



## Visiolis Are Enjoying Retirement

By Evelyn Beck

When they became high school sweethearts in 1965, Barry and Mary Alyce Visioli realized they had a lot in common. For one thing, both were born elsewhere but came to Anderson as toddlers for their fathers' jobs. Barry's dad had relocated the family from Cranford, New Jersey, in 1951 when he took a job at the Singer plant as the purchasing manager (and his grandfather was hired as the plant manager). Mary Alyce's father, a chiropractor, had moved the family here from Wilmington, North Carolina, to open a practice when she was two years old.

Then there was religious heritage. Both had one parent who was Catholic, one who was Presbyterian. Barry was raised Presbyterian while Mary Alyce grew up Catholic. They married in the Presbyterian Church with a Presbyterian minister and a Catholic priest officiating. During the early years of their marriage, Barry attended both churches periodically but eventually decided to convert to Catholicism due to the influences of his wife and of Father Robert Millard, St. Joseph's 13<sup>th</sup> pastor. "I always thought Fr. Millard was a dynamic, charismatic leader," said Barry. "I felt comfortable talking to him, and he encouraged me to go to RCIA." Even more credit goes to Mary Alyce. "I credit her steadfastness and dedication and faithfulness in steering me to the Church," he said.

His conversion meant a lot to his wife.



**Barry and Mary Alyce Visioli took a ride on an elephant during a recent trip to Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.**

"It was exciting," said Mary Alyce. "It meant a lot to me because our kids were being raised Catholic. It was nice to have the whole family involved in the Church." Their children, now grown, are Todd, a producer for Fox News who lives in Virginia, and Alison, a teacher's assistant in Anderson. They have two grandchildren.

Today, Barry and Mary Alyce are both retired but look back with a feeling of accomplishment on their careers. Barry graduated from Presbyterian College with a bachelor's degree in English and taught middle school for a year and a half before a new opportunity presented itself. He took a job with Perpetual Bank, working his way up from teller to office staff to branch manager and eventually to head of the loan department. "I liked it," he said. "I had the feeling, especially with those financing a home for the first time, that I really helped to accomplish something for that family. I participated in their happiness." Barry also served nine years in the Army Reserves.

Mary Alyce has a degree in elementary education from Limestone College. She taught

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kindergarten, first, and second grades, including the last 15 years at Whitehall Elementary School. "I loved the kids, working with them, seeing them make so much progress in first grade," she said. "Most of them don't know how to read at all at first. But in the course of nine months, they grow up a lot, and they're reading."

During his working years, Barry was very involved with the United Way, including a stint as chairman of the board and chairman of the annual fundraising campaign. He has also served as chairman of the YMCA board. At St. Joseph's, Barry is a lector and coordinates the lector schedule. "It's a great ministry," he said. "I feel more a part of the Mass when I participate." Mary Alyce is a member of the Bereavement Committee. And both are very committed to St. Joseph's School. Barry has served on the school board, and both help with marketing and fundraising for the school. "We think the Catholic school here does an absolutely outstanding job," said Barry. "It teaches not only academics but also how to live life in a Christian way."

Now that they're retired, the Visiolis have had the opportunity to pursue their interests. Barry,

who has a 12 handicap, plays golf three days a week and dreams of playing Pebble Beach. Mary Alyce stays busy with gardening and reading. And they enjoy traveling adventures which have taken them to places like Alaska, Scotland, Italy, Switzerland, Australia, and New Zealand. Their most recent—and most memorable trip—was to Africa. "It was a bucket list thing for me," said Barry. Mary Alyce wasn't so sure but agreed to go. "I wasn't that excited about going at first but was very impressed with the beauty of it," she said. As part of a tour group, they stopped at a number of places over three weeks, including Nairobi, Capetown, Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Johannesburg, and enjoyed a couple of photographic safaris.

The experience made a big impression. "That trip was an eye opener," said Barry. "We think we have poverty-stricken areas in the U.S. But in places like those we visited, they know what poverty is about. There are mud huts, people walk five to six miles to their jobs, there are community watering systems. We saw distinct cases of the haves and have nots." Yet what sticks in his mind the most is the great hospitality of those they met. "The people were so nice," he said.

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