

Westbrook

Featured Resident

Juanita Stalder

Juanita was born in Fulton, MO to Eldrich and Bessie Bolton. Her parents divorced when Juanita was four years old. Her mother married Walker Massey when Juanita was nine years old. He adopted her when she was eleven. The couple worked in the mental hospital in Fulton. They moved to Montana for a while, then to San Bernardino, CA, before settling in San Fernando, CA. Her parents got jobs at the Veteran's Hospital in San Bernardino.

Juanita grew up without much contact with her father, though she kept in contact with some of his sisters. When Juanita was eighteen, her father had a son, Bill. As an adult, she became curious about her father and eventually reconnected with him when she was in her fifties.

Juanita went to visit her aunt and uncle in Grandview, MO. While she was there, her cousin introduced her to his friend, Raymond. Juanita and Raymond started dating and decided to get married. They got married in Olathe, KS, because Kansas did not have the three day waiting period before marrying. It was 1948.

Raymond and a couple of his friends started a cabinet making business. The couple welcomed their first son into the world in 1949 and their second son in 1951. When the boys started school, she went to work in a grocery store. She thinks it was Jiffy Mart. She worked her way up into management. In 1963, she gave birth to their third son. She went back to work after her maternity leave was over. Her best friend, Betty, watched their baby. When their son was about four, her friend's husband was transferred and she had to find another baby sitter. After a not too pleasant experience, Juanita decided to quit working. She became a stay at home mom since Raymond's business was very successful and she didn't need to work.

Raising three boys kept Juanita busy. Her two oldest were involved in Boy Scouts. They would take yearly trips out to California to visit their families. Her oldest son was a football player. They would attend all of his high school football games. He got a football scholarship and headed off to college in Springfield, MO. Juanita got a phone call from him one day. He told her he had joined the Navy. When she asked him why he replied, "I was flunking out of school and afraid to tell Dad. So I figured I better join the Navy before coming home."

Raymond was diagnosed with cancer in 1982. He sold his share of the business to his two partners. Juanita took care of him until he passed away at the age of 52 in 1983. They had been married for 35 years.

Juanita remained in their home in Grandview and started getting ready to sell the house. Her neighbor three doors down, Ronnie, had lost his wife the year before Raymond died. They had been neighbors for years. They married in 1986. He passed away in 1989.

Juanita sold the house and moved in with her oldest son and his wife in Excelsior Springs. Thru a family wedding, Juanita met Donnie. They started dating and married in 1993. They were for 18 years when he passed away in 2011.

After the death of Donnie, Juanita moved back in with her oldest son. She had a room and bathroom added onto his house in Pleasant Hope, MO, so she had her own space. She lived there until July of this year, before her son passed away unexpectedly at the age of 65. Due to health issues that needed stabilizing, she was admitted to medical rehab in Bolivar, MO. Her middle son and wife made arrangements for a transfer to Golden Living in Smithville to complete her rehab since no family members were still living in the Bolivar area.

In late September, she moved here to Westbrook. She really enjoys living here. She loves her cozy apartment, especially the fact that she had an outside entrance with a patio as well as an entrance from the hallway. She enjoys the meals and says they're just like what she fixed for herself at home. She also loves the people. Everyone is so nice and friendly. She feels this is a quiet and peaceful place to live.

She says that she feels it's important to be friendly and smile at everyone. It will get you a long way in life. She also feels that it's important not to be too judgmental. Everyone has their own moral guidelines.

Besides her sons and their wives, Juanita has 5 living grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

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