

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR: JOANNE DRISCOLL

Most people who come to Treemont walk into the independent living section and settle in, confident that if and when they need assisted living, skilled nursing care, or nursing home care they can get it right on the same tree-shaded nine-acre campus that has become home to them.

For newcomer Joanne Driscoll, however, the procedure was reversed. After a bout of serious illness her doctor sent her to Treemont Health Care for recovery and rehabilitation, and she was so pleased with the services and therapy received there that she decided to look into Treemont as a permanent home, and in March of this year moved into her apartment on the second floor of Building A.

As an only child born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to older parents, the precocious little girl declared early on as a result of her avid reading and daydreaming that she was one day going to live in Texas. And here she is.



A Tri Delta sorority coed at Carnegie Mellon in Pittsburgh, her first step after getting her Bachelor of Science degree was to marry a geologist whose company almost immediately sent him to Lafayette, Louisianaclose, but not yet Texas.

After two and a half years the little family, which by this time included an 8-months-old daughter Clare, moved to Houston on a company transfer, and Joanne happily put down roots, declaring that she would never live anywhere else. A son, Mike, was born to them in Houston, and both children, adults now, continue to make their homes here.

A born innovator and entrepreneur, Joanne had begun a cottage industry creating decorative and fashion accessories at home and marketing them through boutiques and other low-key venues. She also wrote and illustrated a coloring book for children featuring the various points of interest in Houston.

As soon as both children were in school, however, she was ready for a bigger market and became a “headhunter.”

In case you’re not familiar with the term, a headhunter in today’s English is an executive search expert who recruits specialists to fill a certain niche in a corporation, usually at \$200,000 a year or more. Through networking word-of-mouth and careful research she would uncover someone with expertise in the needed field, interview them carefully, and then if she judged them sufficiently knowledgeable and suited to the culture of the corporation she would recommend and set up interviews between them.

With her keen insights and delicate, almost fragile good looks she was able to find out over lunch just about everything she needed to know about a candidate to judge his suitability for her client’s position and report accordingly.

Her first job in this new career was with a large firm, but she soon moved to a smaller group for faster advancement. By January 1982 she had established a loyal clientele who came to her time after time to fill their high-end recruiting needs, and she launched her own executive recruiting company specializing in the petroleum industry.

The oil bust of the mid-1980s hit Houston hard and business slowed to the point where she took a job as in-house headhunter with Chemical Bank.

In her spare time and especially after retirement Joanne became a docent at the Houston Zoo, caring for animals ranging from bunnies to boa constrictors.



She also served as a volunteer for the Flight Museum in Galveston and the Texas Aviation Hall of Fame. In that capacity she videotaped interviews with some of the Hall of Famers. She is impressively knowledgeable about vintage airplanes and the history of flight.

“I really enjoy people,” she says, “and I love to hear their stories.” She loves Treemont for that and other reasons, including the friendly and welcoming atmosphere, the helpful and super-competent staff, and the diversity and wide-ranging interests of the residents.

She is also a voracious reader and remains an active member of three book clubs. And of course there’s her beautiful family with one granddaughter and three step-grandsons—three now in college and the youngest finishing St. Thomas High School this year.

So if you see a petite platinum blonde newcomer (probably wearing soft pastel colors) at Table 37 in the Dining Room, stop and introduce yourself to Joanne. She is probably the most genteel, soft-spoken headhunter you’ll ever meet, and you’ll be glad you did.