



## Meet Sally Gemmell

I was born in Hartford, Connecticut, but moved to Richmond, Virginia at the age of eight. I remember promising myself, a true Yankee, that I would not end up “sounding like them”. Now, of course, I love a Southern accent and manage to slip into a drawl whenever we return to the South. But my heart was always in New England. After high school, I attended Mary Washington College of the University of Virginia (now the coed University of Mary Washington) in Fredericksburg, Virginia, where I majored in Art History, which had nothing to do with my getting a job as a computer programmer with AT&T Long Lines in White Plains, NY upon graduation in 1965. They hired about 150 women each year, fresh out of college, and trained them in groups of 30 or so, starting a new group every couple of weeks.

So, why is the IT field so predominately male? After a year and a half, I joined Pfizer in NYC, and then moved back to Richmond in 1967.

Eventually, I joined a young start-up consulting company, The Computer Company, or TCC, that specialized in Medicaid claims processing. I spent a lovely 9 months in Austin, Texas on one project with about seven other employees, and then got sent to NYC in 1977, where my cousin introduced me to my future husband, Bill, with whom she worked at Avon Cosmetics. We were married in April 1978, in NYC. We had six weeks to prepare for the wedding, buy a house in Philadelphia, where Bill had accepted a position in marketing for a textbook company, WB Saunders. Oh, and we also sold my townhouse in Richmond during this time, as well. But we managed a church wedding and a reception at Tavern on the Green. Whew!

We were in downtown Center City Philly - a great town for walking and history and good restaurants! Nineteen months later, Bill returned to cosmetics with a position in International Marketing at Helena Rubinstein cosmetics, in NYC, which resulted in almost five years with his managing the subsidiary in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Memorable experiences:

Hosting Thanksgiving dinner for 25, with the help of a few other expats.

House sitting for two dogs, four cats and a mother-in-law left behind when the owners went to England. It instilled a love of cats in me, and we returned to the States with our beloved Burmese siblings, Shaka (for Shaka Zulu) and Nandi, (Shaka Zulu’s mother’s name).

Celebrating a friend’s 40<sup>th</sup> birthday on New Year’s Eve at a game camp with seven other couples

Returning to our house in Norwalk, CT, Bill acquired a Nutri/System Weight Loss center in Danbury, CT, and I joined Max Factor. I may not have loved being in the IT field, but it definitely was a positive in the ease of obtaining gainful employment! I joined Bill in Nutri/System as we continued to grow, owning nine centers at the height. However, all good things must end, and in 1998, with Y2K looming, it was back to IT for me with a consulting company, Keene, Inc’s in their Danbury, CT office. We had moved to Ridgefield, CT in 1986, so the office was convenient, if some of the assignments were not; e.g. commuting to Hartford, CT twice and to NYC twice! I was let go from Keene in 2003. Part time jobs followed, and in 2007 I became Program Manager at the Wilton (CT) Library, planning all adult programs and managing room rentals. While I loved the job and the people I met as a result of it, I was happy to retire in 2012 and regain my nights and weekends.

And with the sale of our house in 2014, we were able to realize our dream of buying the Moses Carlton House here in Wiscasset, moving here in August of that year. It has been so beyond our expectations living here in this wonderful community, where I’ve become involved in the Library, Garden Club, and Lincoln County Historical Association. Bill has become very involved with both the Maine Maritime Museum and the LCHA. Thank you to everyone who has welcomed us so warmly. We love it here!

Lastly, let me just say I’ve had a marvelous life so far! Now in my mid-seventies, I’ve outlived both my parents, but have far to go to equal the length of my paternal grandmother, who reached 94. I’ll be happy to reach that milestone as long as I’m mentally and physically sound.