

Spotlight on Mary Kay Hanson Mittag

Life after Azusa High School

After leaving Azusa High School Mary Kay Hanson attended Mt. SAC where she received her AA degree. In September of 1963 she married Dale Mittag –class of 1959. She worked as a secretary at Norton Air Force Base in San Bernardino until Dale finished his teaching credential. In September of 1966 Mary Kay entered Cal Poly where she completed her Bachelor of Science degree, teaching credential, and Masters degree.



Mary Kay with her cymbidium orchids

In September of 1984 Mary Kay was diagnosed with acute leukemia and was told she would live six months to a year. After making it through the first two rounds of chemotherapy her doctors thought she might be a good candidate for a bone marrow transplant because of her otherwise excellent health, plus the fact that her brother was a perfect match. At this time not only was this experimental, but the best success was with younger children. Given a 50 percent chance of survival she opted for the transplant, beat the odds and in 1985 at the age of 42 became the oldest patient to receive a bone marrow transplant at Kaiser. She says, "It was some kind of miracle." Mary Kay returned to teaching in the fall of the same year.

Work

Mary Kay taught at four schools in the Azusa unified District and retired in 1998 after 30 years of teaching. Her last teaching assignment was at Valleydale, where she attended school in the 7th and 8th grades. Dale was the track and cross country coach at Azusa High School and retired after 32 years in the district.

Play

After retiring Mary Kay and Dale, traveling with a track and field group, took the trip of a lifetime to the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney Australia. They were there a month and had a great time getting to know both the people and the country.

For fun Mary Kay and Dale grow cymbidium orchids and have more than 50 plants. They have also raised 135 camellia plants that they show at Descanso and Huntington Gardens during the months of January and February.

Besides exhibiting camellias at shows, Mary Kay's other hobbies include quilting, water aerobics, fishing and traveling. Mary Kay also collects Precious Moments figurines. She's such an avid collector that in 2004 she and Dale stayed at the Precious Moments campground located near the Precious Moments museum and park in Carthage, Missouri.



*Mary Kay & Dale –2006
Precious Campground, Carthage, MO*



*Mary Kay and Dale – 2004
West Yellowstone Park museum*

Mary Kay and Dale have been living in Upland since 1974. They are listed in the phone book and would like to hear from classmates who are still in the area. Their e-mail address is dwmkm@aol.com