



A short story of Florence and Cornelius (Cor) Van Dam and the Valley View Farms Dairy

Born in the Netherlands, Cor Van Dam immigrated to Southern California in 1930 with his parents and six siblings.

His father ran a dairy farm in El Monte, but by the 1940s the area was already too crowded. The fourth-generation farmer wanted to live out in the country, so he bought land about 20 miles south of his father's farm.

With his wife, Florence, a bank teller he met while signing a loan to buy cows, he set out to build a state-of-the-art operation at Rosecrans and Valley View avenues in the early 1950s.



From the start, there were signs of the change to come. When he saw the ranch across the street being converted into housing, Cor decided to build a small drive-through market, known as a "cash and carry," which opened in 1953. Suburban families in the growing car culture needed a convenient place to shop, so he built one.

When people first moved into La Mirada, so many of them were strangers, even to Southern California. The dairy became a place for them to meet each other and visit.



Valley View Farms was one of the few dairies that produced, processed and distributed its own milk. Among its enduring customers were local school districts.

Speaking of school districts, many of the local schools had field trips to the dairy where the students were able to see the herd and learn about the process of packaging the milk they drank or used on their cereal. It was at the dairy that they learned that “brown cows do not really give chocolate milk.”



Every spring for about 15 years, Cor threw out the first pitch at Van Dam Stadium, a Little League field on the farm that he leased to the community beginning about 1960. He charged a dollar a year.

He was involved in his community in other ways, including serving on the La Mirada planning commission and as choir director at his church. Deeply religious, he often gathered with his family to sing hymns in English and Dutch.

Cor also was one of the founding members of the La Mirada Rotary Club and of the La Mirada Chamber of Commerce. In fact, it was members of the Rotary Club that originally formed the Chamber of Commerce.

By 1992, Valley View Farms was the largest of the county's remaining four urban dairies, with a herd of 1,000 cows.

Cor and Florence raised five children at their home located on three acres at the dairy, including a son, Cornel, who returned after college to help run the enterprise.

When the younger Van Dam wanted to expand the herd, the family transferred the cattle operation to Idaho in 1994. Cornel Van Dam operated a farm there until it merged with another dairy in 2001.

Except for the three acres surrounding the family's home, much of the La Mirada farm has been turned into an industrial park with a name that salutes the past: Valley View Farms Business Center.

In 2002, the Van Dam family established the C.A. Van Dam Family Foundation a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. It is through the generous donations of this Foundation that the Rotary Club of La Mirada is able to award scholarships to graduating seniors at La Mirada High School.

The Rotary Club of La Mirada thanks the C.A. Van Dam Family Foundation for their continued support of the scholarship program and looks forward to working with them in the future.