



## “PEACHES” BLOUNT DENMAN • PEARLAND, TEXAS

Thanks to God I retired from MD Anderson Cancer Center in March, 2019. That means I moved from the “have to” phase of my life to the “get to” phase. What a joy! I have managed to travel, read, garden and give back. I volunteer as a medical courier for the Be the Match Foundation, serve as secretary on the board of a charter school and still enjoy singing, teaching and serving in ministry through my church and serving on Westminster’s Black Alumni Council. Combine that with my almost complete pursuit of International Coaching Foundation (ICF) certification and my plate is full.

**Family:** I have two delightful children, Christian, 36, is an Immigration Specialist with TikTok as of 12/12/22 (moving to Culver City, CA) and Deanna is a Clinical Health Psychologist with Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, TX. No grandchildren yet but check the photos for me and my granddog, Marvel. He’s three in January and so smart!

**Post-secondary education:** AB, Harvard University, 1977 and MS, Texas Woman’s University, 1998

**Career(s):** The last 30 years of my career were spent in healthcare in progressively responsible positions culminating in the Office of the President serving as Chief of Staff for the Deputy President and Chief Operating Officer. Serving in this capacity was rewarding as the first person of color in the suite, however my most rewarding role was during the 10+ years I served as Executive Director of Perioperative Services. This included everything involving surgical procedures: scheduling, materials management, sterile processing, operating rooms,

pre- and post-op care. Being there for the patients and their families during this very stressful time was the best. I can honestly say that I was getting paid for helping others.

**Hobbies and passions:** Travel, reading (in a book club), gardening, bowling (topped 200 once) and spending time with my family top the list.

**What do you like best about this stage of life?** I love the freedom. As I said the “get to” opens up so many possibilities. Not getting up at 4:15 a.m daily to be at my desk by 5:30 a.m is great. If I want to be out walking at 6 a.m., it’s totally my choice or sleeping in. Sitting on my patio and watching nature along with cruising and being able to travel at will are truly a blessing!

**Greatest impact on the direction of your life:** After reading a book titled *Karen* by Marie Killilea at the age of nine, I knew that some role in healthcare would be my future. I took a couple of detours along the way, serving in social work and working in telecommunications for ten years, but healthcare was always calling. Experiencing so many inefficiencies during my mother’s four-month hospital stay really opened my eyes to opportunities to improve the patient experience.

**Hardest thing you’ve ever done:** I’d have to say losing my dad six years ago at the age of 90. His death was not a surprise but rather a relief as he suffered from dementia the last seven years of his life. It hurts to lose someone over such a long period of time; to lose the memories and stories that you shared, not being recognized and watching the continuous decline and feeling helpless.



*Dormie reunion, 2017*



*Dormie reunion, all class of '73 graduates,  
Savannah, GA, 2019*



*Sylvia Shortt (deceased), me, and  
Debbie Leverett (all class of '73)*

**Something you wish you had done:** I don't believe in regrets. I believe that God ordered my steps and orchestrated my life. I also don't feel as though I'm finished and pray that the best is yet to come.

**Proudest accomplishment:** My children. They are not just successful, intelligent, talented, grounded and generally fun, they are respectful, hardworking and loving. They bring me joy and I'm thankful to have been a part of their lives.

**Something that might surprise your classmates:** I've zip lined, parasailed, and bungee jumped in Fiji.

**Fondest Westminster memory:** Without a doubt, the time spent as one of Pearl's Girls in McLarty Hall (the dorm). What an experience to leave home at 15, travel >900 miles and instantly gain a new family of 49 sisters and four dorm mothers. Of special note was the year of the ice storm, being without power for several days and spending our time alternating between sledding down the hill, vying for space at the fireplace and eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

**Fondest Westminster faculty:** Mr. Frank Boggs, who directed both the Chorale and Ensemble, took

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*Birthday trip to NYC with Mary Friday,  
and Carla Martin, both '74*



*Dormies*

me in and made me feel at home. He was always cheerful and encouraging. Mr. Ron Karst, who directed plays like “Stop the World, I Want to Get Off” allowed us to explore who we could be. I even played Dorothy complete with ruby slippers. And lastly, teachers like Ms. Margaret Dean and Ms. Gwen Cleghorn, beautiful, graceful, caring individuals who challenged their students.

**Message that sums up your life:** Life is what you make of it! It's about perspective. Choosing to learn in every situation, remain true to yourself and your beliefs and trying to leave things always better than when you found them. It's genuinely trying to consider the impact you have on others and recognizing that with every interaction you're making a memory.... one that is positive or... one that is negative. I've been truly blessed and I'm grateful.

**Classmate you would most like to run into at the reunion:** Kathy Edwards, Mopsy Stuckey, Olga Goizuetta, Robert Winborne, Meredith Culver, Molly Dahm, Anita Allen, Debbie Leverett, Wendy Whitacre to name a few.

**Reflections of classmates we have lost:** I had the pleasure of making several lifelong friends while at Westminster. That list would not be complete without Sylvia Shortt. I video conferenced with Sylvia just three days before she passed. What she did for me while at Westminster and until her passing was to make me feel loved. Sylvia was instrumental in organizing dormie reunions which were always so hilarious and cathartic. She was the glue that held us together. She is sorely missed.



*With my granddog, Marvel*



*With my children, Christian and Deanna*



*Mary's wedding, 2000*



*Karen Meeks '73, Mary Friday '74, and me*