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Neighbors

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Get to know Nora Spurgin
AUTHOR & FORMER PRESIDENT
OF THE WOMEN'S FEDERATION
FOR WORLD PEACE

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Photo submitted by Nora Spurgin

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Nora Spurgin grew up in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the oldest of nine children in a conservative Mennonite household. It was a life rich in family activity, experiences on the family farm, and a strong sense of Christian values. Because Nora's parents believed that higher education may corrupt her faith, she did not attend high school beyond ninth grade. At age 21, she took a GED test, got a high school diploma to go on to Eastern Mennonite College.

Her husband, Dr. Hugh Spurgin, grew up in Indiana. Nora is 82 and Hugh is 76. The pair met in Washington D.C. where Nora was a psychiatric social worker in St. Elizabeth Hospital and Hugh was a budget analyst at the U.S. Department of Navy. The couple was married in 1970 in Seoul, Korea in an international mass wedding of 777 couples organized by the Unification Church. Only seven of the couples were American. The couple loved getting to share their vows with many other couples from around the world. This past October, they celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary.

Some of the couples' best memories are related to births, marriages, and summer get-togethers with their extended family and good friends. Nora and Hugh have four adult children and three grandsons. Their daughter Andrea graduated from the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City, she and her husband, Tim, live in New Platz, New York where she is currently a partner in a construction firm. Her sister, Ameri, who also graduated from Fashion Institute of Technology, and her husband, Mike, live next door in New Platz. Ameri is an interior designer in New York City. During the pandemic, they all lived with



one more couple and worked together remotely, they had a wonderful time. Chris, who graduated from Cornell University, lives in Seattle, Washington with his wife, Mary, and son, Ari. He is a webmaster for a travel agency. High, their youngest son, lives in Minneola. He and his wife, Kym, have two sons, Brayden and Jaxon. High works for a company in Orlando.

Nora graduated from New York University with a degree in psychiatric social work. Hugh has a Ph.D. in American History from Columbia University, as well as a master's degree in Public Administration from Syracuse University. In addition to working



as a marriage counselor, a family therapist, and the editor of a church family journal, Nora served as the President of the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) for seven years. Hugh was the President of Unification Theological Seminary and executive director of Professors World Peace Academy. Both Nora and Hugh have traveled extensively worldwide, and have had many opportunities to meet people from many different cultures and backgrounds.

One of Nora's most memorable trips occurred in September of 1995 when she

traveled with Maureen Regan to Beijing, China to attend the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women. "Setting up an NGO event in China for WFWP required much planning," says Nora. "But the joy of seeing women from all over the world mingling together and presenting their concerns was worth the investment."

Also in September 1995 as president of WFWP in America, Nora accompanied former President George H.W. Bush and first lady Barbara Bush in Japan when they spoke at a Women's Federation event in the Tokyo Dome to promote

friendship between the Japanese and American people and celebrate the work of WFWP. Previously they had spoken in Washington, D.C. at a very moving WFWP "Bridge of Peace Ceremony" that featured Japanese and American women.

In June of 1991, Nora was in Lithuania organizing a seminar for college students when there was a coup in the former Soviet Union. "At first it was frightening when all communication was cut off," says Nora. "But then I decided this was a historical moment and I was grateful to be there to support the students during that three-day period."

In October of 2007, Nora traveled to North Korea with a group of 700 women from all over the world to the Mount Kumgang Resort where they met with North Korean women representatives in a quest and a gesture of peace. The resort was set up for tourists but crossing into North Korea and the trip to the resort in busses gave the group a small experience with the "hermit nation" where time seemed to have stopped. Stoic uniformed guards stood unblinkingly all along the route.

As for the growing-up years of their children, the Spurgins gathered together as an extended family in Missouri at the ranch of an uncle. The whole family looked forward to this vacation. As adults, their children, their cousins, and their families take turns hosting the reunion every three years in a different city. The family always



has a great time together. This summer, their children will host the reunion at Sweet Escape Mansion in Clermont.

In 1997, the couple founded a private international college preparatory high school in Connecticut. Originally located on the campus of the University of Bridgeport, the school now has its own separate facilities. Hugh was the president, Nora was the principal. The couple found that educating teenagers provided a great opportunity to share their values and experiences. Nora believes that students who can speak and write well will be successful, so she taught those courses.

After retiring, the couple moved to Clermont to be close to family. They enjoy meeting their Kings Ridge neighbors. Nora loves crafting hobbies such as quilting, sewing, ceramics, and writing and has joined those clubs. Nora also makes handbags and enjoys spending time exercising in the swimming pool. Hugh enjoys playing golf. They are both currently working on their memoirs. This is a fun and interesting hobby that is still a little



Their greatest joy is spending time with their grandchildren.

Nora wrote a book called "Circles of Angels," which is available on Amazon. She gives talks and conducts webinars on ways people can utilize angelic energy. Nora was inspired to write the book when she was serving as President of Women's Federation for World Peace. Having many national and international projects to work on and feeling overwhelmed, she prayed to God to help her find people to whom she could delegate projects. Nora found herself humming the song "Oh Come Angel Band," a song she hadn't sung for ages. Nora asked herself, "Is this my answer? Can I call upon the angels to help?" And she did.

"Thinking about their presence in our lives, I gave them jobs, and good things started to happen," says Nora. "What I realized was that angels are available to serve us, but we need to summon them and ask for their help in specific ways." Nora wrote the book because she wanted to share this with others.

The response has been wonderful. One wealthy investor showed Nora a framed prayer from her book that he displays on his desk. Nora met Lorna Byrne, author of numerous books about angels, several years ago. Lorna said, "There are many 'unemployed' angels who are waiting to help us, but we must give them jobs to do." This resonated with Nora's own thoughts. Nora believes our lives can be enriched by calling on angelic energy to help us.

"Helping people and treating them as we would like to be treated is a value we hold dear," said Nora and Hugh when asked about their motto. "We hope we can bring love and happiness into the lives of those around us."

Nora and Hugh would like to thank the advertisers of this magazine for bringing local news from Clermont into their neighborhood.