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My name is Mike Muecke, and I am 58 years old. I grew up in Three Rivers, a small rural town in South Texas. My dad was a respected medical doctor in an area where he was the only doctor in the entire county except for another female that practiced part time. It was *...back in the day...* when a rural doctor delivered all the babies, performed surgery and even made house calls! I was fortunate to have wonderful parents that were good role models and led by example. Our best family friends were the local pharmacist and his family, and he was my inspiration to pursue the pharmacy profession at The University of Texas. In fact, when I graduated from high school, I knew I wanted to be a pharmacist in a rural area of Texas and own my own pharmacy. When I was only twenty, I married my high school sweetheart, Cerie Miller. In high school, I was an all around sports enthusiast playing football, basketball, and high jumping for the tract team. My wife, Cerie, was a State FHA Officer and excelled in music and theatre. She was twirler and drum major of the high school band. I graduated from the University of Texas in 1974 with a degree in pharmacy, and Cerie graduated in 1973 with a teaching degree in home economics from Southwest Texas.

Cerie and I have been happily married for 37 years, and we have worked tirelessly as a team together in retail pharmacy establishing the pharmacy profession as our family breadwinner. We currently own three independent pharmacies in Matagorda County. During our early years of marriage, we were young and in love and would have moved anywhere in the state where we thought we could make a living in retail pharmacy by owning our own business. In the late 1970s, Matagorda County was gearing up with a new nuclear

power plant and without knowing a single person in the entire county; we decided that viable location was our destiny. We opened our first two pharmacies from *"the-get-go....from scratch"* with The Medicine Shoppe opening in 1979 in Bay City and Palacios Prescription Shoppe opening in Palacios in 1982. The third pharmacy, Hibbs Pharmacy, was a successful independent pharmacy in a medical clinic in Bay City that we bought out in 1983. My wife and I were young "whipper-snappers" with ambition, drive, and fearless determination. {I don't know if I would be as brave in 2010 opening three pharmacies.....without knowing a living soul in the county! Oh...the vision and strength of youth!} Cerie taught at Bay City High School to make ends meet and to get to know the people in the community while I worked 24 - 7 in The Medicine Shoppe ..... not taking a single day off for three years! At times, it seemed like all odds were against us. In fact, when we opened our first pharmacy, The Medicine Shoppe was the fourteenth pharmacy in the Matagorda County! {It seemed like the last thing the community needed was another pharmacy!} However, I guess it comes down to the survival of the fittest.....and most determined.... because in 2010, there are only seven pharmacies left of the original fourteen. Cerie and I own three of the seven. In fact, we are the only independent pharmacies left in the entire county.

Our philosophy of running our pharmacies is in simplest terms: "Take care of the pharmacies and the pharmacies will take care of you."

1. We greet customers as they enter the pharmacy by name.

2. We truly care about our customers and their families. We are there when our customers have their babies and are with them when they lose a loved one.
3. We answer the phone at 2 a.m. in the middle of the night at home the same as if it were 2 p.m. in the afternoon at the pharmacy.
4. We send every student that graduates from Bay City High School that gets their prescriptions with us a graduation gift personally selected for them with a hand written note of congratulations.
5. If a customer leaves us for a chain pharmacy, we will personally call them to see if personal service and caring attitude can rectify the situation and hopefully win them back as a customer.

6. We will personally deliver your prescriptions to your home, nursing home or assisted living as needed.

All in all, we have tried to stay on the cutting edge with the competition. In fact, in 1979 we were the first pharmacy in the county to utilize computer systems and also the first to administer immunizations.

Throughout our 31 years in retail pharmacy, we have utilized Health Care Screenings, Health Fairs and have been a guest speaker for the Senior Citizens and various Civic Groups. We are the only compounding pharmacy in the county, and we alone take care of all nursing homes and assisted living facility prescriptions.

My family truly loves Matagorda County, and we have been active in the community and have tried to give back with time, service, and monetary contributions. I have participated or been a part of the following organizations in Matagorda County and across the state:

- First United Methodist Church ~ Finance Committee
- University of Texas Ex Students Association Lifetime Member
- University of Texas Chancellor's Council
- Texas Pharmacy Association
- American Heart Association
- Kids in Distress
- Matagorda County Hospital Board ~ Secretary
- Chairman of Property and Building Committee
- Supervised Construction of a new \$45 million hospital
- Matagorda County Fair Association
- Blackcat Booster Club
- Coached Little League Baseball
- Coached Babe Ruth Baseball
- Coached Youth Basketball
- Coached Youth Flag Football

My wife, Cerie Muecke, has been involved with or a member of the following organizations in Matagorda County:

- First United Methodist Church
- Altar Guild
- Vacation Bible School Teacher
- Bell Choir
- Little League Team Mom
- Dungeoneer Theatre Booster Club ~ President

Cheerleader Booster Club ~ President  
Floral Luncheon Study Club ~ President  
Junior Service League ~ President  
Beta Sigma Phi ~ President  
National Flower Show Judge

CAREER:

Teacher - 7 years  
Interior Designer - currently  
Gift Shop Proprietor - currently

I guess, like most parents, what I am most proud of are our three grown children. All three graduated from the University of Texas and are morally straight, focused, dedicated to their professions and are actually ..... a lot of fun to be around. Our oldest son, Mark, enjoys hunting, fishing, tennis and snow skiing. He attended John Newcomb's Tennis Camp and The University of Texas Baseball Camp while growing up. A highlight of Mark's high school years was watching him compete in the Babe Ruth World Series in Carmel, Indiana. While at The University of Texas, he was Pledge Trainer for his fraternity, Phi Gamma Delta. He is 32 years old and newly married to Bonnie Abell from Houston. Mark and Bonnie live in San Antonio. Mark is a stockbroker and Vice President of Kercheville and Company, and Bonnie teaches Spanish at Saint Mary's Hall.

Matthew is our second son, and he enjoys hunting, fishing, swimming, waterskiing, and snow skiing. Matthew attended The University of Texas Baseball Camp and competed at the Summer League State Swim Meeting for six years while growing up. A favorite memory of his high school years was watching him line back for the Blackcats at the 4-A State High School Football Championship. While at The University of Texas, he was also Pledge Trainer for his fraternity, Phi Gamma Delta. He is 28 years old and works in the petroleum industry as an independent contractor and for Blackbrush Energy in San Antonio.

Our youngest child is our daughter, Meredith. In high school, she was Cheerleader Captain and an accomplished oboist spending one summer at the Interlochen Music Conservatory in Michigan. She also spent summers at Camp Mystic growing up. During her high school years, she spent two summers studying theatre at Boston University and Chicago's Northwestern University. Memorable events in Meredith's high school years were winning the UIL State One Act Play Championship and being a member of the UIL State Championship Speech Team. While at the University of Texas, Meredith was President and Rush Captain of her sorority, Kappa Kappa Gamma. Currently, Meredith is the Marketing Director for a commercial real estate firm, Endeavor, in Austin.

Pharmacy has been a rewarding profession for me in so many ways. I still find the pharmacy profession exciting and challenging. Helping people in rural Texas with their prescriptions and medical concerns is what I derive the most satisfaction from in this business. Not a week goes by that a customer doesn't thank me for providing these needed services on a personal and professional basis in small town America. However, in conclusion, I am concerned that there is a *"fly in the ointment"* ..... with the insurance industry and PBMs trying to rule our most respected profession.