

THE VILLAGE VOICE

Rocky Mountain Village Estates • August 2021

Meet Donna Rae Smith-Jones

It was “competition at first sight,” explained Donna Jones, telling the story of how she met her husband, Roy, in high school. Each was used to being at the top of their respective classes at a residential parochial school in Keene, Texas. He’d been surprised to see that it was a GIRL who’d beat him on Algebra testing! They would marry three years later, and she’d become his greatest supporter, helping him get through the long haul of medical school.

The route to being an ear-nose-and-throat specialist started in the junior college in Keene (after two years as a music major) and took them to Lincoln, Nebraska; Loma Linda and Los Angeles, California; and Columbus, Ohio before settling in Denver where her husband interned at Denver General (now Denver Health). She earned her degree in Business from the University of Nebraska in Lincoln after deciding nursing was not for her.

During the 14-year period of their married life that he was pursuing his degrees as an MD and an ENT, Donna was earning her PhT (“pushing husband through”) degree, she explained with a big smile. Both had come from families experiencing poverty as a result of the Depression and Dust Bowl days, so financial assistance from the home front was not possible.

Donna was used to working. “My first job was at 10 years of age taking trays in the cafeteria at the junior college,” she disclosed. “I made 10 cents an hour.” After her degree she would work for Social Security and in direct selling. When her husband began his medical practice, she handled the front office for many years.

Donna and Roy had the first of four children in 1957, and Roy started practicing medicine in 1965. The day they were to close on the purchase of their first home in Englewood was the day the South Platte River flooded the

Denver metro area in June of 1965, one of the most devastating floods in Colorado’s history.

From an early age, the third of their four children would be afflicted most of his life with seizures as a result of a parasite and would die on his 39th birthday. Donna had served as his caretaker. “All the siblings made it a priority of their friends to be their brother’s friends.”

As a result of growing up with a special needs brother, one of the siblings developed a great deal of empathy, choosing to become a doctor himself. It is that son who lives nearby in Evergreen, the reason Donna relocated here at Rocky Mountain Village five years ago. “When we lived in Englewood, we used to come up to Evergreen for weekend stays.”

Both Roy and Donna took flying lessons and became licensed pilots, doing quite a bit of traveling by plane. When it came to ground school, Donna says, “I got my training while at the beauty parlor.” That’s where she read the training manuals.... She got her license first, and while pilot (and he was co-pilot) she remembers trying to land in Carlsbad, New Mexico, with cows on the runway.

She was also the first to tip the plane over, sustaining only a broken fingernail with no injury or damage to the plane. One time the radios went out and she had to fly by the seat of her pants in a blizzard.

Sometimes friends would fly in and meet them on a runway in Elbert County. “We’d meet up and fly to Wyoming for a cup of coffee!” They enjoyed having their own small plane until selling it because “it was like putting a bicycle on a highway” with all the big planes on the runways.

The couple did a lot of jeeping and mountain climbing. She remembers one climb with her fingernails!

The two enjoyed taking trips sponsored by National



Continued on back side.

Why hurry over beautiful things? Why not linger and enjoy them?

-- Clara Schumann

Memo from the Manager

If you'd like to contribute to the Eagle/Bear sculpture refurbishing fund, please go to Kathy's office or see Walt at the Monday coffee in either building.

Summer is whizzing by! Let's enjoy this beautiful place we live in and the beautiful people we share it with. I'm thankful every day.

-- Kathy

New crosswalk anticipated across CR 65

Within the next month we can expect a crosswalk to be installed across County Road 65 from in front of Center for the Arts to Bergen Park and the RTD Park-n-Ride.

This is the first of 17 projects of the Evergreen Local Improvement District to be constructed and maintained by Jefferson County. With crossing lights and signage, it is estimated to cost \$80,000.

Why isn't this paid for by our taxes? you might ask. Because Evergreen is not incorporated as a city, care of our roads is the responsibility of the county and the state. Being classified as "rural," those entities are not required to provide crosswalks, gutters, or sidewalks, among other things.

Payment comes from funds raised in the community by a 1% voluntary improvement fee added to receipts at participating businesses such as restaurants. That money often-times becomes seed money (20%) to earn an 80% match in grant dollars from governmental agencies.

The RMVE Board of Directors sent a letter to the County Commissioners last fall encouraging acceptance of the proposed projects, specifically the crosswalk by Rocky Mountain Village. This summer the Board submitted a letter of support for a grant request for \$80,000 from special grant monies made possible through the Colorado Department of Transportation as a result of COVID.

What does COVID have to do with grant monies from CDOT?, you might ask. The State designated funds to revitalize Main Streets in smaller communities, with special attention given to "vulnerable populations." The residents of RMVE qualify as a "vulnerable population" affected by COVID in that many of us make use of the park across the highway for exercise and mental health. Most residents feel that walking across County Road 65 is dangerout without a proper crosswalk and many drive a car to the parking lot instead. It is believed that more residents will utilize the park after a crosswalk is installed.

Placement of the crosswalk is affected by in and out traffic to the RTD lot, rights of way by different governmental agencies (Denver and Jefferson Counties) and walking paths to reach the park.

-- Linda Kirkpatrick

Donna Rae Smith-Jones continued

Geographic. One in particular was called "Land of the Midnight Sun," tied to the summer solstice. It started in Boston, and for 16 days they jetted from place to place located near the North Pole ... Greenland, Sweden, St. Petersburg (Russia), Helsinki (Finland), Norway, Lapland, Iceland.

They stayed in an Eskimo bed and breakfast, observed a family having a picnic in the park at 2 a.m., visited Queen Victoria's palace, had elegant dinners served by waiters with white ties and white gloves, stayed at the Santa Claus Hotel, and traveled by helicopter and dogsleds while dressed in seal coats.

"We only had five hours of sleep each night. It was always light; we packed a lot into the daylight!" Donna remarked.

Roy retired in 2002 when his Parkinson's kept him from being able to write prescriptions. He died 11 years later. During this time Donna was his only caregiver. She took a fall down 18 steps, suffering a concussion but only showed disabilities after his death.

Donna describes living at Rocky Mountain Village as "great!" adding, "I know the names of practically everyone in Bergen." She takes part in Game Night, Movie Night, and potlucks, finding that her portable oxygen tank lets her get along "very well." She has assistants come in the morning and again in the evening. They prepare her meals and become her personal friends.

With 25 relatives within the Denver metro area, she finds family gatherings are often family reunions. But she's especially happy to be in Evergreen, living near her son, who is "close to being" her primary care physician.

Profile and photo by Linda Kirkpatrick

Masks....

Jefferson County Public Health is strongly recommending that all residents aged 2 and older — reardless of vaccination status — return to wearing a mask in indoor public spaces to minimize risk and maximize protection from COVID-19, including the highly infectious Delta variant.

WELCOME!

Kendra Piotrowski - 305-G

Kate O'Neal - 219-G

Jane Bolton and Barton Marks - 320-G

Wendy Moore - 111-B