



SOFTBALL COUPLE PROFILE: CHARLENE & HENRY ELLIS

By Larry Wolfe

Charlene and Henry Ellis were “a couple” for nearly ten years back in the ‘70s, then went their separate ways for over twenty years, losing track of each other in the process. They married others, raised three children each and had separate lives and careers. Then fate intervened. Their eldest children founded a Youth Church together in the Vancouver area and Henry and Charlene became supporters and reconnected through church functions. Their first encounter was (guess?) at a church-sponsored softball game. And as they say, the rest is history. Charlene and Henry began dating again and eventually were married. Henry made his surprise marriage proposal during the 2006 Sun Lakes Senior Softball Tournament at the Field of Dreams and they married later that year.

Their long and winding road began and ended in Vancouver. They are both proud Canadian natives and were born and raised in the Vancouver area. Henry left high school early to support his family, becoming a bricklayer as a youth. This led to a career in the construction business where he became a partner in a company that built homes and apartments. He later owned a marketing and

distribution company that primarily sold nutritional products, including Pure-Life vitamins. His major success, however, involved a self-defense spray called DyeWitness. The product was featured on CNN and that segment was seen by a “rich Texan” who wanted the product. Henry sold the whole company to him, retired and began concentrating on softball! That’s called a “bricks to riches story!”

Meanwhile back in Canada, Charlene left Vancouver and moved to live with her sister in Inuvick, a small town in the Northwest Territories located 124 miles north of the Arctic Circle. Amazingly, the average HIGH temperature in January is MINUS 10 Fahrenheit and they have thirty “days” of polar night each winter. (Maybe that’s why Charlene really likes Arizona winters now!) She met her first husband at a nearby Canadian military base and one of her children was born in the Arctic. She and her family later moved back to Vancouver where Charlene and her husband owned a home security monitoring business.

Both Henry and Charlene love the competition, camaraderie and physical activity that is Sun Lakes softball. Henry has played in the men’s league since 1992 while Charlene has been a member of the ladies team since 2004. They also play back in Canada in the summer where they maintain a home in White Rock, British Columbia. Henry’s biggest softball thrill was playing on a Canadian team that won the 60s World Championship in 2000. Charlene’s comparable thrill was winning a Gold Medal in the BC Senior Games just last year.

They do have a life outside of softball, too. They both enjoy golf, travel (especially cruising the Caribbean and around the Hawaiian Islands), and singing. Multi-talented Henry was in a gospel quartet that once opened for big name acts, including the Oak Ridge Boys. Char is also an accomplished singer who nearly “brought the house down” at the recent annual softball banquet. Their love of singing (and each other) actually goes all the way back to when they met for the very first time singing in a church choir back in Vancouver.

The story of Charlene and Henry might be summed up by paraphrasing a great old song: “There are those who’d bet...love comes but once—and yet...they’re oh so glad they met...the second time around.”