

A Passion for Nursing, A Passion for Health- Conscious Living

A FRONT-PAGE NEWS ARTICLE CHANGED HER LIFE.

by Sherry Uribe

I grew up in Norfolk, Virginia, a child of the 50s, and was raised eating meat, dairy, and (newly invented) processed foods. My older sister and I had the absolute best parents and upbringing that anyone could hope for. My dad was a naval officer who was very involved in his family and his church. He later became a real estate investor. My mom, a chemistry major, was a school science teacher and a devoted mother. She *loved* science!

I was a very rebellious child, and I made many mistakes growing up. My mother, a gifted pianist, supported me through eight years of piano lessons. But when I turned 14, boys came onto the scene. I revolted and decided to quit piano. After high school, I attended a mostly all-girls college. During my second quarter of school, at age 18, I eloped with a junior from a neighboring university. We both dropped out of college, moved home, and a year later, at age 19, I had my son. We stayed married for almost seven years, during which I attended nursing school. I needed a skill, and the hospital nursing school was conveniently close to home. My mother paid for all three years of tuition and also for my son's daycare. I am forever grateful to her.

Nursing, an accidental career, became my passion. I worked in the cardiovascular intensive care unit for half of my 35 years as an RN. It was a conveyor belt of patients, some as young as 24 years old, who came through with clogged arteries throughout their bodies. Some patients came back for coronary artery bypass three separate times, scheduled as "Redo-redo CABG." We also did fem-pop bypasses, carotid endarterectomies, and kidney transplants. My remaining nursing years were spent in the operating room, where **I saw the patient population getting larger and sicker. Modern medicine was able to keep patients alive, though barely functioning, with new drugs and new surgical interventions.**

In 2013, at age 61, I read a front-page article in our local newspaper about the China Study and an upcoming Virginia Beach Diet Study. The article mentioned the documentary *Forks Over Knives*, which I watched immediately. It changed my life! I entered the Virginia Beach Diet Study, in which 400 participants followed one of four different diets for eight weeks: whole-food, plant-based; Mediterranean; DASH; or Paleo. I joined the plant-based group and had phenomenal teachers, Dr. Holly Buchanan and Dr. Deepak R. Talreja. I learned so much!

Since becoming plant-based, I've lost a total of 35 pounds. The following year, in 2014, I earned my Certificate in Plant-Based Nutrition from the T. Colin Campbell Center for Nutrition Studies. My hope is to teach WFPB nutrition to anyone truly interested in healing.

My husband and I had planned to hike the Appalachian Trail in 2020. Two weeks before our scheduled departure, the trail closed due to COVID. Later that year, I shifted my exercise focus to yoga. It, like plant-based eating, was life changing! After many years studying with my teacher and mentor, Grandmaster Adam Nguyen of the International Yoga Institute, I obtained my 300-hour yoga teacher certification in 2021—at age 69!

Following my father's death in 2020, I took up piano playing again. I practiced every day for a year, then searched for a teacher. It took months before I could find one who would take on a nearly 70-year-old student. Finally, in June of 2021, I found Jeanette Winsor, NCTM, and I am thoroughly committed to pursuing my love of playing piano. I find music to be healing. It is miraculous! My dad and my aunt would light up when they experienced live music, so one of my fervent goals is to play piano at assisted-living homes.



My husband, Tom, and I live in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and have been happily married for 29 years. He has been my biggest cheerleader in any endeavor I pursue. I am only able to succeed because of his unwavering support and encouragement. He is slowly coming over to the plant-based side, but I let him eat what he wants without pressure or lecturing.

YouTube, a common learning tool for me, knows what I research and highlights videos it knows will interest me. That is how I discovered the National Health Association; the video "Vegan Since 1951!" introduced me to Mark Huberman and the organization. I was blown away when I watched it and surprised to learn that the NHA had been around since 1948. The physicians associated with it were the same ones that I had followed and learned from for nearly ten years. How had I missed this wonderful organization whose principles mirrored mine?

I am grateful to be a part of the NHA and plan to share its many benefits with others. Its commitment to educate the public and disseminate the facts about the WFPB, SOS-free diet and fasting is admirable. The beautiful *Health Science* magazine, all the videos available, and the annual conference are just a few of the other invaluable benefits to me and others seeking a health-conscious life. I am proud to be a part of the NHA family and look forward to many years of learning from each one of you and sharing goals for the common good of all living beings and our precious planet. 🌱

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

There are many papers on the Virginia Beach Diet Study. If you'd like to learn more, visit https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/hcq.12.suppl_1.121