

10 Questions

for CLAIRE & RICH ESPOSITO *by Shirley Belcher*

How long have you known each other and been married?

We've known each other 75 years, since 1942 when we were 10 and 11 years old. We've been married 66 years.

What was your attraction to each other?

Rich: At first, Claire's brother and I became close friends. By high school, I took more notice of his sister who was French, had freckles, blue eyes, and curly hair, was petite and pretty, smart, and nice to everyone.

Claire: Rich was (and is!) one attractive dude with black curly hair and a great Italian complexion. He is never at a loss for words or things to talk about even after 75 years. He still opens car doors for me. A romantic, he writes me poems, constantly surprises me with small gifts, and takes me to my favorite haunts like garage sales and fabric stores. His only competitor was Stevie, who was a lousy kisser.

How and when did you start dancing together?

We were 15 in 1946 and attended high school Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) dances. We danced to Big Band records and taught ourselves as did most others. We danced jitterbug, the double Lindy, and fox trot.

Did you compete in dance contests?



Accomplished dancers and lecturers, Claire and Rich Esposito have known each other 75 years. The secret to their long and happy relationship, they say, is "sharing."

Yes, but only at social and club dances where sometimes the band or DJ would hold a jitterbug, waltz, polka or cha cha contest. We won a lot of jitterbug contests.

What are your favorite dances to perform?

We especially like to jitterbug to "In the Mood" and the waltz, Latin numbers, and the Two Step. This happened when we were much younger and had athlete-like stamina!

Who are your favorite dancers?

We had no favorites because, as teenagers, we were dancing at the tail end of the Big Band era, after 1945.

Who is family to you?

One married daughter and son-in-law in Kentucky, and one granddaughter, her husband, and a great-granddaughter in France. Brothers and sisters and nieces and nephews in Vermont.

Do you have mutual interests?

We both lecture. Rich, a lecturer for Miami University's ILR brown bag group, speaks at independent living facilities, senior centers, and clubs and organizations. Claire is a Certified Handwriting Analyst who lectured all over the northeast and has appeared on TV and radio talk shows. Since moving to Middletown, she has worked the Dayton-Cincinnati venue. Before moving to Ohio, Claire spoke on 20 ocean cruises as an "Enrichment Speaker."

What is your secret to a long and loving relationship?

We have always shared in everything we do and supported each other's interests. We are each other's biggest fan. We both had great parents and families and so share wonderful memories of growing up in a small Vermont town. As teens, when 25 cents was a lot of money, we shared a grilled cheese sandwich and hot chocolate at a diner that was a short walk from our homes.

What do you have in common on your Bucket List?

To make it to 90! 🌿