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Virginia Higman - A Woman of Adventure *by Charity Winters*



I'd have to say that Virginia ("Ginny") Higman leads one of the most adventurous lives out of anyone I have ever met. And, yes, I use the present tense to refer to her life in response to Ginny's comment, "It's not over yet!" Rumored to be the oldest person in Seldovia, Ginny is not about to stop living life when she has spent 90 years enjoying it so thoroughly. And let me tell you, this woman has done everything!

Born February 27, 1916 in Seattle, Washington to Guy and May Bowden, Virginia entered a world where Albert Einstein and Charlie Chaplin were still the talk of the dinner table, and Norman Rockwell was just starting to show up on the front of the Saturday Evening Post. World War I had two years left and Woodrow Wilson had just been re-elected. Ginny grew up in a

In fact, Ginny and Bob loved sailing so much that they decided to sail around the world someday. When all the kids had left home and Bob had retired from CanadAir, he opened up a boat building business. He built them a couple of sailboats, the last and best being the 44 ft. Tormentor – the boat that they would take around the world. They moved to the Bahamas, where they would begin their trip, and lived there on their sailboat for 10 years. Ginny would live there year round and Bob would head back to Montreal during the busy season for his business. While they were there, Ginny made friends with a man named Josh who led sailing tours in Australia. Ginny offered to be his deckhand someday and years later, he flew her out to Australia to work for him. She was his crew for 2 years while Bob stayed behind in Montreal – coming to visit occasionally. "Pretty good husband, eh?" said Ginny. "But he didn't have to worry. Josh

small town called Hunts Point , Washington . Hunt's Point has an interesting history all of it's own. Set on a peninsula that juts out into Lake Washington , this little community began as a summer escape for a group of families. By the time Ginny was born, a school had been established and it had become a year-round residence. The point was home to about 80 other families at the time and contained residences only. Ferries were used to shuttle people back and forth to Seattle for jobs and shopping. Ginny's father took the ferry to Seattle every day to manage a haberdashery called King's Brothers. A road from the peninsula to the mainland wasn't established until 1940. You can see why Ginny said that Seldovia reminded her a lot of Hunts Point!

Ginny later attended the University of Washington and earned a degree in journalism. During college she wrote for the Bellvue American. She recalled an incident when she wrote a piece on a woman's equestrian team called the Galloping Gurdies. She had so much incorrect information in her article that the club invited her to join up and learn the ropes! There Ginny developed a deep love of horseback riding.

While at the university, Ginny met her future husband, Robert Higman. Both were northwest champion skiers on the university ski team. Ginny described their courtship: "We met in January, were engaged in May and married in August!" Apparently, they were quite serious! What followed was a wonderful partnership that lasted almost 51 years.

Nine months after the wedding to the day, Ginny and Bob's first child, Jill, was born. They later had 3 more children: Terry, Jimmy, and Craig (yes, the one and the same Craig Higman we know here in town). Bob got a job working for Boeing at CanadAir and the couple moved to a tiny town 20 miles outside of Montreal, Canada called Baie d' Urfe. They loved Canada and lived there for 17 years, raising their family. Ginny stayed home with the children, but even as a full-time mom she found ways keep up with the things she loved. For one, she kept 2 horses, Rajah and Tiki so she could continue horseback riding. She also joined the Corinthian Yacht Club and became a very adept sailor.

was quite a bit older than I was."

Anyway, back to the trip around the world. Bob and Ginny started off. They headed West toward the Panama Canal . Ginny boasts about being through the Canal three times. They made it through once and then Bob had to head back to work for his busy season. "It sure would be nice to spend those three months back in the San Blas Islands (an archipelago off the coast of Panama)." Ginny said. So Bob took her back through and left her on the islands. When they were ready to continue, they of course had to pass through the Canal a third time. Unfortunately, Ginny and Bob never completed their trip. In the middle of the night one night off the coast of the West Indies the Tormentor hit a reef and was shipwrecked. They made it as far as Samana Key. Without their boat, there was nothing for them to do but to return to Montreal . Ginny later wrote the story of their shipwreck and had it printed in a cruising magazine. The Tormentor III, also built by Bob, now resides in the Bahamas with their granddaughter.

Ginny's lifelong partner in adventure passed away just a few months before their 51 st wedding anniversary. But that hardly kept Ginny from continuing in her quest for the next great thrill. While she was in her eighties, she took on two more hair-raising dreams: skydiving and bungee jumping! It seems that nothing has been too scary or too difficult for this woman. During the interview, I asked her if she had any other hobbies and interests. She thought for a moment, "Well, I told you about the skiing (she's been skiing in the Alps , too!), and the horseback riding, and sailing? No, those are my three favorite." No quilting, embroidery, painting, etc? "No, that's it. Skiing, horseback riding, and sailing." Nowadays the quietest things she makes time for are reading and swimming. So maybe you'll have the privilege of running into her at the pool or in the library. If you do, don't miss your chance to say hello to one of the most adventurous 90 year-olds you will ever meet!



Higgy and his mom

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