



CUSCOUT PACK 61

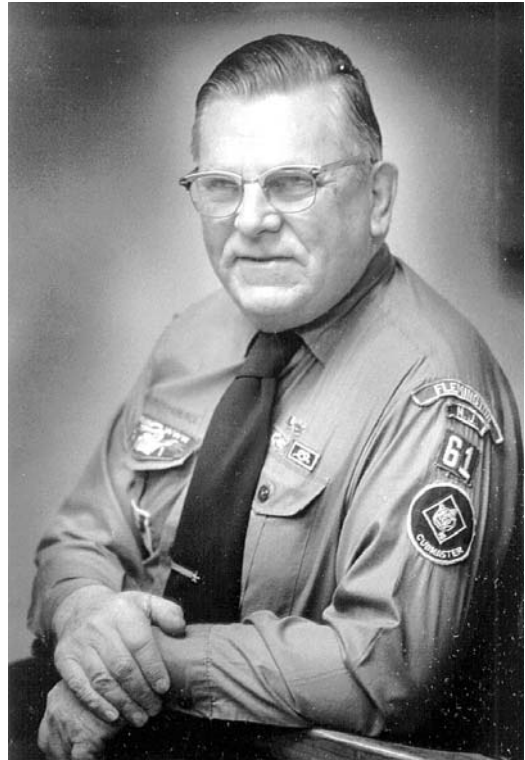
Central New Jersey Council
Boy Scouts of America



DOUGLAS H. NIECE

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LONGEST-SERVING CUBMASTER IN U.S.
— OVER 55 YEARS —

In January 1949 several community leaders in Flemington, New Jersey decided to start a Cub Scout Pack in Hunterdon County. They found a sponsor, American Legion Post 159, 18 boys who were interested in Cub Scouting, and several Den Mothers. All they needed was someone to lead the Pack as Cubmaster. They found him in a 28 year-old printer working at the local newspaper, and Doug Niece has been Cubmaster ever since! We believe this makes him the longest serving Cubmaster in the United States.



Mr. Niece, who was never a Scout himself, says he “learned on the job.” He traveled to Trenton, Princeton and Washington D.C. for training seminars at a time when there were no Cub Scout Packs in Hunterdon County. “I didn’t know any better,” he says. “The cubs didn’t know any better and neither did the parents. Whatever we did was all right with them.” Mr. Niece and his wife never had children and one of the greatest pleasures for him is attending an Eagle Scout Court of Honor for one of his former Cub Scouts. “To be present and know that I had a part in it and celebrate their achievement, it makes me feel good to know I’ve helped.” Niece estimates that over 5,000 boys have belonged to Pack 61 over the years. He should know: he keeps an index card on file for every Cub Scout. He keeps their name, biographical information and records of all awards earned in Scouting. “I’ve hit the second generation now,” he says, explaining that the sons of some original Cub Scouts have since gone through the program. Some of those former Cub Scouts even have sons of their own in Pack 61. “Pretty soon we’ll have three generations who were Cub Scouts in the Pack. Then, maybe, I’ll think about retiring.”

A life-long resident of the Flemington area, Mr. Niece graduated from Flemington High School and was employed by the Hunterdon County Democrat for over 51 years. He is also one of the few surviving graduates of the Flemington Children’s Choir School, a school founded at the turn of the 20th century to train children to sing in the local church choirs. Even at age 85, he still leads singers around Flemington early on Christmas morning, singing carols at any home with the porch light on – a tradition begun by the Choir School in the early 1900s. He also volunteers in the nearby Franklin Township public schools, teaching children who have difficulty reading.

SPONSORED BY AMERICAN LEGION POST 159
FLEMINGTON, NEW JERSEY

— CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF SCOUTING —

His other hobbies include growing prize-winning chrysanthemums. He's a member of the Hunterdon County Chrysanthemum Society and is education director for the New Jersey State Chrysanthemum Society.

Mr. Niece is a life-long member of the Flemington Presbyterian Church where he continues to teach Sunday School after, "Oh, about 70 years." He has served as both an Elder and Deacon of the church and was Superintendent of the Sunday School for over a decade. Several years ago, on Boy Scout Sunday, the church presented him the "God and Service Award" in recognition of his years of service and dedication to youth in the church and the community. "Doug Niece truly embodies the spirit of Christian service — giving and loving," says Rev. Sally Willis-Watkins, Pastor of the church. "He has centered his life around service to others, especially children. Doug has a tremendous gift for giving; one that will bear many lifetimes of fruit."