



Right: Ken Carson, Jr., and his sister Mary Carol enjoy an AMIB Christmas party together.

## Ken Carson Jr. leaves a legacy for his sister and those like her

*Kenneth J. Carson, Jr., whose sister Mary Carol is a resident of the Bayville home, currently serves as president of the AMIB board of trustees. He and his wife Clare recently became members of The Legacy Society, when Ken took out a life insurance policy naming the AMIB Endowment Fund as the beneficiary. We recognize Ken not only for the invaluable work he does as president but also for helping to ensure the financial future of AMIB and its residents in this thoughtful way.*

Kenneth J. Carson Jr. was a year and a half old when his sister Mary Carol was born. She was a premature infant weighing 2 pounds 3 ounces and not expected to live. Her twin brother, Patrick, died hours after birth, but the fragile little girl survived.

When she was four months old, her family learned that their daughter was blind. Her condition—retrolental fibroplasia—was common in premature babies weighing less than 3 pounds who had been subjected to high concentrations of oxygen.

As she grew older, her parents discovered that their daughter was also retarded. Tests revealed that Mary Carol was unable to learn, unable to be educated.

At five the little girl entered St. Joseph's Home for the Blind. However, after two years, unable to keep up with the other children, she returned home. She stayed home until the age of 14, when she entered the Woodbridge State School.

Woodbridge had a program for the deaf/blind and those with other disabilities. The school also had a very active parents group in which the Carsons became involved. Through this group, Mary and Ken Carson, Sr. learned about the Association for the Multiple Impaired Blind, which had opened a group home in Barnegat and was about to open another in Bayville.

In 1982, at the age of 34, Mary Carol became a resident of AMIB's Bayville home.

Now 54, Mary Carol continues to enjoy living in Bayville. Her days are filled with friends and activities, including daily workshops through Easter Seal Program in which residents work on projects according to their abilities. Mary Carol strings beads for her mother and packages items (baby products, cosmetics, etc.) into boxes for local companies.

Like many blind people, to compensate for her lack of sight, Mary

Carol developed other keen senses. Ken Junior remembers how his sister could tell with great accuracy from the smell coming from the kitchen exactly what their mother was cooking. She also has always had a remarkable memory for music and the songs sung by different singers.

"I initially became involved with AMIB because I wanted to be sure that my sister would be taken care of in a safe and comfortable setting for the rest of her life," Ken explained.

"That interest has expanded to include those similar to my sister. Over the years it has become a mission for me to be sure that Mary Carol and others with developmental disabilities and blindness have the best chance to live a comfortable life."

As president of AMIB, Ken Carson Jr. has two major goals. One is to open a new home every one or two years to accommodate individuals with disabilities on the waiting list for a group home. The other is to assure residents who are aging that they will have a place to be cared for in their late years.

"No other group is even attempting to do this," said Ken. "We intend to make it happen."