

Sharon and Lynn McIntosh Interview, July 2015

J: June

S: Sharon

L: Lynn

J: Hello.

S: Hello, this is Sharon McIntosh.

J: This is June Hussey. Thank you so much for calling in.

S: Hi June, your last name was Hussey?

J: Hussey, yes.

S: Ok. Nice to meet you June. I understand you're going to interview me? Ask some questions or something? Did you want to talk to my husband?

J: If he's available can he join in or?

S: Let me go see if he's back, let me see.

J: It's ok, you can do it by yourself.

S: I told him he had to be back but I was sitting out on the patio because the cleaning ladies were here and I like to get away from the noisemakers but they've left. Doesn't look like he's back yet.

J: Ok, well if he pops in we can always let him join in. It's no big deal.

S: I told him to be back but I don't know.

J: Well sometimes men don't listen, right?

S: Sometimes they do listen and don't want to do what you tell them to do. (Laughter)

J: Ok so before we get started I just wanted to remind you that this conversation is being recorded. And I'm going to be asking you questions about your experience in deciding to make a move and what went through your mind when you decided to do that. If you should say something that you didn't mean to say or you wish you hadn't said just say, "Scratch that" and we will take it out of the transcript, ok?

S: I'm always putting my foot in my mouth so.

J: It's no big deal if you do that. Just say, "Scratch that" and we'll do that, ok?

S: Ok, ok.

J: Ok so my first question, Sharon, is very simple. When did you first move to The Fountains at Canterbury?

S: Well we've been here about a month. I think we moved in on like the 28th of last month.

J: Oh my gosh, you're brand new then.

S: We are brand new.

J: Wonderful, where were you living just before you moved in?

S: We lived in Lawton, Oklahoma. It's 90, maybe closer to 100 miles south of Oklahoma City.

J: I see, so what was going through your mind when you decided it was time to move?

S: Well, we had actually started looking a couple of years ago. We looked at a place and that's how we met Amy Hall. We didn't know we were going to meet her but we met her. She was at Epworth. And we looked there and that just didn't seem to suit our needs so we just kind of quit looking. We have a son and daughter-in-law that live here in the city and I was beginning to have a few more health issues and I had three doctors here in the city. And my husband is 83 and he was having to make that long drive for my doctors' appointments and we thought, "That's goofy to make that trip. We just need to move up." But since our son and daughter-in-law lived here. So then we started looking and we looked at I don't know five or six places and The Fountains just seemed to be the best fit for us. But the reason I guess mainly was because we just thought it would be the best gift that we could give our kids, to get closer to them. And also, you know, a right fit for us at this age.

J: Well good, so when you decided you wanted to move closer to Oklahoma City and your kids, what was it that made you think of a retirement community as opposed to a townhouse or condo or something like that?

S: Well actually, I guess we were looking at the future, you know right now we are in independent living. But things move on, time moves on and you're not going to always be able to be independent and we wanted a place where we could, if needed, that we could move into assisted living.

J: And so a lot of people aren't as practical as you. They're not as much of planners and they wait until something happens to make that decision. What do you think it was in your brain that made you think ahead more?

S: You know, I don't know. It just seemed to be, like you say, it was a sensible thing to do. Why wait until a move is going to be harder? My daughter-in-law, her mom and dad both had health issues and they waited too long. And now he's at the point where he doesn't want to leave his home and she has to make an hour trip several times a week getting the two of them back and forth to their doctors. One is 50 miles away the other one is to Oklahoma City, which is about more than an hour. And I didn't want that for our kids. I mean I just didn't want it. Like I said, I wanted it to be gift to our children. And so I didn't want to wait until a time when we didn't make good decision for ourselves and we just got to the point where we were, you know, dug our heels in and said, "No, I'm not moving." So I don't know. I guess that was the thing that was a trigger for us.

J: Yeah and so now that you're there, how do your son and daughter-in-law feel about your living there?

S: Oh, they love it and then we have another son and daughter-in-law that live in Plano, Texas which is about the same distance for them to get to Oklahoma City as it was to Lawton because Lawton was further west and so they can just come up -I35 and they're here so it's about the same distance. So all four of them were really glad that we made this decision. And my grandson hugged me, they were over one day and he said, "Grandmother, I'm so glad that you are here. I love you, now I can see you more often." Which really touched this grandmother's heart.

J: So I understand you picked out a villa, why don't you tell me what made you decide on a villa and what it's like?

S: We really liked the villa or the cottages as they call it. We thought that we would be on a waiting list for some time. We would have taken one of their larger apartments or the villa but a villa was the best suit for us because we have a small dog. And they put up a fence for us in the back which is ideal for her. And so even though we thought that it would be maybe a year or so wait. it was absolutely amazing, a God thing I think that we got a call earlier and said, "We have a place, that things have kind of moved around and different things that happened and we can get you in." So we came immediately up and looked at the cottage and it was just a great fit for us. It was very much like, it's over 1700 square feet and our furniture fit in it. We had already downsized once from a home into a patio home so really things worked out really well for the size for us.

J: Good.

S: Yeah, it's great.

J: How is your dog adjusting?

S: The dog, after she got used to it, has adjusted great, she loves it. She's an adventurer sort so she's got new things to sniff out and to check out. And so she and her dad they go on walks twice a day because it's a 39-acre campus so there's lots of green space for them to walk in and enjoy.

J: Does she like the birds of the pond?

S: She does, yes she likes those. She's happy now.

J: Wonderful. So I know you haven't been there very long but have you had a chance to get involved in any of the community programs yet?

S: Yes my husband has joined the men's group. They have a poker get together I think once a week or once every other week and he's doing the men's club. He's gone to baseball games with the group. He's

getting involved with, he's a golfer. He's found a close by golf course so he's making plans to go with some of the other men here that are golfers. And you know we have gone to, I've gone to some of the things that they've had for ladies. They have a DVD about famous monuments. And so mainly what we've been getting, most of what we've done the first month we've been here has been getting doctors set up so that has taken quite a bit of our time. I had two procedures yesterday and so the main thing that I've had to do is getting my doctors because when you move you have to get scheduled your primary care doctors and things like that. That's been happening. But I anticipate getting involved a lot more with, I go to water aerobics five times a week, which I love that. I had a hip replacement and that has been really, really good for my hip. So that's the main thing that I've got involved with but one of the things that I like is having dinner every night with different people. There are some amazing, amazing people here. We love hearing their stories and visiting with them.

J: Oh that's great, that's great. And water aerobics five days a week, how many folks show up at that?

S: Well I go to the 8 o'clock one and not too many for that one. Maybe the most that is ever been there has been eight. This one is for people that are not residents here can sign up for that and I guess it's been a great marketing tool because I think Amy told me there has been seven occupants that came for this club, members and that have become residents. So it's been a great marketing tool. Since that's the one that I go to there are residents that go there but it's mainly the club members. So I haven't gone to the, 8 o'clock is good for me because, I'm talking too much but you know, it's an hour long and by the time you get home and shower and dress then part of your day is gone. So I like to get it out of the way early. And I love it. If we don't have someone that is the leader she comes in, they have a boom box that you can put in a tape and do your exercises on the tape.

J: Before you moved did you have an opportunity to take part in anything like that where you lived?

S: I had the opportunity, no, not exactly. The Y had that but it was too crowded. I just did not feel comfortable. We belonged to the alumni of the Cameron University there but they didn't have anyone that actually gave the lessons or they didn't have a boom box. You just had to go do whatever you could do on your own. So this is my first opportunity, which was a big, big reason for me wanting to be here is because I could do the water aerobics with an instructor.

J: Great, well that sounds like a lot of fun and good fitness too.

S: Oh yeah, yeah. I was just going to say my husband just came in so if you need to ask him some questions he is here.

J: Great, is he on a speakerphone?

S: He's not on the phone but I can hand the phone to him.

J: Let me ask you just one more question if you don't mind Sharon. You mentioned that you had a hip replacement and I know you're living in a cottage which is detached from the main building, do you take a golf cart or do you walk over there, how does that work out?

S: We're probably about maybe a block and a half or maybe not that far I don't know from the Town Center and so we just drive over there. We don't have a golf cart but it's not that big a deal. But I just had a procedure done yesterday at the spine clinic which I think is going to help my walking a lot so yeah but no we have just been driving over there which is not far. And we can park in a very convenient location and my husband just lets me out. I was really kind of walking only about a half a block was pretty much max for me because with the hip replacement my femur broke and they had to put two titanium clamps on that so it was more than just a hip replacement it was also broken femur.

J: Oh wow.

S: I'm not on a walker or anything.

J: Well, good luck with your healing from that. And before you turn the phone over to Lynn is there anything else that you wanted to say that I didn't ask you?

S: Well I think you pretty well covered it. We seem to have, you know, everything that we need so far and we love the facility. We just haven't found anything negative about it or at least I haven't.

J: And was there anything that was sort of a pleasant surprise that you weren't expecting?

S: No because Amy had pretty well gone over everything with us and we had had lunch here and met Amy and some of the residents before we had met some really lovely couples here before. I don't know that there was anything that was a big surprise. It's just that we were, well we actually were very pleasantly surprised by the ladies that helped us with the move in. There was some amazing women that were here to help us on moving day to get everything put away and other than maybe hunting for a few things they did an amazing job. That was kind of a surprise of getting us settled in and you know the decorating and putting things away, unpacking the boxes, even the moving men that moved us in, there were three of them and they were absolutely delighted to have these women there.

J: That's great, wonderful. I understand you've had some friends come up from Lawton to visit.

S: Yeah I had ten of my Bible study ladies come up Tuesday, we went out to lunch, they loved my place and then I've had, the week before that, I had two ladies come up. And the week before that I had one lady come up. So I've had people come, you know, visit from Lawton and well one from Edmond and the other two groups from Lawton. So they say that they will be back they had such a great time. They all just love my place.

J: Good, good. Ok well thank you. If you want to put Lynn on if he is available that would be wonderful.

S: He is right here. I'll let you talk to him.

J: Thank you so much, it was great talking to you.

S: Thank you, bye-bye.

L: This is McIntosh.

J: Hello, this is June Hussey.

L: Hi June.

J: Very nice to meet you. I understand you're a big golfer.

L: Well, I'm a golfer. My game is not really anything to write home about but I still enjoy playing.

J: Good. Your wife was telling me that you found a nearby course that you're going to go out and shoot some balls on soon.

L: Yeah, there is a course within three miles or something like that. It's very convenient and I've been over and played a couple of times, maybe three times. And I found a guy here in the complex who also plays and so we're going to get together and go out sometime. I like to play golf and she likes to play golf.

J: That's great. So Sharon told me you've only been there a very short time but that you've already made some new friends in the men's group. Tell me about how it's been to adjust for you.

L: Well, it's been fairly, fairly easy really. You know this is the first major move. I'm 83 and a half and we had lived in the same community for all of our lives with the exception of a four year break when I was in the service. But we're only 100 miles away. It's not the first time we had ever been to Oklahoma City and so we had some familiarity with it you know.

J: Yeah.

L: I have a son and daughter-in-law and a couple grandchildren who live here so it's not, we're 100 miles from where we did live and so it's not a move across the country but you know it takes a little bit of getting used to. But all in all it's been pretty seamless.

J: Great, good. Well let me ask you if you have any advice to share with other couples who may be far from their doctors or, you know, getting tired of home maintenance. Maybe they've never even visited a retirement community. What kind of advice would you share with them?

L: I would say this, in our case we started a couple years ago looking at retirement communities and we didn't, it was not a pressing issue in that we did not have any immediate health problems you know. But there were signs that we might ought to be doing something like this. And so we started, from the time we began until we made the decision, until a place came available and we made the decision, there was probably 24 months, couple years time there. And for us, you know, we didn't have to make the decision

with any, it was not a quick emergency decision. It was a decision we could make when the right unit came available. When we were ready to move and everything, while we could do it. We didn't have any health problems hanging over our heads. I had a very good friend who played my golf game who developed Parkinson's disease and so I saw firsthand what could happen to people who are trying to make decisions, immediate decisions, emergency decisions you know and they weren't emotionally equipped to be doing this sort of thing and not even physically equipped to be doing it either. It was not a good thing.

J: So you decided to sort of make a preemptive strike and get it taken care of while you could and enjoy it, huh?

L: These people I saw they got a caregiver in their house and it was not satisfactory at all, it was not satisfactory at all. This is what happens to you when you're compelled to make a decision, you don't have the luxury of making choices or things you do what you have to do immediately.

J: Right. Well, it sounds like you two made the best choice for you at a very good time. Do you wish you had done it sooner?

L: Maybe so, we are 80 and 83. You know probably so, probably so that that's 20/20 hindsight and you know the longer you wait the more apt you are to not have the luxury of waiting. Once you've got a catastrophic health problem then all those options are gone, you know, you've got to do something immediately.

J: That's very true so really there is no harm, it's never too early to start looking, right?

L: That's right. That's right. It doesn't hurt anything to look, talk to people. Talk to people who are residents and things. And so yeah it's not too early.

J: Well that's fantastic advice and between you and your wife I think you've hit on some very important points that other people will really think about so I appreciate your time today and is there anything else you'd like people to know about the process?

L: No, I think not it's (indecipherable) For us it was the right thing to do and I think probably great many other people would be.

J: Well once again thank you so much for your time and all your thoughts this morning. I appreciate it and you and Sharon have a wonderful rest of the day.

L: And you.

J: Thank you so much.

L: Bye.

J: Bye now.