



Jeanne Gassman

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Senior Spotlighter



Jeanne Gassman was the baby of eight siblings (5 girls, 3 boys). Scranton, PA was the family's home. Her mother was Genevieve Arnold and her father was James Joyce (not the writer, but he did have Irish ancestors). James was a miner from the age of 7 and unfortunately he died of black lung disease, a miner's scourge, at age 59. Jeanne tells us that he never went to school but he was the best father you could ever find!

St. Anne's School was the setting for elementary school. When the family moved to Dunmore, the new school placed her in 5th grade instead of 4th. Jeanne took tap and ballroom dancing lessons. She and her niece danced at events. Jeanne's father was a clog dancer. Her mother was part American Indian, making the Joyce family an interesting mixture of Irish, English and American Indian!

After West Side High School and graduation, Jeanne went to Beauty School in Lackawanna. She worked at Globe Stores until they closed.

Wedding bells chimed for Jeanne and John O'Shea when she was 19. They had one son, John O'Shea, now nearly 70 (a policeman for 30 years, now working in security). Jeanne's grandson is a doctor and she has a granddaughter Nevaeh. ("Heaven" spelled backwards!)

In 1963, Jeanne received terrifying news. She was diagnosed with cancer and given three months to live! Happily, she is still with us to tell the tale. She reveals that Sloan Kettering Hospitals cured her and the doctors who told her the grim news are long dead!!

After a divorce, Jeanne moved to Florida and settled in Fort Lauderdale for 6 years. She worked in a Beauty Parlor on A1A and eventually bought the shop.

Romance blossomed once more when Jeanne vacationed in Brielle, NJ, where William Gassman came into her life. Briefly, she continued her career in the beauty business there until she and William moved to South Florida. Jeanne bought a beauty shop in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, where she lived and worked for 22 years. This location saw a dip in revenue during the summer months so she wisely added a shop in Tamarac that did well because it catered to year-round resident/clients.

At the age of 76, Jeanne retired. Sadly, her husband of 15 years, William, had a stroke and passed away.

She moved to Century Village when she stopped driving to avail herself of all the services and activities offered. At 92 years young, Jeanne is a snowbird, spending 6 months of each year in Scranton, PA. She reminisces about many years ago when she coached cheerleaders and made their costumes at St. Anne's School in that town.

Two years ago, while living on McNab Road, a couple she knew brought her to N.E. Focal Point (now the Center for Active Aging.) Jeanne tells us, "I am happy to say that I have made friends here that are now like a second family to me!"