LONG LAKE ASSOCIATION

HISTORY SERIES No. 4

DON KOEHLER

Don Koehler was a Long Lake lover. In fact, he is without dispute, the longest of all Long Lake Lovers. At 8 feet 2 inches tall, he held the Guinness Book of World Records as the tallest person alive, a recognition he held from about 1969 until his death in 1981.

In all other respects, Don Koehler was much like anyone else who has fallen in love with Long Lake. Don had two dogs and loved to fish. Stories are told of how you could see his knees bending up at an angle well above the gunwales of his small aluminum fishing boat. Don also liked to water ski and do many of the "lake things" that folks like to do.

He never adjusted his Long Lake cottage to his size. The doors and ceilings were standard. He only adjusted two things, his bed and his drivers seat. He had an extra long bed to stretch his legs and he mounted a bucket seat in what would normally be the back seat of his Chevy.

At Mumbrue's Landing, Don Koehler could see in the store windows without taking a step up—an impossibility for anyone else. He greeted the Mumbrue's and most anyone he encountered with a smile and a wave.

Don was born with a twin sister in Montana. He grew up and lived as an adult in Chicago. When

Don Koehler. (Source: www.thetallestman.com)

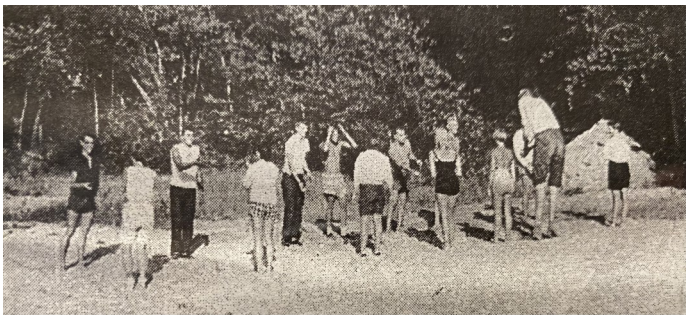
***Attribution*: The information presented herein is based largely on descriptions in Wikipedia and www.thetallestman.com. Information was also extracted from the Saxeville Sesquicentennial Journal published in 1976.**

he was 10 years old he started to grow at an accelerated rate. His standing height of 8 feet 2 inches was 29 inches taller than his twin sister's height (also a Guinness record)!

His height brought Don much notoriety, but this never seemed to change his outlook. Accounts tell of Don as an affable, warm-hearted and tranquil gentlemen. He was as well-liked as he was tall. A man that would poke an occasional joke about his size.

One of the most poignant memories is of his spiritual sense, and it speaks to the way many people feel about Long Lake. When asked about church, he was quoted as saying *"Church? My church is my cottage. I have a little cottage out in Wisconsin. I take my boat out late at night and sit there in the middle of the lake with all the stars out - and the man upstairs and I have our talks."*

Don Koehler was an interesting and colorful character that is forever part of our lore. Upon his passing in 1981 his family honored his wish, and spread his ashes over his favorite place in the world...Long Lake. ◆◆◆



Don (right) playing egg toss with friends at the lake. (Source: Saxeville Sesquicentennial Times)

(Source: www.thetallestman.com)

Top of the fridge — the perfect counter height for Don Koehler (Source: www.thetallestman.com)

Vintage photo of Don Koehler (left) water skiing. (Source: Saxeville Sesquicentennial Times)