

Finding Success and Fun with Yoga

By BD Tharp

Flora Rogers Nessly has been attending or teaching yoga classes for 50 years and has the agile, graceful, and calm presence to prove it. She teaches at the YMCA, Health Strategies, several country clubs and Wichita State University. “I teach seven days a week,” Flora said, and she loves it. “I believe in the slow sustained stretch and deep breathing of yoga.” Flora admits she is pleased that yoga has taken a firm hold in the mainstream the past 10-15 years. “I’ve had as many as 70 in my classes. I love that the whole world is recognizing the value of stretching for our well-being.”

She was born in Seattle and studied at the University of Washington. Flora has lived in New York City, Las Alamos, San Francisco, and Denver before moving to Wichita more than twenty years ago. “I raised three children in San Francisco and after my divorce, the youngest and I went to Denver,” she said. It was there that she started a career in hotel hospitality. “I achieved some success in the hotel world, working for two fine hotels, the Fairmount and Hyatt,” Flora said. “There’s really no difference in entertaining for 3 or 300.”

Having met a very nice Kansan by the name of Jack Nessly in California years before, Flora ran into him again in Denver while she was in the hotel business. “Jack enjoys making me laugh,” she said. In the mid 80’s they decided to marry and move to Wichita. “My California kids were embarrassed that their mother lived in Kansas. My oldest son lives here now and purchased Mort’s Cigar Bar seven years ago. And, I fell in love with my youngest son’s new loft in Old Town, especially the high ceilings and openness. I love having them close,” Flora said.

“My mother was Scottish, of the MacLeod clan. And my Father was British. It was a loving and harmonious atmosphere growing up. We loved fine dining and tea. You know the world stops at 3 for a spot of tea. It was during one of my tea times that I realized I couldn’t sit and enjoy it. I had to weed my garden.” In 2006 she and Jack decided to move out of their Tallgrass home of twenty years and obtain a loft, near her son. They found it much harder to care for their 3 dogs downtown, but they still have 2 cats.

The Nessly’s love to travel and play golf, and have visited Scotland every year for the past twelve years to play. “Golf is my favorite hobby, but I don’t play enough anymore. We may skip visiting Scotland this year since the dollar is worth so little right now,” Flora said. “It’s just too expensive. We did go to Washington D.C. this spring and it was lovely.”

Flora feels as though yoga has mellowed her. “I may still get peeved, but I have a sense of calm that remains,” she said.

A great fan of written correspondence Flora keeps the tradition alive in her family. “I also love to cook, to read fiction and non-fiction interchangeably, go to movies, shopping and I used to play a lot of bridge,” she said. “I can’t resist Indian Jewelry and chocolate.”

This woman has seen much in her 82-year lifetime. She lived in Los Alamos when they were testing the atomic bomb and has a photograph to prove it. Flora remembers reading that Ann Lindberg, wife of Charles Lindberg went from having the

country's support after losing their baby to being turned on because of his relationships with the Germans before, during and after WWII. "He wouldn't turn on his friends," Flora said. "I admire that." She danced 5 nights a week at the Seattle service club during WWII and still loves to dance at every opportunity. Flora discovered yoga when it was still considered strange.

"I've found success in yoga," she said. "It is such a joy for me to share Yoga with 'everyday' people from all walks of life regardless of age or fitness level." She exhibits the boundless energy of a child and knows that the human body has a tremendous capacity for flexibility and movement if it is only utilized. Flora is an example that adult life doesn't have to be marked with pain, stiffness, and lethargy; it is neither normal nor necessary. "Don't let anyone steal your joy," she said. "If you give it away, you are the one who suffers."