



*50+Living our best lives now and in the future!*

## **Working Hard, Adapting, and Finding Joy**

Her father advised, “No matter what you do, you’ve got to work hard.” Pamela Woods took this advice to heart. She spent her summers working in the Oregon berry fields with her older sister starting when she was ten. To catch the berry field bus, she and her sister got up by 4:30 a.m. and often didn’t get home until after 4:00 p.m.



When Woods wasn’t picking berries or thinking about horses, her father had her “paint fences and do yard work.” When she started high school, she “worked weekends cleaning house for a teacher and also worked at a dry-cleaning business.” Despite a busy schedule, she maintained an almost perfect GPA in high school, served on the forensics team for four years, and was the yearbook editor when she was a senior.

### **New Opportunities and Changes**

Before graduating from high school, Woods received a full grant to attend Lewis and Clark

College in Portland. At the same time, she had an opportunity to spend a year in the Philippines; she chose the latter. After graduating from high school, she boarded a plane and headed to a new country. She quickly adapted to the new culture and treasured many of the people she met.

After returning home, Woods attended Oregon State University and finished a degree in sociology at the University of Portland. Soon after graduating, she started her career as a sales and service representative in the insurance industry.

### **Law School Invitations**

While working, Woods applied for law school at Lewis and Clark College. “I wanted to make a difference in people’s lives.” Three days after submitting her application to law school, she received a phone call informing her that she had been accepted. Wondering if she could handle law school and a new job as a single woman, she declined. “I had no idea I was eligible for scholarships and other financial support while in the program.”

A few years later, and after getting married, Woods accepted a position as an insurance adjuster and then as an insurance supervisor. Again, she considered law school, applied a second time, and was quickly accepted. However, she discovered that she was pregnant with her first child. “Becoming a parent

meant more than anything to me, so I chose to focus on being a parent rather than heading to law school.” A couple of years later, she had a second child.

### **Facing the Unthinkable**

While Woods was holding down a position as a unit director with 135 employees, her long-time husband and the father of her two children (ages 10 and 13) suddenly died. “My position was demanding, and I also commuted 50 miles per day. For the next eight years, I devoted myself exclusively to raising my children and my career responsibilities. I worked as hard as I could to help my children through their loss and tried to be at every event in which they were involved.”

### **Completing A Forty-Year-Career**

Woods’ diligence, quick mind, and hard work opened doors “that were often not available to women” when she started in the industry. She served as a liability director during her career and was “responsible for \$1,000,000 in claims settlements per case.” She continued assuming more responsibility throughout her career. While parenting and working, she also completed a Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter (CPCU) designation; this achievement is considered the same as a master’s in insurance. When she retired, she was a regional insurance company vice president.

### **Rediscovering Deferred and New Interests**



When Woods retired six years ago, she began exploring some of her deferred interests. “I began taking watercolor and

Spanish language classes. I joined a gym and regularly worked out with my daughter. I also did some traveling, including to Puerto Rico and Cuba.”

During her visit to Cuba, Woods enjoyed taking a cooking lesson. She also took her first Salsa dance lesson. “I had always loved Salsa style dance music and the warm and lively culture” of the Latin American cultures she had visited. She later discovered that there was a dance studio near her home. “I took the leap and attended my first class. Everyone was very friendly and encouraging, freely offering support and tips on how to improve. To my surprise, it was also good exercise, and I go home tired.”



Recently, Woods signed up for private horseback riding lessons. “I’ve always loved horses, and as a young adult, I owned a horse for a couple of years. I asked my instructor to focus on dressage because I’d taken it in college and knew it was oriented toward improving balance as a rider.”

“Another opportunity opened up when my daughter gave me a subscription to [Storyworth](#) on my birthday a couple of years ago. This service sends a question or topic for you to write about each week. After a year, Storyworth will publish a book of your stories for your children. I extended my subscription and plan to include more recollections of my family history.”

Woods loves spending time with her children and grandson. “When my late husband died, my son asked us to commit to staying together. We all live close by, and that is truly a blessing.”

### **For Relaxation**

Pamela Woods enjoys reading history books and novels, cooking, hanging out with the dogs, and spending time with her dressage horse.

### **Advice for Others**

“Don’t be afraid of changes in your life. Life is a series of changes, and you can and will adapt.”

## Dressage



Dressage means “to train” and is a “unique discipline for riding a horse.” It is also an Olympic discipline. A Dressage Rider Training post describes it as a discipline that is “like ballet on horseback. The horse and rider work together to perform movements that seem effortless and that flow gracefully from one to the next. This form of riding takes a high level of athleticism and good communication between the horse and rider.”

## MIND Your Diet

According to a Webmd report, “The MIND diet is a brain-healthy diet that stands for Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay.” This diet involves eating at least one serving of leafy vegetables and two or more servings of other vegetables daily.



The MIND diet also includes berries (especially blueberries), nuts, olive oil, beans, whole grains, fatty fish like salmon, beans, poultry, and a limit of one glass of wine each day (optional). Foods that should be limited or avoided include butter/margarine, cheese, red meat, fried foods, and sweets.

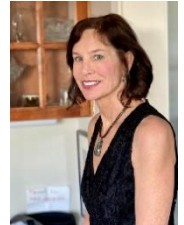
As reported by Knowridge, a study from Rush University suggested that closely adhering to the MIND diet may result in a slower cognitive decline of older adults by as much as 7.5 years. Findings from this study also reinforced the benefits of eating

blueberries. “Blueberries are one of the more potent foods in terms of protecting the brain.”

## Winn Selected as the New Executive Director of the Oregon Racing Commission.

Featured in the June 2021 Boomer Best U Newsletter, Connie

“Pepper” Winn assumed her new position as the Executive Director of the Oregon Racing Commission (ORC) on September 1, 2022. Winn also serves as the Association of Racing Commissioners International Auditing Committee Chair.



Previously, Winn was the Supervisor of Account Wagering for ORC. Her positions with the Commission have allowed her to spend time around horses. Interestingly, Winn has enjoyed horses most of her life and was once a competitive rider. Now Winn rides a bike and is training for a half- triathlon.



## From Shore to Shore: A Late Summer Solo Hike in England

Charles Young, featured in the May 2019 Boomer Best U Newsletter, is passionate

about the outdoors, hiking, and history. Earlier this week, he completed a solo coast-to-coast hike across England. This most recent adventure began in St. Bees and ended when he reached Robin Hood’s Bay on the North Sea after nearly 200 miles of hiking. He is now headed back to the classroom at Umpqua Community College, where he teaches history.



At 76, Young continues to live by the advice he shared with all of us in 2019:





“Get out of bed each morning impatient for the next adventure and determined to continue to do our part in this ultimate trek-adventure we call life.”

### Hiking: A Prescription for Health

From [Greater Good](#), a Berkeley University publication, “Hiking in nature is so powerful for our health and well-being that some doctors have begun prescribing it as an adjunct to other treatments for disease.”

### Clearing Clutter Can Benefit Your Well-Being and Health

Over 18 years ago, my late husband and I moved from an urban area near Portland, Oregon, to a rural area in Southern Oregon. We left our roots and loaded up everything we owned, settling into our new home. Over the past several years, we added to our accumulation of ‘things’—more clothes hanging in our closets, tools, furniture, yard decorations, and everything else we bought or other people gave us.



### The Problem with Too Much Clutter

I suspect most of us have held onto far more ‘stuff’ than we truly need or even want. Worse is that too much clutter can affect our well-being and health.

Citing a 2016 study published in the *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, Stacey Colino reported in [Everyday Health](#) that clutter can negatively affect our sense of well-being. Other reports suggest that too much clutter can be distracting and can also lead to a lack of focus.

A [Webmd article](#) points out that too much clutter can lead to unwanted pests, dust, mold, and mildew. Because it can be hard to clean some of our possessions (or clean around them), keeping them may “trigger asthma or allergies.”

### Paula’s Decluttering Plan

I am dealing with some ‘clutter’ that must be sorted out, trashed, given away, or sold. For the most part, I am choosing a pragmatic approach. If I don’t need a particular item or don’t have a strong emotional tie to it, why am I letting it take up space or collect



dust? For example, I have my grandmother’s sewing machine in my closet. I don’t sew, and no one in my family sews. That machine needs a new home.

I have begun going through every item in my house, tossing anything that no one could use or want. (I am now asking myself why I kept a box of trophies and awards from decades ago. If I choose, I can take a picture of them for a keepsake.)

I am also in the process of cataloging and identifying everything that needs to be given away, sold, offered at a yard sale, or given to a charity. I’ve already started finding new homes for ‘treasures’ that I want to give to family members.

### Simple Satisfaction

Honestly, it feels good—even cleansing—to begin decluttering my home. All of us can benefit from a little decluttering from time to time. I challenge you to come up with a plan that works for you. Here’s to your good health!

*Paula Marie*

Boomer Best U does not provide medical, dietary, legal, or financial advice. As appropriate, consult your doctor, a legal professional, or a financial expert when considering health-related, legal, or financial changes.

**Subscribe/Unsubscribe:** [Paula@boomerbestU.com](mailto:Paula@boomerbestU.com)