National Venturing Leadership Award, and Silver Antelope. Donna Cunningham was awarded the prestigious Silver Buffalo in 2003.

More than this significant list of accomplishments and awards, I would like you to know that Larry and Donna Cunningham are genuinely nice and kind people, who are dedicated to helping others and committed to Venturing.

Thanks, Donna and Larry!