
MARIE AGOSTINELLI

Member since 2013

Background

Birth Date:

June 5, 1943

Place of Birth:

Hagerstown, MD

Did You Know?

Through her genealogy skills, Marie has been able to trace her family history back to John and Eleanor Billington, two of the people to arrive in the Americas on the Mayflower. Eleanor was one of the few women who survived the first winter.

Marie started bowling when she was 15, and has participated in bowling tournaments in Washington, California, Florida, Iowa, New York, Arizona, North Dakota, New Mexico, and Colorado. She has bowled several 600 sets.

Favorite Hymns:

I'll Fly Away



While the birth of any baby is a miracle, Marie's birth is even more so because her mother had been told that she would never be able to have children. As a teenager, Marie's mother had suffered a severe case of blood poisoning, resulting in a hip deformity that supposedly made pregnancy impossible for her. Yet, Marie's mother managed to carry her to term and delivered by C-section at the Washington County Hospital. She then further defied the odds, raising Marie as a single-mother.

Marie and her mother survived on Mother's Assistance until Marie was old enough to go to school. At this point her mom took a job in the sewing factory down the street from their home in Mercersburg. Marie remembers spending a lot of time with her grandmother in the afternoons and summers, when her mom was at work. One of her favorite things to do was to listen to her grandmother's old records, especially the old hymns.

Church was an important part of Marie's childhood. In her earliest years, they walked to Church of God on Park Street, where her mother taught Sunday School. Later, they began getting a ride to Mt. Tabor Pentecostal Church, where Marie remembers attending "happy, lively revival meetings, filled with drums, horns, and shouts." Around the age of 12, Marie was baptized in the creek behind Mt. Tabor. Marie also attended many churches in the area with her paternal grandmother, Alma, who traveled around playing the piano, organ, and accordion. Marie remembers her Grandmother Alma being a big influence on her faith growing up.

Marie was raised to be kind and compassionate toward others, helping those in need whenever she could. She remembers the five

children who lived in the apartment above her. Their father didn't take good care of them, so Marie and her mom made sure that the kids had food to eat and clothes to wear. In order to supply food to their neighbors, Marie and her mother tended a large garden of their own while also helping several elderly neighbors to plant and tend theirs. Marie says, "I've always helped people for as long as I can remember. From little up, I worked hard. Whatever we raised, we shared."

Marie was brought up to be hard-working and independent. She remembers her mother leaving a list of chores for her to complete each day when she left for work. Marie got her first job at the age of eight, picking strawberries for her great-uncle for 5 cents per box, and she soon moved on to a job processing peaches for Breyers ice cream, earning \$1.25 an hour. After high school graduation in 1961, Marie took a job at the Stanley Company in Chambersburg, carpooling each day with other girls from Mercersburg.

After working at the Stanley Company for eight years, Marie decided she didn't want to work in a factory for the rest of her life. She enrolled in beauty school, completing the program during evenings and Saturday mornings. Finally, in 1971, Marie opened Stevens Beauty Salon. Marie says it was a big step to go from working and having an income to starting her own business. But she took that step, and it couldn't have worked out any better.

Throughout that time, Marie's mother was always at her side. Marie says that her mother was her best friend: "We kind of grew up together. She did everything for me, so when I got old enough I took care of her. When I learned to drive, I took her everywhere with me. When I bought my first house, she came to live with me."

Later, when her mother suffered a stroke and had to go into Manor Care nursing home, Marie gave up her salon and took a nursing assistant job. During the five years that her mother lived at Manor Care, Marie visited with her every day, making sure that she had the nicest hair of anyone in the facility. Marie's mother slept on satin pillowcases and had fresh flowers in her room every day until her death in March of 1993.

While at Manor Care, Marie advanced to a supervisory position. She remembers telling the other assistants working under her, "I won't ask you to do anything I won't do myself." Manor Care soon recognized Marie's potential and encouraged her to go to nursing school to become an LPN. They offered to pay for her schooling if she would agree to work for them for 18 months after she graduated. Eventually, the 10-12 hour shifts at Manor Care became too demanding, and Marie applied for a nursing job at Providence Place. Instead, she was hired as their beautician, a position she held until her retirement.

Now, Marie works tirelessly in a variety of volunteer and advisory positions for the Capitol Theater, Kittatinny Historical Society, and Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter. One of the things she is most proud of is having raised \$6000 to contribute toward building the new animal shelter in Letterkenny, by sewing cats, dogs, rabbits, and bears out of sports team fabric.

Marie describes herself as a 'go for it' type of person, who has never been afraid to jump into anything. Except for the one time, when Mike Agostinelli asked her to marry him. Marie describes Mike as a good man and fantastic cook, but she was 55 years old at the time and felt some reservations, afraid that she couldn't change her ways at that point in her life. She remembers telling Mike, "I've lived all these years by myself and I'm used to doing things my own way." Mike decided he was okay with that, and they were married on January 30, 1999. They enjoyed a brief but happy marriage.

After Mike's death, Marie began attending FUMC with Lois Good and Linda Albert. Here, she does much of what she has always done, serving on the Staff-Parish and History Committees and volunteering with the 3M Choir and Hungry Hearts ministry. When asked about a favorite memory of FUMC, Marie responds, "All of them. There are no bad memories here."

Marie's advice to younger generations:

"Try to stick to your core beliefs and what you know in your heart is right. Try not to be swayed to jump into something that you have doubts about."