



Virginia Galyean left Littleton, Colorado, to come live in Vista with her daughter about one year ago. When her daughter politely suggested that Virginia get out of house, she came to the center for a tour and after some thought, Virginia decided to volunteer. She started working in the center's Azalea Café in July and is the friendly face you see there every Tuesday. Virginia remarked that since coming to the senior center, she has "met the loveliest people" and "that's a fact." You will probably see her more around the center as she hopes to try out other volunteer jobs.

Virginia was born in Rock Springs, Wyoming, where her father worked for United Airlines. A mechanical engineer, her father got a job with Northrop Aircraft and moved the family, including Virginia's younger brother and sister to California when Virginia was in about the second grade. The family lived in several places, including Hollywood and Los Angeles, finally settling in Manhattan Beach. They lived on the strand and Virginia and her friends 'lived' on the beach. They enjoying playing "kick the can" and Virginia seemed to always have a stubbed toe. Her friend's father was a chauffer for Esther Williams and she enjoyed getting the inside "scoop." She attended Grand View Elementary, Center Street Middle School, and Redondo Union High School, the only high school in the area at the time. At the suggestion of her mother, Virginia and her sister were involved in dancing and Virginia became part of the welcoming committee at the old Redondo Theatre where she met Donald O'Connor and Peggy Ryan. She continued dancing throughout high school. Her dance teacher was instrumental in booking shows at places like the Los Angeles Fair where she met Rhonda Fleming, Roddy MacDowell, and in Redondo Beach where she met Bob Hope and Jerry Colonna, who autographed a photograph for her (she still has it).

When her father was transferred to New Mexico in September of 1950, Virginia met Frank James Galyean the following month in October, they were engaged in November, and married the following August. Her husband was brought up on a horse and cattle ranch in New Mexico and, in 1942, he became the youngest professional rodeo bull rider. Once married, Frank joined the Air Force. After basic training, they moved to Long Island until Frank was sent to Germany. Virginia was pregnant so she returned to Hermosa Beach where she stayed with her mother. After their first daughter, Cindy, was born, Virginia found an apartment above a double car garage in Manhattan Beach, just north of the pier. When he left the service in 1954, Frank was stationed in Lancaster. The family moved to Whittier where Frank worked for Rheem Manufacturing working on aircraft parts. Two more daughters were born, Georgia and Bonnie. Frank got a job with Martin Marrietta in Denver and the family moved to Littleton, Colorado, where Virginia lived for the next fifty-three years. She recalls the tragedy of Columbine High School – she lived only two blocks away – a sad day for her indeed.



Frank and Virginia in the summer, 1998.



Her own daughters were among the first Bronchettes, cheerleaders for the Denver Broncos, and her oldest was runner-up Miss Teen USA in 1972. Virginia and her daughters were involved with the Miss Colorado Universe Pageant and a bridal show on television. Then her daughters realized boys existed and that was that. Virginia and her sister opened a dance studio, the Imperial School of Ballet, where they taught ballet, tap, jazz, and modern dance. Her sister kept the business, but Virginia left after about ten years. Virginia's husband volunteered as the town's sheriff; he rode on horseback and they themselves owned five horses. Together they participated in the town's parades and met a lot of dignitaries, such as Elvis Presley, Nelson Rockefeller, Al Hirt, Charlie Pride, and Boots Randall, to

name a few, as she was on the committee to elect Ronald Reagan and Frank had to provide law enforcement protection when dignitaries came to town.

Virginia and her husband and best buddy, Frank, enjoyed going camping and fishing in the mountains and knew every crook and cranny you could fish in Aspen. After retiring, Frank worked briefly as a metallurgist in Los Angeles for a couple of years and then in 1982, Virginia and Frank sold their home in Littleton, bought a motor home and returned to California. They lived in Vacationland, across from Disneyland, where their grandchildren visited them and they met a lot of people with whom they often went to Catalina Island and just had a real fun time. They traveled the coast to Canada and went deep sea fishing. It was the best thing they ever did and Virginia was so grateful to have spent those twelve years enjoying life with her husband since, in 1994, Frank was diagnosed with lung cancer and they had to return to Littleton. For the next eleven years, Virginia took care of her beloved Frank until he passed away in 2005. They were married for fifty-eight years and have four granddaughters and twelve great-grandchildren. Virginia now lives with her daughter, Georgia, in Vista, and she is very happy to be here.



Frank and Virginia in the summer, 2002.

*Thank you, Virginia, for your friendship and for sharing your story with us. We're glad to have you here!*