

## Patricia Ferrell Interview, November 2016

J: June

P: Patricia

J: Hello.

P: Hi, is this June?

J: Yes, it is. This must be Patricia.

P: It is, it is. How are you this morning?

J: I'm very well, thank you. And thank you for making time in your busy day for me.

P: Ok, ok, it's great.

J: Well good, I'm glad that you're participating. Before we get started with the interview, I just wanted to go over a couple of things, if I may.

P: Ok.

J: The first is that we are recording the conversation so that we can get an accurate transcript and get what you say accurate.

P: Ok.

J: But I want you to know if you should say something along the way that might be too personal that you don't want to share with the public, just say so right then and there. Say, "Please don't print this part." Ok?

P: Ok.

J: Alrighty and then I also wanted to explain the purpose of doing these interviews and I've done many of them around the United States of different Watermark residents.

P: Ok.

J: First of all, we like to get to know who you are and what's interesting about your background and your life because everybody brings a different, interesting story and they're fascinating to share.

P: Of course they do.

J: Yeah and secondly we like to get your perspective on the process that you went through to decide where you wanted to live in your later years. And we find that it's very helpful to share the stories with people who are just in the beginning of the process or maybe haven't even thought about planning their future, just to share kind of how you went about the process and maybe share some tips for making it easier.

P: Ok.

J: That's all I'm going to say about that and we'll start. I'll invite you to do most of the talking and begin by sharing something about yourself. You might want to talk about, you know, where you were born, where you're from, stuff that you've done in your life, anything that you think would be something you would want to share with people and then after that I'll ask you more questions and we'll get into some more specifics about your move, ok?

P: Ok.

J: Perfect, so go right ahead when you're ready.

P: Ok, my name is Patricia Ferrell. I was born in Lamar, Colorado on October 1, 1940. I lived in Colorado until I was 15 years old and then my family moved to California where my parents found jobs with the aircraft companies. And there I was a sophomore in high school and I met

my husband the beginning of our junior year in high school so we were like 16 1/2 years old. We became good friends and of course then I knew immediately that I was going to marry this young man. He didn't know that but I did. We graduated with a class of 400 from Antelope Valley High School. While I was in high school we had to ride a bus from our homes to the school because we had such a large high school community. I came from a class of 72 to a class of 500 so it was quite a change for me in my life. I found California very interesting. We got to do sightseeing in Hollywood and see all of the homes and stuff of the movie stars and that was interesting. After high school I was recommended to California Bank in Lancaster, California by my bookkeeping teacher and that's when I started my banking career of 28 years. I started as a bookkeeper on large machines and graduated tellering. From there my husband was in the Air Force when we became engaged by his proposal over the phone and he mailed me my engagement ring. I found that very exciting and different.

J: Oh yeah.

P: He came home in February and we were just 18 years old and we were married on February 21, 1959. We graduated in 1958. And from there, a month later, he left for Okinawa. And nine months later I had our first child, our son Donald, born on December 7, Pearl Harbor Day, December 7, 1959. And he was adorable and I lived with my mom and dad and my sister and we were just welcomed. I went back to work at the bank after six weeks and my mother was the caregiver of our baby. And so I was able to work until my husband came home from Okinawa. And from there we traveled by car and hauling a trailer to Michigan. We lived in a little town named Oscoda, Michigan. And believe me the snow goes to the roofs almost of the homes in the fall.

J: Oh my.

P: Your roads are ice bearing most of the winter in the upper part of Michigan. And there our second child was born, our daughter, Kim and our third child, Brad. While we lived there we were happy looking at all of the trees and visiting with our neighbors. My husband and his fellow airmen built a pontoon boat and we had a lot of fun going out on the lake and picnicking and barbecuing and all that good stuff. When our third son was born it was on July 1st and our oldest son had almost drowned that day. It sent me right into labor and of course our son was born. Just a minute, let me get rid of this TV.

J: That's ok, no problem, no problem.

P: And we lived in Michigan for four and half years, met lovely people, did all kinds of things, played cards, canasta and pinochle with different groups and just loved our lives there. From Michigan we moved to Fort Worth, Texas in the Air Force to a spot called Carswell Air Force Base. We lived in Fort Worth, Texas there for two and half years and that's when our fourth child, Lisa, was born. We then, my husband told us two weeks before he was to reenlist as a staff sergeant, that we were leaving the Air Force and going home. This is after eight years and I loved all of the people around me. We were busy doing coffee breaks and all of the good stuff that young people do. From there we came back to California and we lived with my sister for a month while we were waiting for our apartment. And we got settled in. My husband went to work for Hughes Aircraft Company and there he met a sergeant of the LAPD, a reserve sergeant and became interested in policing. From there he went through the LAPD police academy and became a police officer. He was a police officer for 31 years.

J: Wow.

P: I'm just going through what our lifestyle was and then I'll tell you the things we did after that. From our retirement in 1998 we moved to Washington state. And in Washington state we loved it. It was just absolute gorgeous, rain and all. We would take the ferry from our home across the lake to the Sound to Seattle once a week and go out to lunch at a fancy restaurant and walk the streets and shop and just have a glorious time in Washington. That was for the first three years. My husband fell ill and he was in the hospital only one week, one three-day period. And he didn't like that so I promised him that I would take care of him at home. He died of primary amyloidosis which is an autoimmune disease and he battled that for two years. I was able to take care of him with the help of hospice for 18 months. And that was in my home. From there I moved back to California per the request of my daughters. That was 18 months later. I'm just prattling on here, excuse me.

J: No, it's ok, it's perfect.

P: From there I moved up in California and my daughter moved about 20 miles away from there and I decided I wanted to live closer to her so I moved to Ukiah, California where I lived for 10 years. And I bought my home and I did my own gardening, planted rose trees and flowers and took care of everything, weeded and trimmed and everything and had a gardener to mow the grass though because I wasn't able to do that. But I just absolutely loved it. My neighbors were wonderful and then I move from there to Frisco, Texas in Parkview. My journey here began October the year before I moved in October 2015. My daughter had come to visit me. I was ill with my legs and back. I could hardly walk. I hadn't had surgery yet so I was down and my oldest daughter who lives in Little Elm Texas came to visit and she saw that I was troubled and I had given up driving so I had this big huge 3,000 square foot home and she goes, "Mom, you can't take care of this." But I still stayed in the downstairs part for another year. However, when she came back to her home here in Frisco she and her husband happened to be driving by and they just happened to see Parkview. And they made an appointment and they came and visited Susan Taylor, had lunch with her and found this a lovely place. And she thought I would love to live here. So she called me and then Susan Taylor contacted me and for a year I talked with Susan Taylor so I felt like I lived here already. Susan Taylor called me at least once a month and we chatted for a lengthy period of time and became friends over the phone. That's one of the reasons I chose to come to Parkview in Frisco. And I just absolutely adore it here. It's beautiful, the food for the most part is good, the staff is wonderful and the people here are just darling. I feel right at home and I've gotten busy with my life here playing bingo, nickels, tai chi. All of the things that they offer here are wonderful and I'm going to try a little bit of everything. The reason I came or chose to come at this time in my life, I was 75 and I turned 76 the 1st of October of course, but the reason I chose to come here is I didn't want to burden my children whenever I became incapacitated, if that happens. I wanted to come to a place where I could be my own person and not be a burden to my family. So Parkview was the place I chose. The reason I chose to come on my own is because my parents had a really tough time when we had to help make them come to assisted living and living in an apartment facility like this in California. And it was so troublesome my mother ran away the first day so we had to find her, bring her back to the facility. And it was extremely hard and I couldn't say no to her. I couldn't take her home so my sister said you need to leave and I'll take care of it and that's what happened. So you know I just didn't want that to occur with my children. I just felt that it would be easier if I made the decision on my own to do this move and I'm so grateful I did. Now, about

my life and raising my family of five and doing things, we did things that were just family oriented most of our lives, my husband and I. We hardly ever left our children with babysitters and we did picnicking, we went fishing. We went on trips across the country to Oklahoma to visit grandparents and aunts and uncles. My boys were in Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts. And I was a Cub Scout leader. My daughters were in Girl Scouts and Brownies and I was a Brownie leader, had a marvelous two years of each for the girls and the boys. And then they became interested in sports, the boys did, and it was football and baseball year-round. We became involved with them heavily. I was a team mother, bought the stuff for the snack bar, took care of all of that. I also participated in all the PTAs of the different schools they belong to. So I had a really, really busy life. And my husband was their coach. We worked with our children until they were in high school. So that's basically all of the things we did. And we didn't get away. My husband and I didn't get away by ourselves until our 17th year and we made a trip to San Francisco in June and it was supposed to be cool and it was the hottest week of the month that ever had been. So we were kind of warmly dressed because we had taken clothes for a little bit cooler time but we just had a marvelous time. And my husband was a romantic. He liked coming up to me and saying, "You want to dance?" Or, "Give me a hug." Or things like that, it was real special. He was the love of my life and that's all I can say about that. I can't think of anything else that I can say. That's just a synopsis of everything that went on in my life.

J: That's perfect. I have a couple of questions because I'm not sure I remember, did you say you had four or five kids?

P: Five children. Three girls, two boys.

J: While you're doing all the scouting in the PTA and everything were you simultaneously working at the bank for 28 years?

P: No, I went back to work at 34. And at 34 I started out as a part-time teller. Six months later I was a full-time teller and within two years I was 36 when I went into management.

J: I see so your kids were kind of getting older by then.

P: Yes, my youngest was three and a half years old. So in two years I was a bank manager, vice president of corporate headquarters branch of the bank I worked for. I was there for 15 years.

J: Because of your husband's job in the service and moving around so much, you've lived so many different places. How do you find living in Frisco, Texas compared to all the other places you have lived?

P: You know I've loved every place I've lived but I think Frisco is wonderful. It's growing. It's amazing. I love the climate so far but it's cool, cooler than hot. I'll have to get used to the climate come summertime. But I enjoy every place I lived. It's like being on a new adventure for me. And so Frisco, Texas, I stepped off the plane and I said, "I'm home."

J: That's nice and so was that a year ago October or just this past October?

P: Just this past September is when I got here. A year ago I was down with my back. In February I had back surgery so I had to get well and sell my home and then I came here this past September.

J: I see, ok.

P: I felt like I was here a year because of talking to Susan.

J: Right.

P: And the apartment is lovely.

J: And so did you daughter pick out the apartment for you?

P: No, they came available and Susan called me and said, "Do you want to make your commitment now?" And I said, "Yes." They chose the apartment that I moved into or she did, helped me with that.

J: You hadn't seen it yet before you actually had lived there. So how did you figure out what furniture to bring or did you bring furniture, did you buy new furniture, how did you make that cross-country move?

P: We had like three garage sales, sold everything I had except my bedroom set and my dining room table and a couple of bookcases and a buffet and my TVs. I bought a set of dishes and silverware and cookware and all of that. And I made the trip by having U-Haul boxes, they're called U-Boxes, and I filled three of those and my son-in-laws moved me in. My daughters came and saw the apartment before I moved in, before I came. And they said, "Mom, you have too much furniture." Well and I didn't. I'm ordering my furniture as I go so my bedroom is set up and I'm going to set up a little office in the second bedroom. And my couch is supposed to be here within the week and my washer and dryer. And then I'll order other pieces to go in my living room. My dining room is set up and my kitchen is set up. So I'm making it a home for the next 20 years.

J: That's great. So you came out of 3000 square feet into, what is your square footage now?

P: Probably around a 1036, something like that. Small. My bedroom and the second bedroom were together, this bedroom here and the second bedroom would be the size of my bedroom in my home in California. My living room was. what do they call them? It was kitchen and living room together. It was lovely so the family could gather in there. Some people call it a family room but it was my living room and kitchen. And the dining room was separate.

J: So you haven't been there very long but tell me how much time do you actually spend in your apartment versus out in the community, in the common areas and so forth?

P: I spend most of the day here except for dinner and for the activities that I've chosen. I go off in the buses on the shopping days. They have taken me to the doctors by car. It's lovely. I would say I'm awake in my apartment probably from 7:15 in the morning that's usually when my puppy gets me up until 9 o'clock at night with the exception of a couple or three hours.

J: When you say you have a puppy to you mean a puppy or a doggie?

P: Well, she's a doggie. I call her a puppy because she's only six pounds. She's a Yorkshire Terrier. And she doesn't go outside. She was trained to papers.

J: And you brought her with you from California?

P: I did, I did and I love it that I was able to bring her.

J: What's her name?

P: Her name is Dakota.

J: How did she adjust to the move? Does she know that she's in a different place?

P: She does. It took her probably three weeks to be able to get into her toy basket. She scatters her toys all over now and she plays with them. And she sleeps both in the living room area and in the bedroom area. So she's adjusted really well and I do have a training tool to keep her from barking so much. I know other people's dogs bark. And I try to keep her from barking because Yorkies are notably yappers. And so I started training her probably six months before I came. And she's doing pretty well. Sometimes in the morning she tries to make out like she owns the place and she's letting everybody know it. She marches up and down the hall strutting and barking but I get her to stop. And people here say they don't hear her so I'm surprised.

J: Now, I'm interested in what you told me about your parents' experience being so negative and the fact that they hadn't made their own decision. Describe for me what you think the primary difference is between why you're happy with your move and why your mom ran away the first day she moved.

P: They felt they had lost their independence. They felt that they were taken out of their home, which they were. They couldn't live alone any longer and I had taken my dad to live with me for a little while and my sister had taken my mom and they were both difficult until they got back together but they both didn't like the idea of the move. My dad was a stroke patient and my mom was able to do whatever she did. But she just was really upset. She had been a drinking alcoholic in her 40s and 50s and she wasn't drinking anymore. And so she was kind of messed up that way. And so that's why she had the difficulty. They felt they just couldn't think for themselves anymore. And my sister took good care of them. She was able to tell them, "No." I would've waited on them hand and foot but she wouldn't do that for them. She made them take care of themselves. And the staff of course looked out for them.

J: Family dynamics, right?

P: Oh yes, yes, I have seen families who have lived together and done well where mothers and/or fathers have moved in with families and have done well and then I have seen families torn apart because of it. I just didn't want that to happen in my life or my children's life.

J: And how many of your kids live in the Frisco area?

P: My oldest daughter lives in Little Elm which is 15 minutes away. And my youngest daughter lives in Fort Worth which is 45 miles away for me. I see them both at least once or twice a month and that's enough.

J: And what about grandkids, do you have a number of grandkids?

P: I have 13 grandkids.

J: Wow.

P: And I have six great grandkids.

J: Oh my goodness.

P: And they're all just absolutely gorgeous. All of my grandchildren are in college. The last one has been in college for two years and she is going to be 21 this next year. So we are from 21 to 34 years of age my grandkids are. It makes me feel really old.

J: Yeah but you started young. You started very young.

P: Yes, I had four children by the time I was 24.

J: Wow.

P: And then six and a half years later my surprise package arrived. We tried to raise her a little bit differently with psychology. She's quite mouthy. Even as a 45-year-old woman she's quite mouthy and bossy. And that's another thing, I wanted to be my own boss. I am still bright enough and can figure things out to where I can be on my own.

J: Must be a good feeling to know that you're in a place where you can do that.

P: Yes, it's very comforting and like I say, the staff here is wonderful. And David, he's amazing to me. He knows all of our names. It's just amazing. We have 200 people here in this facility or in this apartment group. I don't know why I call it a facility. And he knows all their names. It's amazing.

J: We say that we'll wash people's mouths out if they say "facility" at work.

P: Oh, ok. I don't want my mouth washed out so.

J: We prefer the word community. That's what it is.

P: Ok, a community and I love the community and like I say, the staff is great here and Susan was wonderful. She is a darling woman. Diane, our concierge, is great. Trudy, all of them that work here, Kelly the driver, all of them that work here are just fantastic. And the staff in the dining room is great. You know they call us by name and wait on us. It's amazing. And we'll be so glad when the kitchen is completed at this community because things will be better in the dining room.

J: Yeah, I know that the kitchen is being renovated. That will be nice.

P: Yes and I know that this community is eight years old. And then of course they have spent time building the assisted living care memory care community and so it takes time to renovate things. They have let me pay for my floor. I had a wood floor put in before I moved in and I'm going to have the rest of it done probably after the first of the year, the two bedrooms will be done in wood floor to match.

J: Very nice.

P: Yes and I was just really pleased they let me do that. I'm not a carpeting fan. I would call me OCD because I like to be very clean. And the wood floors are just better for me, the wood and the tile. And it makes my apartment be mine.

J: Nice, well, let me ask you one last question, what advice do you have for other people out there who may have never set foot in a retirement community and may not know that there are such options out there? Can you offer any tips or advice about taking a look?

P: I think if they are able to go out and look for themselves it would be really wonderful. But if they have family members that can help them and would like to help them to be warm and happy that their families are loving them enough to do that for them. But if they want to be still do their own thing I think they can make the choice themselves. And it's so much easier for people to make their own choices. Of course there are people who are disabled and who cannot do that for themselves and their families do it for them. And I think that's wonderful too and to just be accepting. To be loving and caring about the whole thing is the whole thing for me.

J: Well, it sounds like you've got the right attitude. It sounds like you found the place that's right for you. So hopefully when people read this they will take your words to heart and look for them.

P: Hopefully you can make it have some sound without all the extra words.

J: Well, thank you very much.

P: You're welcome.

J: It's been a pleasure speaking with you and getting to know you and once again we really appreciate you sharing your story.

P: Well, I love being chosen to do this and like I say again, "Love makes the work around and being smart makes the world go round." So it's really a wonderful decision that I made with my family.

J: Very good, is there anything else you'd like to say before we close?

P: No, not really other than to you thank you for listening to me and being a part of this. Just know that this community is run very well and I love it.

J: That's good to hear. That's nice feedback, always nice to hear that and thank you very much once again. I'm going to let you go and you enjoy the rest of your day in Frisco, Texas.

P: Ok I will, you too, dear.

J: Alrighty, take care. Bye, Pat.

P: Bye-bye.