

Resident Stories

Pursuing adventures—and fulfilling dreams

The last two years have been especially busy for Jean and Max Jenkins. In 2013, they celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary and their 75th birthdays with a series of once-in-a-lifetime adventures. They also continued planning the next phase of their life together, refining their search for a retirement community that would provide a continuum of care and full-life opportunities on one campus.

“We traveled and did some adventurous things, like taking a trip to Costa Rica to zip-line over the rainforest through 14 platforms,” says Jean. “We also went skydiving near Star, Idaho.”

They fulfilled individual dreams, too. Max climbed a 13,000-foot peak near Breckenridge, Colorado, and Jean won a Gold Medal in the Lewis-Clark Senior Games in the women’s rimfire handgun event, held in Lewiston, Idaho.

In 2014, the couple did more traveling and finalized their plans to move to Touchmark. “Touchmark best matched our criteria for retirement living,” Max explains. “We like the continuum of care; affordability; attractive, comfortable, and well-maintained homes; opportunities for active living; interesting residents; and the great chef.”

With their love of travel and family—son, daughter, and three grandchildren—scattered across the country, the couple also find Boise’s easily accessible air travel convenient.

Moving was a challenge. “We downsized significantly, holding multiple garage sales, selling through Craigslist, donating items; it was no small undertaking after more than half a century of acquiring stuff,” says Jean. Their house sold within a month, and two months later, the couple had moved into their new Touchmark home.

Advanced degrees, family, and many moves

Jean and Max met during freshman orientation at Idaho State University. While Max finished his five-year pharmacy curriculum, Jean, who received her bachelor’s degree in Home Economics, worked as the home demonstration agent for Bannock County Extension Service.

“Then we moved to Reno, where Max worked at a drugstore chain, and our daughter was born. After a year, we were off to Germany, where Max served as an Army Medical Service Corps Officer.”

Two years later, the family, which now included a son, returned to the US.

“I enrolled at the University of Idaho Law School and worked summers as a pharmacist in Reno,” explains Max. “I worked 80 - 100 hours a week, including the midnight to 4 am shift, seven days a week, in downtown Reno. I saw all kinds of interesting people, including celebrities, during those nights!”

“Our hard work paid off,” beams Max. “At graduation, we were proud to be free from any debt, and we had money in the bank.”

Max was hired by Osco Drug/Jewel Companies in Chicago, passed the Illinois Bar Exam, and became director of Pharmacy Operations before being given the task to start the company’s first photo-finishing plant.

“I then joined Carhart Photo Corporation in Rochester, New York.” As president, he led Carhart’s turnaround before it was sold to a subsidiary of Eastman Kodak. After retiring from Carhart Photo, Max was a nonpaid executive director for the Rochester Habitat for Humanity affiliate.

Called to serve

After years of managing the household, substitute teaching, volunteering, and raising children, Jean took the plunge and entered seminary to pursue a Master’s of Divinity degree. Ordained to Word and Sacrament by the Presbyterian Church in Rochester, Jean served for more than 13 years as a New York state chaplain.

“I worked with people who have developmental disabilities living outside the traditional institutional setting,” says Jean, who pioneered a community-based model of chaplaincy called Merging Two Worlds.

With additional specialized training, Jean served the Presbyterian Church as an intentional interim pastor. “Shortly after we moved to Lewiston, I came out of retirement to serve as the interim pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, just 35 miles to the north in Moscow. We had been members of that church when Max was a law student.”

Life at Touchmark

Today, Jean and Max are busier than ever. “There’s more to do than time allows,” laughs Jean.

Max continues his stock market trading activities along with pursuing a new goal to complete an ancestry chart and keep his photos up to date and accessible “within the cloud.” He also continues to be active with his early morning one-mile run to the local McDonald’s, where he drinks coffee and reads *The Wall Street Journal* on his Kindle, and then runs back home before breakfast. He also does 132 push-ups plus other exercises each weekday.

Jean is transferring all her sermons to an electronic format, so they, too, can be stored in the cloud. She also continues her quilting projects, painting, making new friends, preaching from time to time, and “staying alert to ways to serve the community at Touchmark.”

And their adventures continue. The two met friends in Park City, Utah, to check out The Extreme at Olympic Park—one of the steepest zip lines in the world. They are also planning a rafting trip in September with four Touchmark friends to the backcountry of the lower Salmon and Snake rivers.

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