

Mary Prutny

Mrs. Mary Prutny is 66 years old. She grew up in Orange, Virginia. She was the only child, and lived with her mother and father. As a teenager she went to boarding school. Being the only child she got lonely at times, boarding school she enjoyed. She made many friends to accommodate for the sisters and brothers she always wished she had. After boarding school she moved to Washington D.C., where she went to Strayer College. At Strayer College she majored in primary education because she loved children and always felt that Education was the one of the most important things of life. As a young girl she would dream of teaching. She states she played school, pretending her dolls were her students and her bedroom was her classroom.

At Strayer College she met her husband Ivor Prutny, She married after attending college for two years and had her first child of eight a year later. Mrs. Prutny has three sons and five girls. Being lonely as an only child she knew if she ever had children she wanted to have more than just one, she never thought she would have eight. While her children were young Mrs. Prutny spent most of her time between odd jobs and being a housewife. She wanted so much to work but she knew that guiding her children was more important.

After all eight children reached school age Mrs. Prutny went back to school at Howard University to achieve a degree in secondary education. "It was very rewarding working as a high school teacher" she states, "It is a special feeling you get out of giving to society, especially children something as important as Education".

The only disadvantage to having to rear children, she states, "is being able to give them every thing they need". "Unfortunately the cost of living and rearing children, can be very expensive". Mrs. Prutny states that putting her children through was a great financial struggle for her. Most of her children had to work and pay for their own education.

Once her children became adults life was less stressful, Mrs. Prutny states that her life was more relaxed. She now could do some social things she couldn't do before. Mrs. Prutny states she loves to travel and this time of her life financially allowed for her and Mr. Prutny to enjoy other parts of the country.

Mrs. Prutny states she enjoyed what she feels were leisure years for her. Her husband enjoyed them also. This is one reason why it was unfortunate that he had a stroke only seven years ago. After the stroke Mr. Prutny was paralyzed and his speech was impaired. It was very difficult for him to adjust to her husband's condition. She states it took her a long time to accept that her husband could no longer care for himself. It was hard for her to deal with the pain that his condition had cost not only her but him. At this time she was even more grateful for her children because they provided her with much financial and emotional support. It was hard for her to financially keep the house. Mrs. Prutny worked days and tried to hire home care for her husband, when her children weren't available but this became very expensive. She also didn't want to burden her children, because most of them had children of their own. At this time Mrs. Prutny decided to put Mr. Prutny in a nursing home. She didn't want to do this but knew it was for the best.

Mr. Prutny passed away after three years of being in the nursing home and having another stroke. Mrs. Prutny went through all stages of grieving from denial to acceptance. It was very hard for the family emotionally although she says they were relieved that Mr. Prutny was relieved of his pain and agony.

The illness and death of her husband became significant during the last two years. After going to the hospital because of chest pains and finding out that she had a mild heart attack. Mrs. Prutny remembered what her husband had went through she knew she didn't want to experience this and that she to do what ever

possible to avoid this. It was at this time that Mrs. Prutny decided to retire and change her lifestyle. She began by changing her diet and exercising by walking every morning and doing light aerobics. Her doctor told her that she had signs of Atherosclerosis that could cause a heart attack and or stroke and that if her condition worsened it would be wise for her to have surgery to remove the plaque. In the meantime low fat and cholesterol diet may help decrease any additional plaque accumulation. Mrs. Prutny was leary about surgery but knew that her life would need a change. This was a year ago she was diagnosed and she is very proud to state she feels good and haven't had any problems since. Regular check ups at the Doctor's office indicates that she may have definitely extended her life.

Since the hospital visit and improvement of her life Mrs. Prutny says she tries to enjoy life. Although she is on a fixed income and doesn't have private transportation she tries to get out as much as possible. She has joined a senior citizens group where she has made a lot of friends. She states that being in the club provides her a chance to socialize and travel. She recently was in a senior fashion show which she enjoyed very much. She also went to Atlantic City on a bus trip that was very exciting.

Mrs. Prutny is very grateful for her children because they support her in many ways. The children that live near her provide her with transportation when she can't get around by public transportation or walking. They also help her financially by giving her money for the special activities she likes to attend.

Although her children are very helpful Mrs. Prutny likes to be independent so she tries to get as much as possible on her own. For this reason she continues to live in Washington D.C. although the crime rate is high the stores are close to her home and public transportation is reliable. Mrs. Prutny states that her apartment building is very secure which gives her some feeling of security.

Continuing a healthy and enjoyable life has become one of Mrs. Prutny's most important goals. To maintain a healthy and enjoyable life she will continue to maintain her diet and exercise along with outside socializing. In her spare time she also enjoys reading and watching television, she feels it is never too late to learn new things.

Looking back at her life she is very satisfied with the roles she has held. Wife, teacher and mother she misses it all. Sometimes she still sees herself in the role of mother although her children are grown adults. At times this can cause role conflict because she feels she still has to guide her children although she depends on them more than they depend on her.

Mrs. Prutny states that she never really thought of aging as a young adult. She always knew that she was getting older and that age may change her life but never really thought of how it would change her life. Now that she's older she feels it's not much different from being younger as long as you are accomplishing what you want to accomplish and enjoying life taking one day at a time.