



THE MARSHALL PLAN CREATOR FOUND A SIMPLE LIFE IN THE VILLAGE OF PINEHURST

In the glorious shadow of the large American flag which centrally anchors the Pinehurst roundabout, a simple gray monument stands in refined tribute to one former citizen. He lived here for only about 15 years, but it was what he stood for, as much as who he was, that earned him a special place in the hearts of the roughly 1,000 folks who lived here in the 1950s.

The Pinehurst telephone book listed him simply as ‘George Marshall.’ Pinehurst allowed him to live as a normal ordinary person, not a military superstar in the world’s showcase.

He and his wife could have chosen to live anywhere after his military career ended. They chose Pinehurst.

In recognition of his place in history, Pinehurst then chose to honor his brilliant leadership and unyielding ethics with the monument which was located in the original Deer Park.



“The credibility of Marshall in his work and leadership style and the way he is held in awe made him a commanding figure,” said current Village Councilman John Strickland, a third-generation retiree from Michigan. “That monument was in honor of him because he was so well-regarded and had this connection to Pinehurst in a very important geopolitical sense.”

And after foreign assignments, leadership roles, government service and work in the private sector, George and Katherine Marshall lived a calm and unassuming life in the Sandhills.

Newspaper clippings and articles from the Tufts Archives at the Given Memorial Library provided insights on the man who was larger than life, revered and respected throughout the world, but yet sought no special treatment and asked for no favors during his winters in Pinehurst.

Village Manager Andy Wilkison noted that Marshall was described as humble, easily blending in around the Village because the folks here allowed him to be down to earth.

“I’ve been told that he was very friendly and didn’t wear his general stars on his sleeve,” added Wilkison. “If you met him on the streets and didn’t know his background, you would have thought that he was just a normal retiree.”

Mrs. Marshall was known to have suffered from pneumonia and came here because of the “pine ozone,” Wilkson noted.

One story revealed how, on a rainy, dreary day during her recovery, she expressed to her husband a desire to leave the Moore County rain and return to her familiar life in Washington, DC. He replied that it was raining there also and she should stay in Pinehurst. The following day, according to the news article, was beautiful and Mrs. Marshall set out to find a place to live.

They found an uncomplicated life at “Liscombe Lodge,” a modest clapboard bungalow two blocks west of The Carolina Hotel, down Linden Road. The General was nota golfer, but attained an honorary membership in the Tin Whistles, a well-known men’s golfing organization connected with the Pinehurst Country Club. Stories are shared about how General Marshall would ride his horse around the courses, but often would gallery during the famed North-South tournaments in his jeep station wagon, watching the approaching action through field glasses.

He also did his own grocery shopping at a local grocery store and casually walked in the Village, chatting with acquaintances and visitors alike.

Those friends included the grandparents of Strickland who lived across the street from the Marshalls and became what he characterized as “very close friends.”



“When he lived in Pinehurst, he was very approachable,” Strickland said of Marshall. “He was known to walk with a cane in his later years, and he would go around to my grandparents’ house, knock on the door with that cane and just open the door, leaving the cane hanging on the door handle.”

George Marshall had five-star merit before President Franklin Roosevelt elevated him in late 1944, making him the first of five generals known as ‘five star,’ meaning General of the Army, a distinction handed out during wartime.

And, by all accounts, the 1901 graduate of Virginia Military Institute (VMI) had leadership ability from the beginning.

A Pennsylvania native, Marshall began his military service in 1902 in the Philippines and ended it fifty years later. But during those fifty years, this man, who was called a healer, a statesman and a peacemaker, made his profound mark on American and European history. He served with American forces in France during World War I, during which he was aide-de-camp to General John J. Pershing for five years.

Following a China assignment and five years at the Army War College, General Marshall became an assistant commandant of the Infantry School at Fort Benning, GA, where he met Katherine Tupper Brown, who would become his second wife.

In most circles, Marshall was best known for a Harvard University commencement speech in 1947, outlining the State Department's recovery program which became known as The Marshall Plan. Billions of Us dollars would go toward the economic recovery of sixteen European nations, in shambles following World War II. There were shortages of materials and food, factories were in rubble, and the economy was in ruin.

For his genius and diplomacy at helping to rebuild countries consumed by war atrocities, Marshall was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1953.

His formal titles included Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, Director of the Red Cross and Time Magazine's Man of the Year in 1944 and 1947.

Ironically, this man of many influential titles-- who led our nation's military with quiet self-confidence--shunned pretentiousness. Consequently, when the founders of Pinehurst, the Tufts family, decided to honor General Marshall, it was with a noble granite marker which was originally located in a lovely pine area, once known as Deer Park between the Sandhills Woman's Exchange and the Pinehurst Resort.

After various name changes and relocations through the years, Marshall Park is now in a dignified pine stand, more accessible, only about 20 yards from the brick walkway parallel to Carolina Vista. Visitors can approach the monument and reflect on the storied career of this unassuming Pinehurst resident.

At the back of the marker, benches have been donated by the Tin Whistles and the Sandhills Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). The location of the benches allow visitors to view the new 30"x40" plaque which explains, through the five-star chapters of Marshall's life, the impact this understated man had in 20th century America and the rest of the world.

Councilman Strickland spoke admiringly about Marshall, the non-golfing Army general, from a different perspective.

"The style of leadership and ethical nature of General Marshall represents how the game of golf, at its highest level, is meant to be played," he declared. "Golfers are self-governing and they play by the honor system.

"These are all things that General Marshall stood for. And for Pinehurst to have this connection with him, as we do in a substantial way, is a great credit to this Village."

