

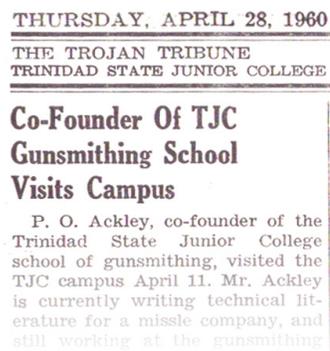


# Pillar & Post

## Enduring 'Society of 1925' Legacies

*The Society of 1925 honors and recognizes those who remember Trinidad State with a legacy gift. We take a moment to reflect on the generosity of Wayne and Dorothy DeMiller.*

Born in Ohio in 1907, Wayne DeMiller first came to Colorado in 1943. He'd been working at an airplane manufacturing facility in Florida, but with WWII at its height, his expertise was needed out west. Originally, Wayne thought he would be joining an airplane facility in California, but a visit to his cousin in Trinidad would change these plans.



Wayne's cousin, Dick Murray, was the Las Animas County Superintendent of Schools at the time. With Trinidad State seeking ways to expand curriculum, Murray felt it might be beneficial to introduce Wayne DeMiller to TSJC President, Dr. P.P. Mickelson.

Previously, DeMiller had attended—and then taught at—the U.S. Army Air Corps Technical Institute. With skills as an aeronautical and mechanical engineer, a pilot, and a tool and die maker—DeMiller brought considerable expertise to all matters related to aviation.

His conversations with Trinidad State led to the creation of a course in 'Airplane and Engine Mechanics.' DeMiller both designed the new course and helped secure the necessary equipment—which would prepare students for specialized positions in carburation and hydraulics, instruments, electrical installations, and motor mechanics.

Wayne DeMiller's introduction to Trinidad State would produce something else. An opportunity to meet Dorothy Okkerse, the College's Registrar and Bursar.

"I was working in the office just outside of Mickelson's," Dorothy later explained, "and that is where I

first met Wayne. I don't remember how many days later, (but) a class was set up for Wayne to teach one evening. Wayne was to pick me up so I could open the safe and register the students.”

And from there, a relationship flourished.



Dorothy had attended Trinidad High School, before earning a degree from the University of Colorado during an era in which fewer women became College graduates. After a courtship, she and Wayne would soon marry, with the couple attended by Wayne's cousin, Dick Murray, and his wife.

Prior to the end of World War II, Wayne would enlist in the U.S. Navy. In 1947, he helped Trinidad State establish its Gunsmithing program alongside his business partner, P.O. Ackley. Ackley taught its first course in the 'theory of gunsmithing,' and Wayne became its shop instructor. DeMiller would also work with other engineers around the development of folding wings for Navy planes on aircraft carriers.



Although Wayne predeceased her, Dorothy would live into her mid-90s—passing away 10 days before her 95th birthday. In 2002, she informed Trinidad State of a legacy gift in her estate plans.

According to Dorothy, this gift would be, “*in the name of O. W. DeMiller and Dorothy M. DeMiller, in recognition of O. W. DeMiller's part in establishing in 1944 the first classes in airplane engine mechanics and in establishing the first classes in gunsmithing.*”

Today, Wayne and Dorothy DeMiller are remembered in our Society of 1925. We remain grateful for their legacy of support for Trinidad State.

For more information about legacy gifts and the Society of 1925, please contact Toni DeAngelis at [toni.deangelis@trinidadstate.edu](mailto:toni.deangelis@trinidadstate.edu) or 719-846-5520.