



Calvin Barclay Hoopes Jr.: A Good Neighbor

By Chris Robinson

“You cannot farm in today’s environment and not take care of the environment.” – Barclay Hoopes.

For most of the past century and half, over a hundred small dairy farms existed in the rolling hills of rural New Garden Township. Today, in a largely urban setting Barclay Hoopes and his family represent one of the last dairy businesses in the Township. This juxtaposition of farming and homes gives testament to Hoopes’ enduring legacy of the steadfast struggle required to sustain an agriculture business within the changing landscape of which it is connected.



High Point Acres. The dairy operation in foreground, cultivated fields in background.

Highpoint Acres, the name of the Hoopes’ 62 acre farm, is situated high on a hill along Walnut Run road and contiguous to the headwaters of Laurel Woods Creek. Barclay represents the Hoopes’ 5th generation to cultivate and work on this family farm that dates back to 1854. Beginning in 1940’s when he was a child, farming was a lifestyle for Barclay. He grew to love it despite the 24/7 demand on his time; Up before sunrise to milk the cows, then off to school on a bus, home again to milk the cows followed by a late family dinner and then a night’s rest for another day. He graduated from Kennett High School in 1964, the class yearbook dedicated to the memory of the assassinated US President, John F. Kennedy

After attending Delaware Valley College of Science and Agriculture for a degree in Dairy Husbandry, he managed the family farm. Shortly thereafter he and his steadfast wife, Diana, purchased the farm from his mother, raised a happy and healthy family of four children (and now have nine grandchildren). Among others farming awards the Hoopes received the “Outstanding Young Cooperators” by the Inter-State Milk Cooperative and the “Century Farm Recognition” award marking the 143 years of continuous farming on the same ground. For generations, Highpoint Acres provided milk, corn, rye, alfalfa, wheat, hay, barley and mulch to the community. “I’ve enjoyed farming” says Barclay. “It’s been and is a challenging business.”

Today, this 160-year old farm raises heifers, grows corn, alfalfa, rye, and incorporates methods to conserve a precious natural resource, its nutrient rich soil. These conservation practices evolved due to Barclay’s keen sense to learn and employ new techniques that made the business of farming more efficient and a viable example how to preserve land for agriculture. His proactive approach started as a youngster when he travelled with his father, Calvin B. Hoopes Sr., who was the tax assessor of



Young heifers. One of several growth stages at Highpoint Acres Farm.

New Garden Township. There and then Barclay met expert farmers, such as Pownall Jones, Charles Wollaston and Leon Wilkinson, who employed new soil conservation methods such as no-till and contour plowing. He met County and State agriculture leaders such as Eleanor and Sam Morris, Bob Powers and Robert Struble who foresaw the importance to preserve land for farming as evidenced by the State's 1981 Agricultural Security Area (PA Act 43). Barclay became involved with the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau helping to build strong, prosperous agricultural communities. He served as Vice Chairman on Chester County's first Agricultural Development Council which among other purposes helps farmers continue to farm, educate and partner with others to help resolve problems and issues related to agriculture. Highpoint Acres is in the Agricultural Security Area of New Garden Township.

Water quality is vital to farming. Working with Chester County Conservation District (CCCD) and the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) during the 1990s, Barclay installed a state-of-the-art drainage system to capture cow manure before it enters Laurel Woods Creek. Asked why he was inclined to do this, he replied "It's an opportunity for me to live in harmony with my community. I want to be a good neighbor." Not surprisingly, in 2008 the Hoopes family received the Distinguished Service to Agriculture award recognizing their perseverance in promoting, contributing and providing exceptional services for the Chester County agricultural community.



Barclay Hoopes talking to the camera about the stream riparian buffer installation on his farm. [Click image to see video.](#) { www.unitedwater.com }

streams cleaner", remarked Barclay. In 2015, scientists will be monitoring the creek to quantify how this stream protection project improves water quality thus benefiting not only his heifers, but stream critters and thousands of residents living in the White Clay Watershed. "It's a win-win-win for everybody", observed Don Suckstorf, the Township's Stormwater Management Program Coordinator. "This is a sensible approach. To stop (pollutants) at its source is a lot cheaper to do than to filter the water." Though he's the last to boast about his passionate advocacy for the family farming, for soil conservation and for water protection Chester County Conservation District awarded Barclay the "Conservation Farmer of the Year".

For six years, Barclay served on New Garden Township's Board of Supervisors. Because stream protection and access to clean water had always been a concern to him, he cast the pivotal vote to add seven additional stream miles in the National Wild and Scenic River system. Subsequently the US Congress passed the [White Clay Creek Wild and Scenic Expansion Bill](#).

During the spring of 2012 Barclay further collaborated with the CCCD and also with United Water of Delaware, a water utility company servicing residents with drinking water diverted from the White and Red Clay Creeks. This project reduced manure loading on Laurel Woods Creek by fencing it from his cows and planting a riparian buffer along the 1,800 foot creek. Since its completion, this protective measure can reduce Cryptosporidium, a protozoan that can cause gastrointestinal illness, from entering the White Clay Creek. "Now I can keep my animals here and keep the



Before and after images of installing the riparian buffer. {Heathy Waters; Andrea Bennett}

Along with one of his mentors, Bernie McKay, Barclay served on the steering committee to create a mechanism for the Township to preserve open space. He provides mulch to the mushroom industry for compost and worked with the mushroom industry to assist with setting up stormwater controls. He provided field trips for school students interested in animal husbandry and growing feed crops. In 1982 Barclay participated in a select group of farm leaders to meet with and directly pose a question to President Reagan about a pending congressional bill to amend the Agricultural Act of 1949 regarding dairy price support during the President's visit to the nearby Wilkinson Dairy Farm. The bill was passed.

Having the opportunity to interview Barclay about his family farm business, one is impressed with the eager drive the Hoopes family have demonstrated to endure, learn, adapt and sustain agriculture. "Too much of my life is in this land", Barclay stated. Indeed, their farm is preserved with an agricultural easement ensuring this rich land and legacy will endure for future farmers in New Garden Township.

As Board of Supervisor Betty Gordon observed about Barclay's dedication and love for the land, "He cares about the Township, about the earth, about the water. He just cares."

And, probably because of the nuisance Canadian Geese pose to his farm and to everyone else in the neighborhood, a favorite movie of his is "Those Calloways". Check it out!