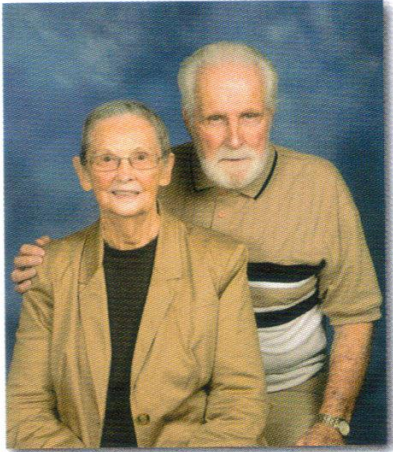


Siesta Retirement Village Outstanding Volunteer Recognition

All the residents of Siesta Retirement Village benefit greatly by the efforts of volunteers and some volunteers simply stand out from the rest by going above and beyond.



Gene & Edy McKenzie
3202 Sonora

MUSIC TO YOUR EARS GENE & EDY MC KENZIE!



Gene and Edy McKenzie are best known for running the Jams in the Park. It has moved to a new day and time this year; it will be on Thursdays!! On Thursday, 12:00 to 1:00 PM, a luncheon will be served; it will be a plate-lunch with coffee, tea, water or sodas (they will also have pies!). The Jam will be from 1:00 to 3:00 PM, starting Thursday, November 3, 2016, and continue throughout the season. (Exceptions: No Jams on 11-24-16, Thanksgiving, and 12-01-16, Shuffle Board Games.)

Gene retired from Wright Patterson Air Force Base in 1972, he established his own striping business, concentrating on mall parking lots. His striping took him from New Hampshire, in the north, south to west Palm Beach, Florida, and west to Chicago, Illinois. They were in a RV at in Pine-to-Palm from 1972 to 1977. In 1973, they purchased the family farm, and planted corn and soy beans. In 1977, he came to Weslaco to be with his father, who was in the process of establishing a home in Siesta Retirement Village. He and Harlow Peterson worked for the Dittburners, setting-up, tying-down and skirting some of the first mobil homes set-up in the Village. Edy remained in Ohio, caring for her parents until she was able to come to Siesta Village on a more permanent basis.

I enjoyed looking at pictures they have of the Village in the beginning when this area was a vegetable field. They have pictures of the pool and hot tube being built; also some pictures of activities öway-back-whenö; trick-or-treating, circus animals, parades, etc. In 1977, Gene was the first Pancake Breakfast Chairman; starting with 20-25 people. He went to other parks and advertised and brought those numbers up to over 225 people at the end of the season. In 1978, Gene was Olympics Chairman for Siesta Village, and was the Ping-Pong Champion of the Mid-Valley Olympics. He was the second Shuffle Board Chairman for the Village from 1979 to the mid-1980s, and they used the 24 courts set-up in 1977.

Gene took over as Jam Host from Don Pierce in mid-2000s, and has been doing it ever since. In the past, he has played the keyboard, but does not take it to the Jams because it became too heavy for him to carry. Both he and Edy do the sound system for events and Church on Sundays. They also arrange for special music for the Church services. Edy worked for General Motors as an employee benefits administrator for three plants, retiring in 1987. She then became a paralegal for 10 years.

In 2005, Ike Warkenton was contacted by the Rio Grande Valley Show grounds to fill a vacancy when a festival scheduled in February, was cancelled. Ike contacted Edy McKenzie and Geri Clark and the Rio Grande Valley Music Festival was formed. The Music Festival had no monies, so the Trustees put-up the needed funds for two years. The Music Festival was a non-profit organization; all activities were performed by volunteers. All monies in excess of expenses were donated to Valley School Music Departments. From 2007 thru 2014, more than \$200,000.00 was distributed to Valley schools. The Music Festival was a huge undertaking; \$25,000.00-to-\$30,000.00 was needed to open the gates. There were six stages and hosted entertainers from Branson, MO and Nashville, TN. Two bus lines brought tourists as a must-see stop. There were 13 trustees and approximately 125 volunteers during the six day Music Festival.

Gene and Edy were fund raisers for the Music Festival. They have three children: 1)Son, Jan Alan McKenzie, Pastor, Louisville, Ky., 2)Daughter, Darla Jean Hensley (Glenn), Nurse, Lexington, Ky., and 3)Foster-daughter, Charla Doucette Scovil (Steve), Nurse, Bellbrook, Oh. In November, 2014, Charla called advising she had been diagnosed with stage 4 esophageal lymphoma, and was told she had 2 months to live; that she need them to come home. They returned to Ohio to care for her. No one stepped up as fund raisers for the Music Festival. The Music Festival stopped after 2014, and all remaining funds were distributed to Valley School Music Departments.

Since Gene and Edy are growing old and have health issues, Siesta Village needs to look for someone to learn the sound system. They also need someone to host the Jams. If you are interested in volunteering for these activities, please contact the Social Board. Volunteering is a great way to meet new people.

As a reminder please come to the Jam on Thursdays at noon for lunch with a fantastic \$5.00 plate luncheon followed by the music starting at 1pm-3pm starting November 3, 2016. Hope to see you there and stop by and thank Edy & Gene for all they have done for SRV and continue to do for us.

THANKS EDY & GENE!

