



2019

# Poetry Contest

*Transitioning Into Retirement*

1<sup>st</sup> Place

Alice W. Sweeney, Garden Way

2<sup>nd</sup> Place

Jane Cocke Perdue, The Clairmont

3<sup>rd</sup> Place

Shirley Laundry, The Continental



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## **MY GOLDEN YEARS**

“Fancy clothes and Cadillacs” The fortune cookie said.  
Aches and pains and cataracts are what I got instead.  
My knees are getting wobbly, and I wake up in a skin  
More wrinkled than pajamas that I’d tossed the whole night in.  
Everybody mumbles, so I can’t hear what they say.  
I’d forget it anyhow. My memory’s gone astray.  
But I know God still loves me, and I’ve friends who cheer me on,  
So I don’t worry ‘bout the vim and vigor that are gone.  
And I still have some body parts that never do get sore.  
So I just count my blessings, and then I feel young once more.

**Alice W. Sweeney**

**Garden Way**

## Parade of Elders

The day arrives quickly – surprising us!  
Workplace demands have ended,  
sending us into another stage of changes,  
gravity pulling us toward a center  
like moths circling light.  
From places near and far  
we come as pioneers of old  
searching for a new home.  
Arriving with trepidation and hesitation,  
greeted by the sight of a grand procession  
we stand and watch with fascination—

Steering his power chair  
like the tank commander  
he was in Viet Nam,  
he sits erect,  
looking straight ahead,  
speeding toward the dining room.

She clutches the handlebars  
of her well-worn walker,  
her daily life-line,  
gently lifting and lowering the frame  
in steady rhythm  
with each painful step.

He shuffles slowly,  
shoes scraping the carpet,  
right side leaning toward the wall,  
knowing he can balance against it  
to avoid a fall.

A wheeled chair rolls slowly  
down one corridor,  
tenderly and carefully pushed  
by a partner  
of over fifty years.

Each person in this parade of elders  
determined to navigate  
the long halls of golden age  
from their apartment  
to the dining room  
to nourish their bodies with good food  
and their souls with friendship  
and conversation—

We know with the wisdom  
of this life phase,  
we have found our home  
and this parade of elders  
will soon become our friends.

**Jane Cocke Perdue**  
**The Clairmont**

## Transitioning Into Retirement

Easing into retirement? It all  
goes in stages –  
Changing, evolving as each  
person ages.

For me it began with excitement  
and fun.

As I played with my love in  
the Florida sun.

The kids came to visit – then  
grandkids – a bonus!

They moved far out west but,  
oh well! they'd still phone us.

But as years sped on by it  
was harder to travel.

My idyllic existence began to  
unravel.

Friends faded away. There were  
fewer vacations.

The ER was one of our prime  
destinations.



Then one day I awoke and my  
dreams were all shattered.

I faced life alone and I felt  
nothing mattered.

Yet time eases pain and after  
a while.

I went on with my life – even  
started to smile.

My days settled into a  
pleasant routine.

My home was my castle. I  
reigned there as queen.

I gladly flew westward for  
special occasions –

Weddings and birthdays – no  
missed celebrations.

Not even my 90<sup>th</sup>! Yikes!

Could this be true?

What I really that old? Now  
what should I do?

My far away family was  
worried and so

I decided t'was time just  
to pack up and go.

So now I'm in Texas with  
family at hand  
Trying retirement home living  
and so far it's grand.  
The staff here is gracious. I  
like my new pad.  
Most people are friendly. The  
food isn't bad.  
So I thank the dear Lord for  
this thrilling new chapter

In my quest to seek life  
happily ever after.

**Shirley Laundry**  
**The Continental**

## **Our Retirement Life**

Our retirement life was  
topped when we moved to  
Brook Ridge in two thousand  
eighteen, there we  
discovered our apartment  
so pretty and clean.

The balcony outside our  
window is so inviting.

Palm trees and landscape  
are so refreshing.

Welcome to our dining  
room, so beautiful and serene.

We love the staff  
and all the amenities.

All this make our lives so comfortable  
and serene.

**Dale Cleveland**

**Brook Ridge**

## **Retirement?**

That retirement nonsense just must go,  
The status quo is fine you know.

My years of wisdom should suffice  
To tell you it's a poor device.

To halt my service to the world,  
And find a replacement, that's absurd!

What's that? I have no choice you say,  
And I must retire, and you name the day.

After all the years of working together,  
My team will surely tell them "never!"

But my team is kindly letting me know,  
That retirement is a gift of time bestowed.

And that very soon they all will be,  
Placed for retirement just like me.

**Jean Kirkpatrick**  
**Waterford Terrace**

## **It's Not Your Grandma's Bingo Anymore...**

...it's great to have no responsibilities...

...it's true – grandkids are great on Saturdays– and then they go home...

...not everyone plays Bingo 'cause they're old – it's not your grandma's bingo anymore – you would be surprised who is at bingo – yes, there are men at bingo – ok, count me in! – there are all kinds of people at bingo these days - the ladies are not too happy when the men win! – they can play just not win!...

...you can travel – where haven't we been is a better question – drop me off in Italy...

...speaking of work – miss the 'gossip' and seeing and being with co-workers but not the work! – it's not the same getting together with co-workers after you have left – you don't have things you can talk about like you did before...

...getting to do the things you've always wanted – and still haven't done! - but someday it could still happen!...

...making new friends...and men friends...

...going out to eat - a lot! – Senior discounts are great! and most places have a senior menu – the breadsticks at Olive Garden are the best – always order more to take home – they're free...

...being able to do absolutely nothing!...

...sometimes it can be quiet but at the end of the day –

We wouldn't trade retirement for anything!

**By Betty Z., Roxanne H., & Ruth Ma.**

**The Haven at North Hills**

## **EARLY RETIREMENT**

Our redhead, full of promise,  
Flew the nest for FSU.  
Anticipation followed;  
Just how would our fledgling do?

She spoke not of her courses,  
But to younger brother snapped,  
“T am brighter far, than you;  
With honors, I’ll be capped.”

She claimed dorm housing awful,  
So we quickly packed and drove.  
Our own dorms were not as nice,  
Classy drapes, a brand new stove.

The walls were freshly painted  
And the lighting bright and fine.  
A lush green lawn surrounded,  
Where stood stately Oak and Pine.

We scratched our heads in wonder;  
Just what more could one desire?  
Then one corner caught our eye;  
Still yet...a cozy fire.

In time we found her taking  
But one class each semester;  
Holding her degree in hand  
Meant real life soon would test her.

She crossed the stage with honors  
As her parents filled with glee;  
Fingers tightly wrapped around  
The long coveted degree.

Our family celebrated,  
Though the graduate seemed glum,  
As if a smile would kill her,  
She but wanted home to come.

Our couch, her best friend soon became  
As she lounged across its frame,  
Sometimes stretching like her cat,  
Shrugging off "The working game."

Employment forms, her friend brought,  
Just for her to think about;  
The second that each friend left  
She would rip and throw them out.

Friends were swiftly landing jobs;

I asked if that inspired...

“All required of me, I’ve done,

And NOW MOM, I’M RETIRED!!!”

**Joyful I. Waszink**

**Summerfield Estates**



## **Don't Play Dead Until You Die**

When people begin to get a little old,  
There is always a story to be told.

You look into their eyes and wonder,  
Where they've been and what's asunder.

If they could only see the reason why,  
They shouldn't play dead until they die.

Years have passed and since gone by,  
Until you breathe your very last sigh.

**Wanda Chastain**  
**Country Club Village**

## **Pajamas and no make-up**

Pajamas and no make-up,  
No body to say "Wake-up."  
Hair a mess, but feel so blessed.  
Plenty of time to think of a guest.  
Movie or shopping, no cleaning or mopping.  
Jeans and a sweat shirt  
No problems with my own quirks.  
Plenty of gas to go have a blast.  
No selling houses using note book & bank scores.  
Don't have to worry about those anymore.  
Retirement can't be as much fun as that  
But it's finally here – I think I'll go take a nap.

**Frances Tomlinson**

**The Continental**

## **ME AND MAMA**

**ME AND MAMA** we've been talkin' for a long time,  
'Bout the places and the things we'd like to see.  
We always thought that it was wishful thinkin',  
And we'd spend our lives right here at four-oh-three.

But yesterday we settled up the mortgage,  
The kids have all growed up and gone away.  
The crab grass on the lawn can go to blazes,  
**ME AND MAMA** gonna have ourselves a day.

**ME AND MAMA** we've been through a lot together,  
Through the lean years she was always at my side,  
And now with all the hard times way behind us,  
**ME AND MAMA** gonna take ourselves a ride.

Maybe we'll go south to Arizona,  
The desert air they say is mighty fine.  
We might decide to spend a night in Vegas,  
**ME AND MAMA** gonna have ourselves a time.

There was times when we both wondered if we'd make it,  
But we kept each other goin' through it all,  
And now I guess you'd say it's downhill all the way,  
**ME AND MAMA** gonna have ourselves a ball.

**Larry Matson**  
**Garden Way**



## **THE LAST STOP**

It has been a long, long haul, had some laughs and some sorrows,

Days and days packed with routine and plans for our tomorrows.

Off every day to make a few bucks, to pay the bills of life,

Back home at night to the family, the kids and a wonderful wife.

'O', yes, we've had a lot of fun but time has slowly slipped away.

The kids are gone now and we don't need all these chores every day.

We worked all those years to keep body and soul together,

But now it's time to head south and join our many friends of a feather.

No more getting up early, fightin traffic, always ruled by a schedule,

We have earned the right to lay back, take a nap, and play bean bag baseball,

We can grab a bag of popcorn, settle down to watch the big movie screen

Or catch the Retirement bus and go watch the Ducks team.

Life is really winding down and joy is fading out,

We are beginning to forget where we were headin, even what we were about.

This old body is getting ready to cash in its chips

The game is almost over. This home will be the last one of our great trips.

**Melmuth D. McKay**

**Garden Way**

## **Josie the Cat**

There once was a cat named Josie,  
Who, like most cats, was nosy.  
“Don’t shut that door!  
want to explore.  
Or down the hall to mosey.”

Her breed was Russian Blue.  
Her fur a dark grey hue.  
Full name, Josephina.  
A feline Tsarina.  
Her subjects knew ‘twas true.

She seldom said “Meow”.  
‘Twas more likely a “Now!”  
“Pet me! Feed me!  
Groom me! Heed me!  
Or I’ll have a cow!”

Sometimes she was like a dog,  
Daily tummy rubs to log.  
She’d chase her tail,  
Her toys assail,  
Then nap, the sunshine to hog.

When we returned one day,  
Her excitement was on display.  
A lizard in place  
Had invaded her space.  
Now dead on the floor did lay.

At dawn she began to chime.  
But really, it was a crime.  
Four-legged alarm  
Our sleep did harm.  
Too bad she couldn't tell time!

**Estelle Voelker**  
**Waterford Terrace**

## Retiring

It's not a hotel, it's a community  
End-of-life place to go to share  
Not a hotel but a friendly kind of unity  
A sunshine space to learn to care

Yellow serviettes, fancy, china cups  
We can sit in any empty place  
I wobble over, trying not to fall  
Fascinated by man with head-like-ball  
Where I join sweet lady with elfin face

She jumps up going to get me coffee  
Smile on his face, I pull out a stool  
**"ABBA calls me 'SNL', but Sam's just fine,"**  
**"Saturday Night Live?" you the funny man?**  
Laughing, "Stupid, Not Likely." ABBA doesn't like the fool

ABBA is taking an inordinately long time  
Sam frowns, following the direction of my gaze  
Few people waiting for fresh, **Decaf** coffee  
In the line for **Regular**, I count to twenty-three  
Line loops around walkers, power chairs and makes an old-age maze



“Has domineering daughter wants ABBA drink only decaf  
When ABBA turned 100, daughter’s gift; jump rope, “  
“Pray tell”, but Sam skirts the slippery slope  
Says ABBA fond name used even by the staff  
Joins us with walker, 3 cups and a flask  
To drink Decaf makes daughter right,  
Far more steady on her feet than I at seventy-eight  
Sam says, “Daughter insists calling her Gertrude!”  
“Of course, ABBA stands for Grandmother?” I ask  
**“No, ABBA stands for Ancient, Bold B\*\*\*h, with Attitude!”**

Not a hotel, it’s an immunity  
End-of-life place for just a little while  
Not a hotel but a fabulous community  
A Sunshine Place where we learn to smile

**Lynn Verhoeff**

**The Clairmont**

## **A Place for Dad**

*June has its moments.*

*Days have its weeks.*

*Life has its low points,*

*But also its peaks.*

*The body has its zeniths.*

*When strength seems to flow,*

*But the springtime of youth*

*Eventually turns to the winter of slow.*

*A body that once jumped and danced*

*that stood straight and tall,*

*Now bends at the waist and leans forward*

*As if threatening to suddenly fall.*

*Dads hair that was black*

*Begins turning white,*

*And not long after takes flight.*

*Dad needs a change of lifestyle*

*Was the opinion the family expressed,*

*That will provide him better care*

*And lessen his obvious distress.*

*Austin, Texas appeared to be the best place  
For Dad to find the assistance he needed.  
And The Continental Retirement Community  
Was just the place the family conceded.*

*With superior location near medical services.  
He was thrilled to see would be getting.  
And with its exciting offerings of activities and games,  
And smiling friends to complete the setting.*

*Doctors and hospitals were close at hand.  
Shopping offerings that were very near.  
With church services and entertainment, a desired option.  
I could remain active throughout the year.*

*The fact that his daughter lived very close,  
Offered him help for which he was glad.  
When all these factors were added up  
We knew for truth this was the place for Dad*

**Wendell Sharpton**

**The Continental**



# Sunshine Retirement Living Communities 2019



## ARKANSAS

### Hot Springs

- Country Club Village

## CALIFORNIA

### Antioch

- Quail Lodge

### Chula Vista

- Canterbury Court

### Folsom

- Creekside Oaks

### La Mesa

- Waterford Terrace

### Novato

- Deer Park

## FLORIDA

### Lehigh Acres

- Fountain Crest

### Tallahassee

- Azalea Gardens

## GEORGIA

### Dallas

- Creekside Pines

### Dunwoody

- Dunwoody Pines

### Evans

- Marshall Pines

### Sandy Springs

- Hammond Glen

## INDIANA

### Mishawaka

- Heritage Point

## LOUISIANA

### Lake Charles

- The Verandah

### New Orleans

- Landing at Behrman Place

## NEVADA

### Reno

- Stone Valley

## OHIO

### Beachwood

- Windsor Heights

## OREGON

### Bend

- ★ Community Support Office

### Eugene

- Garden Way

### Tigard

- Summerfield Estates

## PENNSYLVANIA

### Pittsburgh

- The Haven at North Hills

## TEXAS

### Austin

- The Clairmont

- The Continental

### Pharr

- Brook Ridge

- The Gardens At Brook Ridge

## COMING SOON:

### CALIFORNIA

#### Fountain Valley

- Park View  
Opening Spring 2020

### MASSACHUSETTS

#### Methuen

- The Woods At Merrimack  
Opening Fall 2019

### SOUTH CAROLINA

#### Greenville

- Maple Brook Terrace  
Opening Spring 2020