

Kathy Orr Ragsdale

My life in Upper Arlington started in 1950 when my parents bought an original farm house on Tremont Rd, which was a gravel road at the time. My dad would take me, a two-year-old, up to Zollinger to watch the cows graze. Mom and the four kids belonged to St. Agatha church and that is where we all went to school, even though Tremont school was literally across the street. After 8th grade, I went to Jones Jr High for 9th grade, then UAHS for sophomore through senior grades. I graduated at 17, married at 18, and had my first child in 1967. That early marriage only lasted a couple of years. The late 60s and early 70s were full of change and I took up the hippie life (what a time to be young).

In 1970, I sold what few possessions I had and my 3-yr old and I went West. We hitchhiked a lot, as that was a common form of transportation back then. We settled in Tucson AZ for a while, until I got very homesick for Ohio. Back we went, I got my hair cut and joined the workforce as a keypunch operator. In 1975, I met my husband Steve and we married the next year. In 1980, I had my 2nd daughter. In May of 2026, we celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary in Paris.

Through the course of my IT career, I was always in the right place at the right time. I had a wonderful career even though I didn't go to college. I went from keypunch operator, to computer operator, supervisor, manager, and finally Director of Global Telecommunications for an e-commerce company, Sterling Commerce. When Sterling Commerce was eventually bought by IBM, the senior management level was let go. I spent a while looking for a job and ended up with a total career change by taking a job at Starbucks. Nothing could have been more different from an IT corporate management job to a retail destination job. I stayed with Starbucks for 3 yrs as a Store Manager. I decided to get back into the IT field so I could make enough money to retire. I joined a consulting company as a Project Manager and oversaw some big projects for Chase Bank and OSU Medical Center. In 2013, I retired and never looked back. Two months into retirement, I decided to volunteer at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium. I was trained on all 10,000 animals, birds and fish and I've been a docent ever since. I love working with the visitors to educate them on the animals and working with the zookeepers on whatever they need me to do.

In 2020, Steve retired after 50 yrs as an owner operator truck driver and we decided to travel the world. We have been to Africa, Iceland, Greenland, Norway, Costa Rica, and quite a few European countries. We have an Antarctic Expedition with Viking booked for 2028. As they say, God willing and the creek don't rise, I'll be 80 yrs old as I step foot in Antarctica.

While I didn't participate much in high school, I have thoroughly enjoyed connecting with classmates at the 25th, 50th and 60th reunions. A number of us meet a couple of times a year at the Lane Avenue Rusty Bucket for dinner. It is a wonderful way to stay in touch.

