



# The Village Voice

January 2022

## “At Home in the Retirement Center”

By Jane Shaw Stroup



If you watch TV channels that appeal to older people, you see many ads stressing the value of remaining in one's home as one ages. The ads market the people and services that make staying in your home possible. But is staying home the best idea as you age? In early 2017, my husband and I moved into an upscale retirement center here in Raleigh, N.C. He was experiencing some memory loss, and we wanted life to be more settled – especially since at some point we would cut back on traveling and going out. The experience has been mixed but generally a good one. At a retirement center, for example, your friends are close by. This was important during the depths of COVID-19, when we were not allowed to go out even to shop and our meals were brought to us. A small group on our floor met once a week for wine and snacks. (I'm not sure we were supposed to do even that, but it gave us a boost.) Yes, a retirement home has some resemblance to a college dorm. But that's a good thing. Unlike a typical apartment complex, where one rarely knows one's neighbors, a retirement home allows meeting many people – at meals, exercise classes, lectures and clubs. Having a gym and a restaurant downstairs makes life easier. You can be as active as you wish (although you pay for activities you may not indulge in). And unlike a college dorm, a retirement complex is full of people who have experienced long, interesting lives. This complex has many retired professors, teachers, physicians, engineers and business executives. There are always opportunities for good conversation. Emptying the contents of one's home and selling it are poignant experiences, and I understand why people want to avoid them. But putting off the process, leaving it to one's children, may not be the right approach. A one – or two – bedroom apartment (plus storage space) in a retirement home actually can hold a lot of favorite artworks and personal treasures. In fact, as time goes on, we have found we don't really need all that we did bring. A retirement home can succeed only if it has caring staff who tolerate the foibles of older people. I have never been reprimanded or even chided here, even though I've done some stupid things (and frequently forget to push the button each morning that assures I am all right.) The staff's affection for us is visible. Similarly, one source of camaraderie among residents is the acceptance of our foibles. A retirement center is a place where you don't have to pretend to be smarter or younger than you are. You can relax. And the end of life takes place here. When it happened to my husband this month, I learned there are many people here who can ease the heartache. The notes, the hugs, the gifts, the get-togethers – all remind me that nearly five years ago my husband and I did, indeed, find a home.

*Mrs. Stroup is a retired nonprofit executive. Her husband was the economist Richard L. Stroup. This article appeared in The Wall Street Journal.*



## Senior Moments Been There...Done That!

In the 1920's, movie star Douglas



Fairbanks, was driving back to his Beverly Hills estate when he passed a man with a familiar face and an aristocratic bearing who was

walking down the road on a hot day. Fairbanks stopped to offer him a ride, which the surprised man accepted gratefully in an educated British accent. Unable to remember the man's name, but convinced he knew him from somewhere, Fairbanks invited him inside his mansion for a drink. During their conversation, the visitor

seemed to know a lot of Fairbank's friends and was even familiar with the mansion itself, as if he had visited it often. Fairbanks



eventually managed to whisper to his secretary, "Who is this Englishman? I know he's Lord Somebody, but I can't remember his name." "That", replied the secretary, "is the English butler you fired last month for getting drunk."

## Another Happy New Year At Westminster Village!!

Another new year is upon us, full of new hopes and dreams. Around Westminster, all the Christmas trees, lights, wreaths and other decorations that took weeks to put up, have been carefully packed



away for another year. Residents are tucked in and ready to spend winter at Westminster

Village, where they know they will be safe from whatever winter can dish out.

With all the amenities that Westminster offers right inside our building, residents can relax in knowing that they don't have to step a toe outside...unless they want to!



## Congratulations to the Staff of Westminster!

We want to congratulate the staff of Westminster Village for being voted *2021 Muncie Area's Finest* in the following categories:

Retirement Community

Assisted Living

Nursing Home

Customer Service

Company Culture

Best Boss: Mary Jo Crutcher

Thank you to all of our staff for all you do for our residents!

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