

Lyla Russell's STORY

Lyla Russell was born in Jonesville, Virginia, but she's "moved around quite a bit". After graduating high school, she took her nurse's training in Knoxville, Tennessee, at St. Mary's Hospital and became an RN. While living there, she met her husband, Carroll Russell, on a blind date where they went dancing, which has been a lifelong passion of Lyla's. After marrying, they moved to North Carolina for Carroll's job as vice president of Misty Harbor All Weather Coats. However, Carroll made a big career change once he decided he wanted to own a franchise with McDonald's, which was a completely new concept at the time. He took his two-year training close to Raleigh and was offered a store in Roanoke, Virginia, so the Russells moved once again. They raised three children together over the years, a daughter and two sons, and all three have owned or currently own McDonald's franchises.

Decades later after Carroll took on his first store, he had the opportunity to sell his franchise and take over two news stores in McComb, Mississippi. Carroll's new locations did so well that he built two more stores, and the Russells lived there for 11 years. They did quite a bit of traveling together during this time, and when Carroll was too busy to go, Lyla would take off with girlfriends. The Russells moved back to Virginia when he retired in 1994, but Lyla says that she still to this day talks on the phone to the two best friends that she made while in Mississippi, every single Saturday since they moved. "My kids know not to call me," she laughs, "and everyone learned to stop asking me to play cards on Saturdays. That is my day."

A few years down the road, once Carroll started having health complications, they moved to Tennessee to be closer to their daughter and began the search for a senior living community. "I had been looking in three different states," Lyla says, "and I just couldn't make up my mind." Their daughter eventually took them to tour AdamsPlace, and Lyla says, "The minute we walked in the front door, I looked at my husband and said, 'This is it!'" The Russells became residents of Independent Living in January of 2000.

As Carroll's cognitive decline progressed, he eventually moved into AdamsPlace Assisted Living to better meet his needs. Although Lyla continued living in their original apartment, she was with him every day until bedtime, so it wasn't too difficult of a transition for them. Carroll passed away in 2003, but Lyla has continued flourishing in Independent Living. "I credit being as well as I am now and as active to living here," she says. "I wish people wouldn't wait until they're so old before they decide to move in a place like this." The Russells were in their mid-70's when they came to AdamsPlace, and she says, "We got into everything they offered." She participated in water aerobics for 17 years and still attends the morning stretch classes; she also struck up a friendship with a fellow resident who became her ballroom dancing partner for over a decade. Playing cards such as bridge is one of her favorite things to do, and it's helped her stay social and form a new network of friends. "You're not stressed out all the time over things such as bills and all that," she says. "It is such a happy place to live!"


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