

BIOGRAPHY

Janulee Russell



Shyly I would've said "hi" almost 50 years ago but at age 67 now, I have gotten beyond that awkward stage. Today I am a mother of four daughters, 16 grands and 7 great-grands, with all my big and little babies living out-of-state from me.

I live in Ocala, Florida; having lived in eight states in my lifetime, including many, many cities (I was born in Norfolk, Virginia and was raised an Army brat and later a Navy wife.) I did pass a two hour test to join the Air Force but was too underweight to be accepted...how I wish I had that problem now. Smile Face.

After leaving Germany (lived there as a dependent), I ended up at Austin HS in the last couple months of my freshman year, and then went to Burges HS 1960-63 where I graduated. I was in B choir and then A choir... also modern dance and helped in office on my study hall, delivering messages to room. I married my high school sweetheart, John Shoats (from Irvin HS), although he was the newspaper guy who lived behind our quarters on Ft. Bliss. We had four beautiful girls; we remarried twice and then finally divorced (he passed away 25 yrs ago from drugs and alcohol). I remarried #2 husband a few years later, while living in a small town south of Kansas City, MO; and that ended up in a painful divorce after ten years. The best part was helping raise two stepsons. I have been in a complicated, married relationship for over 15 years now. Sometimes, we just do not learn! I never met my biological father but found my roots in 1986 or so, visiting his siblings in NC. I am so thankful I had this opportunity because out of 12 only 2 are left alive now.

I wanted to be a devout nun as I grew up with mixed dreams later of also being a singer/dancer/photographer/artist and interior decorator, but spent my life with a career in medical transcription...so glad that is behind me five years ago now! I learned to love the movies, where my sister and I use to spend time alone as kids. I am still a big movie buff!

I went to school in Denver, CO 1968 (single again with two babies in diapers!) received diploma as a medical secretary, later working in two civil service jobs; again at Longview College in Kansas City but never tested out for associate's degree but had lots of fun with four semesters in photography and later in tech school with graphic arts in Ad Art. Later, I reentered classes over and over again in digital photography and Photoshop. I have updated classes here in Ocala at the community college covering various computer programs; I also stay involved with a computer club here in Ocala.

I have had a fantastic life with lots of travel, great friends and acquaintances (knowing a few "celebs" because of my work in photography in the past...including photo of Ronald Regan I took and processed myself...up close in person. For many years I was actively engaged with different community, church and charity works as a volunteer, i.e. Red Cross, Disaster Volunteer, Culture Art programs, etc. I have stepped back from this to "enjoy" my retired life now, living in a house that closely resembles a house I had mapped out (as a draft) many, many years ago...that I wanted to have...my sort of dream house. Although I must admit, I am still looking for that turn-of-the-century, two story house, visualizing me swinging on the front porch! You probably noticed on Facebook that I love getting exercise working in the gardens and yards, followed by tons of photographs of flowers and birds.... all my little friends. BTW, since HS I go by the name, "Janulee", so if you holler out Jan at the reunion, I may not respond. Another Jan may.

