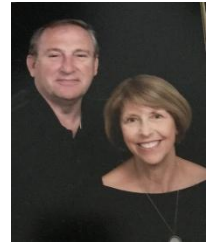


Meet Your Neighbors!

Steve and Judy Johnson Unit #503

Written by Judy Johnson



Hello everyone! So glad you are enjoying the “MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS” articles. This month I’m going to share some information about our family. Many of you are already friends. I hope to introduce the Johnsons to those who don’t know us yet. This column is open to all residents and seasonal families. We would love to “meet you” through this platform! I am fascinated by the stories of the amazing neighbors here at the Princess. I’d like to get to know you, too! So, here is our story.

Steve and I were both born in Buffalo, NY on the West side. We lived blocks apart. We were baptized in the same Church! My family and all my relatives have Italian roots. Steve’s family relocated from Holyoke, MA, to Buffalo. Steve’s family and all his relatives have roots in the British Isles. At some point both our families moved ten miles south to “Hamburg, the Town that Friendship Built”. Also famous as an early settlement, home of the Hamburger (Erie County Fair), and snow blizzards! Steve and I attended different schools, and met at the end of Junior year, through a mutual friend. Steve was a star football player and co-captain of the track team. I was an honor student and President of the Future Teachers Club. We were very different, but I soon fell in love with his quiet demeanor, politeness and great sense of humor! Yup! I knew he was the one!

After graduation, I attended the University of Buffalo, my dream school, and Steve left for Marshall University in Huntington, WV, as a freshman football player. The year was 1970. You may remember a horrific plane crash that killed a football team. That was Steve’s Varsity team. He lost good friends and coaches. This changed everything for us. Shortly after that Steve and I got married. After the anguish we went through when we thought Steve was on the plane, our parents gave us their blessings. We moved down to Huntington into married housing. We both attended classes and Steve played football. Before Steve graduated, we welcomed Jennifer, and then Matt into our family. We wanted a big family.

After graduation, we returned to Hamburg, our beloved hometown. Steve worked at Republic Steel as a Melt Foreman, and a computer engineer. We bought our first house and Nathan joined our family. We bought a bigger house, in our dream neighborhood. We welcomed Eric into our family. Shortly later, the Steel Industry came upon hard times. The Plant shut down and Steve and I packed up our four kids and off we went to a Steel Plant in Gadsden Alabama. We had a great group of friends there with whom we shared many happy family activities until that Plant also had troubles. Southerners for three years.

Steve’s next job was back North at a Research Center in Niagara Falls, NY. Now he was working on computers systems. He travelled extensively, including weeks in Norway, Quebec and six months in Australia! The small town we moved to was on Lake Ontario, Youngstown, NY. Our new house bordered Fort Niagara State Park. So much green grass, and so many soccer fields! All our kids loved soccer and excelled at it. I got a job in a Primary Mental Health Program, which I loved, and in the same school district as all the kids. We were all on the same campus but in different schools. All was well until six years later the Research Center shut down.

Jen left for college, and the rest of us got transferred to Pittsburgh, PA. Steve liked working at the new Research Center. We bought a charming 1901 three-story brick home in the quaint town of Beaver, PA. Although all these moves were hard on our family, the kids adjusted, made friends and excelled in academics and sports. We had six very happy years here until, you guessed it, this Research Center closed too!

Matt and Nathan left for college, so just three of us moved to Marrietta, Ohio because Steve again was transferred. This time to a Plant. Our new home was located on thirteen wooded acres, with a large pond, in Vincent, Ohio. Eric finished high school, I worked across the Ohio River in Parkersburg, WV. I taught Reading and Math, then full day Pre-K, and finally, Kindergarten. I realized I just wanted to sing, dance and read Aloud stories; to basically have fun while teaching reading and math. After 23 years of living in Ohio, and all our kids on their own, we found ourselves retired and needing more beach time. We had spent many happy vacations on the beach in Maine. We got in our RV and checked out a few places. In 2019 we visited our friends in Port Saint Lucie and luckily discovered the Princess.

Steve and I have had a busy and blessed life, full of wonderful friends, from many diverse locations. We have loved all the places we have lived, but the Princess is our favorite home because of our time spent on the ocean, and with our wonderful Princess friends and neighbors! It feels like Paradise!