

1941 Alumnus Remembers "Uncle Eldon"

1939. Baker Business University occupied the fifth floor of the Industrial Bank Building. It was a small school but to eighteen year old **Maurice Sheldon** it offered vast opportunities.

The youngest of eight children, Sheldon first heard of Baker Business University when a counselor came to speak at Mary Crapo High School in Swartz Creek.

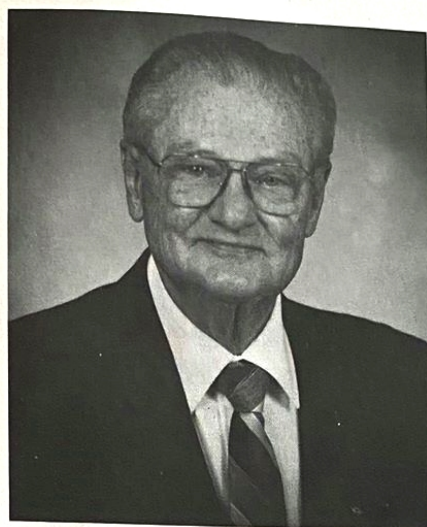
"I attended a one-room schoolhouse for my first eight years of education. At that time you had to take an exam to get into high school," remarked Sheldon. "Going on to college was quite an accomplishment. My parents were very supportive of the idea. They encouraged all of their children to get an education."

Baker's advertisement of "A Job For Everyone" and the counselor's presentation convinced Sheldon to enroll in the secretarial & bookkeeping program in the fall of 1939. Tuition was \$22.50 a month.

Classes were small and everyone knew everyone else. Teachers such as Guy Howard, Ernest Johnson, Lois Baker McCormick and Miss Barnum left a lasting impression, but most of Sheldon's memories involve Baker Business University President Eldon Baker and his involvement with the students.

"Every now and then Mr. Baker would call us into his office to check on our progress. He was very positive and offered suggestions and advice, but the walk down that long hallway to his office always made me nervous," remembers Sheldon.

Dinner parties at Mr. Baker's home



Maurice Sheldon

on Church street were a common practice.

According to Sheldon, "Every week approximately ten students were invited to dinner. Everyone dressed up and it was all very elegant. Most of us were farm boys and sometimes the food, such as oyster soup, was different from what we were accustomed to but we had a wonderful time and looked forward to our next invitation."

During the summer of 1940 Mr. Baker and his daughter, Lois McCormick, needed someone to drive them and an aunt, who had been visiting, to Iowa. Mr. Baker had a brand new 1940 Buick but never drove. He asked Sheldon if he'd like to make the trip.

The trip proved to be memorable for the nineteen year old student. In addition to the new experiences of reading a road map and driving through a blinding snow storm, Sheldon was encouraged to call Mr. Baker "Uncle Eldon."

"Because of all the time we would be spending together Mr. Baker thought

"Uncle Eldon" sounded less formal, but I never felt comfortable about it," commented Sheldon. "I switched back to Mr. Baker once we returned to school. It wouldn't have been appropriate there. I still don't know why he picked me to drive them across country but I will always remember the experience."

After completing classes and a six week co-op job at the Court Street United Methodist Church, Mr. Sheldon received his diploma in 1941 and went to work in the employment office at Fisher Body. He joined the Air Force in 1942 and was stationed in Cincinnati, Ohio where he met his wife Evelyn and attended classes at Xavier University.

Returning to Flint three and a half years later, Sheldon began his career at Citizens Bank where he achieved the rank of Assistant Vice President and Regional Branch Manager before his retirement in June 1982.

Mr. Sheldon considers Baker a "stepping stone to the rest of my life. I learned discipline and compatibility—how to get along with other people."

Today at seventy-one, Sheldon divides his time between homes in Flint and Florida. Busy enjoying his retirement with his family, Sheldon is proud of his Baker heritage.

"I received the best training possible from knowledgeable people. It was a good time with good people. A young person today can do nothing better than to choose Baker College and get a specialty degree. Learn a trade. Look how Baker has grown. They are obviously offering what is needed in education today."