

Westbrook

Featured Resident

Virginia (Hunt) Mulkey



Virginia Mulkey was born in Fairfax, MO, near Mound City. She was the third child born to Clarence and Hazel Hunt. She had three sisters and three brothers. Her father worked as a hired farm hand and they moved around some. They finally settled in the Parkville area. Virginia and her siblings loved to play games and hang out by the river. Their mother had an old quilt she would let them take with them so they didn't have to sit on the ground. They stayed on it for a while and then they'd be off exploring, playing and wading the water. Virginia attended a one-room schoolhouse in the country. She loved learning and wanted a good education so she could improve herself.

Virginia started working at the age of 13. She would clean houses for different people, watch their children and help her mother out as well. About the same time a young man named James "June" Mulkey, moved into the area. He was 16 and he worked with her father some. They would see each other at neighborly gatherings. At 15, while still going to high school, Virginia went to work for the Northside Telephone Company. When she turned 16, her father agreed to let her start dating June. A year later, he was shipped overseas. He spent two years in the Army as a member of the Calvary and an MP. While he was overseas, Virginia graduated from Parkville High School.

June came home in 1945 and wanted to get married, but Virginia was only 19 and not ready. She wanted them to continue to date and make sure that they were right for each other. She had moved out of her family home and lived in the basement of a couple she referred to as Grandma and Grandpa Nolan. June and Virginia were married on November 1, 1947, and he moved into the basement apartment with her. Grandma Nolan gave Virginia this piece of advice before she got married. "Always make up from a fight before you go to bed." Even though she says she never had occasion to use it, it stuck with her.

June went to work for Ford Motor Company and Virginia continued to work for the phone company. Their first child, James Keith, was born in 1948 and they moved to a rented house in Parkville. A few years later, Jerald Kenneth was born and they bought a house near Claycomo. Jon Kevin was born a couple years after that move. Virginia transferred to the Gladstone Telephone Company (it would eventually be sold to Southwestern Bell and then finally to AT&T).

Virginia continued working as she raised her family. As the kids grew up and moved away, June's started having heart problems. He had a blockage in his heart. It was a difficult time with lots of ups and downs but he survived and retired from Ford in 1983. It wasn't long and he stumbled upon a small farm for sale in Cameron, MO. He was actually buying a mower and saw the land. He inquired with the mower dealer who was also a realtor. They went and looked at the property, fell in love and bought it.

As June's health continued to decline, Virginia finally had to retire to be able to take care of him. He'd be in and out of Liberty Hospital quite often and Virginia was left to care for the farm; mowing, feeding the cattle, pigs and hogs and tending their quarter horses. June suggested they move closer to their children who lived in Smithville, Plattsburg and Excelsior Springs. So they sold the farm and moved to Kearney, MO, in 1993. June passed away in 1997.

Virginia continued to stay in their home. She loves babies and little kids and had wanted to be able to work with and take care of them. However, her health had started declining with all the demands of having taken care of her husband, the farm and still maintaining their home, so she wasn't able to do it.

Virginia's family has increased in number. Keith is married to Beverly, Kenny to Roberta and Kevin to Debbie. She has 19 grandchildren and 22 great grandchildren. She considers herself very blessed indeed.

Over the years, Virginia has traveled to 47 of our 50 states including Alaska and to Canada as well. She has a love for crocheting and drawing. She has even tried her hand at writing for her own pleasure.

Virginia moved to Westbrook from her home here in Kearney in October of this year. She says she met the owners, Steve and Amy McDonald, and thought what a wonderful couple. Since she's moved here, she says she has met so many nice people. While she misses the home she shared with June, Westbrook is feeling more like home every day.

My mother loves being at Westbrook. They have a lot of activities for residents. The rooms are very large and comfortable. The staff is friendly and attentive so I believe that the residents' safety is of their utmost concern.—Kendall!

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