

## Pauline Santoro Interview, November 2017

J: June

P: Pauline

C: Christine

J: Hello.

C Hi, June

J: Yes, hi.

C: Hi, it's Christine and I'm here with Pauline.

J: Excellent, Hi Pauline

C: This is June you're going to be speaking with.

P: Hello, June.

C: I'll leave you alone.

J: Thank you for the introduction. Hi, Pauline, how are you today?

P: I'm just fine and yourself?

J: I'm doing very well, thank you. So, I want to start out by saying thank you for making yourself available for this interview. I really appreciate your time today. Before we get started I just wanted to go over a couple of things the first being that we are recording this conversation, Pauline, just so that we can have an accurate transcript and that I don't have to sit here and take sloppy notes. But should you say something about the conversation that maybe you don't want to share or it's too personal or something just interrupt and say right then and there and say, "Please don't publish this part." And we will make sure we don't, ok?

P: Ok.

J: Just to go over the purpose of the interview, we do interviews like this all over the country with residents of all kinds of Watermark Communities including The Fountains at RiverVue where you are. And I've interviewed lots of your neighbors before you. What we do is we first try to just get a sense of who you are and your life up until this point where you live and the kinds of things you enjoy doing just get a sense of who you are as a person. And then we like to get into some questions about why you felt it was time to make a move, how you went about deciding where you were going to live and then now that you are at The Fountains at RiverVue what your life is like now, how is it different how is it the same, that kind of thing. And then what we do with this information is we share with people out in the community surrounding area in a mailer and give them a sense of what it takes to make a move and how you go about thinking about it from the beginning to the end. We have found that by sharing our resident's stories that it really helps people plan their own best futures. And so that's really what we're after today is your own personal story, whatever you'd like to share and let people know that may be helpful to them. So, with that I will let you do most of the talking now and I will ask you to start by just simply introducing yourself, tell me about your life, where you're from, where you've lived all your life, the kind of things you enjoy doing, anything about your family or whatever you feel like sharing.

P: Ok.

J: So, go right ahead when you're ready.

P: I'm Pauline Santoro, I'm originally from New Rochelle, New York which is about 20 minutes

away from Tuckahoe. And I'm married. My first husband and with him I had one son, Bill, who now lives down the street in a condo so it makes it very convenient if he's not traveling on his job that he can stop in. I was a secretary for many years I worked in New York City and originally went to New Rochelle Schools and then I went to Katherine Gibbs Business School. I worked for American (inaudible) Labs and other places. Then as I said I lived in New Rochelle after my son was born and he grew up there. Then I realized that I no longer could stay in my house because I was having a bit of memory loss and we looked at The Fountains which was very close by to people I know that could visit and also my son. I've found it very good here. They have a lot of nice programs and we have exercise every day, they have people come in and present on different things. They have bridge, poker, knitting, just a variety of things that keep you interested. And we have movies in the afternoon and in the evening so I have found it very enjoyable.

J: And how long have you lived there, when did you move in?

P: I came in May 2016 so it's been just over year.

J: So, it's been just over a year then. Did you know anybody before you moved in?

P: Not really, not really.

J: And how did you find it meeting people?

P: I like to be active so first of all I went to the exercise every morning. And then they had different things that would interest you like the knitting and a few other things and they do crosswords every day and other things. You just get to know people as you are sitting down and you're talking to them to meet people. We always eat in the same place in the dining room so met people through there. I just find it easy to make friends.

J: So, it doesn't matter if you don't know anybody, you found it easy to make friends.

P: Yes, yes, because you are interested in some things that they are interested in and then you will see them in different rooms that we have things going on.

J: And so how would you say the lifestyle you have now compares to when you were living on your own?

P: Well, when I lived on my own I was able to drive and go places and meet my friends for lunch or do things like that and I liked to travel, and I had a sister who lived in the state of Seattle so I'd go out there every summer and I have friends nearby where we'd get together they found that being here is easier on my son and easy on me. You can be as active as you want or you stay in your room if you want.

J: Good, well, tell me about your apartment.

P: I just have a studio. I was thinking maybe if I wanted a bedroom but I find that it's very sufficient for me. I have a table and chairs and if I'm too sick to come down I can have my meals sent up. I'm able to have the television, have a bed and dresser and the bathroom of course and a small kitchenette, the refrigerator, the microwave. It's very sufficient for me. Some people prefer a larger area like a living room and all that but I find that I really don't need it.

J: And you spend a lot of time in your apartment as opposed out in the various community areas?

P: No, I'm mainly out of the room most of the day, which I enjoy.

J: That's great so what do you enjoy doing during the day?

P: The exercise every day, we have jumble time, crosswords, knitting, we go on day trips that I enjoy, things like that.

J: And have you been on I know they offer trips into the city have you been on any of those?

P: Oh yes, I can't remember some of them but I do go.

J: You go on a train or a bus and just have the driver drive you in somewhere?

P: We usually have a driver who has the van and he takes us to these different places.

J: That must be fun.

P: Yes, it is. What did we recently see, Mamma Mia? Up at the Westchester Broadway Theater. That's always nice to go to.

J: Your apartment, I've been there and it must be beautiful colors right now with the fall, are there leaves still on the trees?

P: Yes, they haven't quite reached their peak yet in some areas. I'm on the fourth floor. I'm on the top floor and I'm trying to think what I overlook, I overlook one of the streets in the neighborhood. I see different homes and I see people walking their dogs and everything.

J: Do you ever cook for yourself or do you mainly take the meals downstairs?

P: No, I really take the meals downstairs. I do have a microwave if I should want a cup of coffee I can pick some up down in the café and either heat up in the microwave or, but I do come downstairs for the meals mostly.

J: And for those folks who don't know can you describe how the dining situation is.

P: How did I get at the table where I am?

C: We introduce you to people with similar interests.

P: Oh, I didn't know that. They introduce you to people with similar interests and then they seat you in the dining room.

J: And then you order off the menu, do you?

P: Yes, and you get three meals a day. They are very varied and I like my breakfast in the morning so I get the juice, the cereal with coffee or toast or something. Lunch I try to go easy. Maybe at dinner I'll eat a little bit more.

J: That sounds great.

P: And I go to the café where they have buns in there and fruit, like bananas and apples then you can get coffee and things like that in there.

J: And so back before you moved in were you still trying to prepare all your own meals every day?

P: Yes, but then as time went on I decided it was getting to be a little much.

J: Most people come to that conclusion eventually

P: And I couldn't drive after a while. I used to go down to the senior center in New Rochelle we had a very active program down there and you can go and have lunch there every day. They have speakers come in and that's where I learned the computer. I didn't know that until I went down to the senior center and took that but they don't have a computer room here, a lot of people have their own computers but I've never bothered because my son lives nearby so he brings his computer over.

J: Nice, well, that's great. I see in the information they sent me that you have been to a lot of national parks around the country. What was your favorite one?

P: Oh dear, I don't remember which.

J: Have you been to Yellowstone?

P: Not with them, I've been on my own. I don't think they went out that far. I'd have to check that.

J: I was just curious because it looks like you've done a lot of traveling in your life.

P: No, they never went out to Yellowstone. I don't think they go out that far. It's more local.

J: No, no, I was talking about you yourself in your lifetime, you've been to a lot of places.

P: I've been to Europe quite a few times. I've been to Ireland. I've been to France. I went to Austria. My parents originally came from Austria; I still have relatives over there so my son treated me last year. It was my last trip over. I enjoy traveling a lot and I'm glad I did.

C: I had that you had gone to the Canadian Rockies and some of the national parks.

P: I did but I can't remember. Oh, the Canadian Rockies definitely I remember that, my sister lived so close that was a stepping off point.

J: Now has your sister ever been to visit you at The Fountains?

P: No, because she's out too far and she's also in assisted living right now. I used to go out there every year.

J: I see.

P: The reason she got out there is that her husband was a pharmacist in the public health service they lived in Houston, they lived in Fort Worth, they lived in Kentucky, they lived in you name it they were there. But then had five children and when they finally got out to the Seattle area they were getting older and they didn't want to lose their friendships in going to different schools so that's why they stayed out there otherwise they probably would have come closer.

J: Well, great and so how does your son feel about your choice of community to live in?

P: He's very pleased with it because as I said he is so close and that was one of my reasons for picking it.

J: Very good well, is there anything else that we haven't discussed that you feel is important for people to know as they begin their journey of exploring their different options?

P: As I said they have a lot of programs going on every day. You can be as busy as you want. They have the day trips which are very good, they have lunches out at times which is nice. As I said they go to the Broadway dinner theater so you can be as active as you want. A lot of people play cards every day. What we make? Jewelry. We do jewelry so I keep busy with that.

C: Do you do the painting class?

P: We also have a painting class.

J: That sounds fun. Well, good it sounds like plenty to keep busy.

P: Yes.

J: Do you have any advice to give to someone that may be alone in their home living nearby and they may have never thought about moving would you have any advice to share?

P: Because sometimes when you're living alone if you don't have the ability to get out or see people then you are lonely. Here there is always something to do and you're with people. You don't have to worry about your meals. It's much easier because as I said I was alone in the house after a while I couldn't drive so you couldn't get together with people. They have enough activity to keep you occupied. It's very nice.

J: Well, perfect. That was very well said and I think that pretty well sums it up. Ok, Pauline, well, I want to thank you very much again for spending time with me today and sharing your story with folks out there that may need to hear it.

P: My pleasure I hope you'll come and see us.

J: I would love to. I'm from that area originally so I love getting back there but usually in the summer I come.

P: Very good I look forward to meeting you.

J: Thank you, Pauline, you have a wonderful day. Bye now.