

## From: Faye Harding (May 15,2020 newsletter)



Hello everyone!! Thanks for the invite to tell the Hardings' story. Something about Ralph and me?

Well I was born in West Virginia and yes, I was a coal miner's daughter. I was raised in a tiny town that had a tiny country Methodist church and a pastor that came just once a month. But growing up, all week long my life revolved around my family's religion and our faith. And then on Saturday night it was the Grand Ole Opry that was the centerpiece of our existence as we sat near the radio to listen as they instilled the love and purity of country life, humor and music.

I loved that my father had great talent when it came to performing country music himself. I love music and the pleasure of singing in church on Sundays.

Ralph was born in Indianapolis, Indiana. He served his beloved country in the Navy during the Korean War. He was medically discharged and came to the Florida Keys to recuperate in the soothing South Florida sunshine and fresh air. He loved the Keys and decided to stay. He got a job as manager of the Chesapeake restaurant and put down roots.

It was at the restaurant that we met 52 years ago. We both fell head over heels in love at first sight.

We were married by our beloved Methodist pastor in West Virginia ... the very last marriage ceremony he performed.

Ralph had a son, Jeffrey, from a previous marriage and I had a daughter, Carley.

Over the years, I worked at the Howard Johnsons restaurant serving breakfast and then as a hair-dresser at two different salons. As for Ralph, he spent several decades at the Chesapeake. Some of you surely remember when he started "Rotten Ralph's" at Whale Harbor. It was certainly a tremendous hit. Ralph has been retired for about 25 years now.

Ralph and I clearly avoid change. We've been married to each other for 52 years, we have resided in the same town for 52 years, on the same street, in the same house... our lovely home in Tavernier, though now Ralph resides at Crystal Rehab.

This past weekend Ralph tested positive for the COVID-19 virus along with eight other residents at Crystal. Since I am unable to visit with Ralph, his phone calls mean the world to me as he assures me that he continues to feel better and has none of the usual symptoms.

I ask you to pray for us. Having so many people praying for Ralph's recovery strengthens my faith. The staff is working diligently to do all they can for those impacted. I believe that God is in control. And your prayers help. My faith tells me that when you have no one else to turn to, turn to God with absolutely all your heart.

Looking forward to hearing from our friends from our beloved church.

Our love for each other has grown over the years and remains firm. LOVE never fails.

Faye and Ralph... in Christ.

