

A TAXING CAREER

Crunching numbers and saving people money is what keeps Bob Dussel young.

by Mike Prejna



R.N. "Bob" Dussel
Photo courtesy of the
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Most people are pretty ready to relax and enjoy life after 35 or 40 years of work. After all, aren't we all supposed to look forward to retirement? Well, Kent State alum R.N. "Bob" Dussel isn't like most people. Dussel, class of 1950, is a tax attorney in his 65th year of a very distinguished career. The sharp-as-a-tack octogenarian (he'll be 82 in April) still goes to his office each day, where he crunches numbers to old fashioned way: with paper and pencil.

They say that when you love your job, it's not really work. The satisfaction Dussel gets out of helping people save money may explain his commitment to his profession. "I enjoy trying to save a man tax dollars. Many people over pay and never realize it. I like finding what they otherwise might have missed. And they're usually very grateful."

Dussel was born in Cleveland and grew up in Portage County. After earning a Bachelor of Business Administration degree, he became a Portage County tax investigator. Dussel's father was a contractor who built houses for many Kent State professors, as well as some well-known Kent State administrators, eventually became Dussel's clients. He prepared taxes for President Engelman, Dean Manchester, Dean Chapman and Dr. e DeWeese, to name a few.

In 1941, Dussel became a special agent with the IRS, for whom he traveled across the country tracking down tax dodgers. During World War II, he worked the White House detachment for U.S. Army. When the war ended, Dussel returned to the IRS and began preparing tax returns for government officials he'd met. Through word of mouth, he developed an excellent

reputation. His list of clients grew to include a supreme court justice, two- and three-star generals, congressmen, senators and eve the president himself. Dussel's claim to fame is having caught a \$1,000 error on one of President Harry Truman's returns. When Truman left office, he retained Dussel's services. "He was a great man," Dussel recalls. "No nonsense and very intelligent."

Dussel retired from government service in 1972 and started the private practice that maintains to this day. Though technology and computers have changed the way people do things since Dussel's career began sixty-some years ago, he hasn't much changed the way he does things. "The present tax structure started in 1939," he explains, "so it's just a matter of keeping up with the new laws from year to year." And he doesn't bother with computers, relying instead on a calculator and his vast experience.

Dussel lives in Mechanicsville, Va, with his wife Bondalene, an Akron native whom he married in 1941. Although he hasn't been back to visit Kent since the early 80s, Dussel has stayed in touch with former classmates and friends, and still receives the Record-Courier, Portage County's daily newspaper. "I'm sure a lot has changed since I last visited dear old Kent State. But I'll bet my initials are still somewhere under that big rock (on front campus)."