



# The Happy Hoper

Rosemary and Rich Neely

By Mary Bresnahan

## Rich (Richmond)

**Birthdate:** September 29, 1953

**Birthplace:** Washington, D.C.

**Marriage:** March 13, 1982

**Children:** Nick (Avq), Katie (Portland, OR)

**Occupation:** Family law attorney

**Hobbies:** vegetable garden, bicycle, singing,

## Rosemary (Rose)

January 7, 1955

Overland Park, KS

Bethel Park, PA

Retired Pre-K teacher

opera, singing, knitting, sewing, reading murder

Rich was born to Merle and Ann who met at Ft. Jackson, SC while Merle was serving in the Army. Rich was born while the family was living in Manassas, Virginia. After the family moved to Baltimore, MD they relocated to Pittsburgh PA by the time Rich was three years old. Rich had two brothers (one older and one younger) who are both deceased. Rich's father died two weeks before he graduated from law school. His mother lived to 90 years old.

Rich's dad graduated from Penn State and worked as a sales engineer designing hydraulic and pneumatic systems. He designed the air brake system for BART (the San Francisco transit system) and for roller coasters. You might owe a fun ride to Rich's dad. He was an Irish tenor and sang in the church choir. Rich sang in the choir from the age of two. So now we know how he got his start. Rich's mother was a homemaker and worked as a telephone operator. She organized a kindergarten for the neighborhood kids which was held in the basement of their house.

Besides his vocal talents, Rich played the clarinet from the age of three years old until he was a senior in high school (he still has it). When he was a junior, he had his first role in Kismet. Although he and Rosemary went to the same high school (Bethel Park High) they didn't know each other.

Rich attended University of South Carolina receiving a B. A. in Russian History in 1975. He then went on to law school at DuKane University in Pittsburg, receiving his J.D. in 1985 and an L.L.M. from the University of Denver in 1985.

Rosemary attended Penn State and did babysitting for some of the professors to earn extra money. She started as a French major. This afforded her the opportunity to nanny for one of the professors for a semester in France. When she returned to Penn State, she changed her major to Early Childhood Education, graduating with a B.S. in 1978. Her next stop was Washington D.C. for a job in a day care center while continuing to nanny for a professor for some extra cash. After one year, and not making much money, she went to secretarial school, so she could support herself.

Now they were both back in Pittsburgh. Here comes the fun part – Rosemary and Rich met in a Presbyterian church choir! Funny how things happen. Rich had just started law school. He was working full-time and attending law school. They got married in 1982 in the Presbyterian church where they met. Once Rick finished law school, they were off to Denver for Rich to attend tax school. While there, Rosemary worked as a typesetter.

Rosemary was always encouraged by her parents to “go West.” They talked about living someplace where the sun always shined. Pittsburgh was always gray and gloomy. Since Rosemary’s parents had retired to Rio Rancho, NM, Albuquerque became an easy transition after Denver. Once they arrived Rosemary got a secretarial job at J.C. Penny. Rich worked in a law firm until he opened his own practice.

When they had their second child, Katie, Rosemary stayed at home. After two years, with two children, Rosemary decided to go back to work. She started at a pre-school, Bright Beginnings. She became a director at Wesley Kids Preschool at First United Methodist church. After attaining her Master’s in Multi-Cultural Early Childhood from UNM in 2004 she taught at Lavaland Elementary for 22 years until she retired in 2023 as a National Board Certified Teacher.

Rosemary’s parents were Bill and Nell Clark. She has two brother. Matt lives in Katy, TX and Dave splits his time between Arizona and Washington State. Somewhat similar to her and Rich’s story, her parents lived 50 miles apart and never knew each other until they met in Kansas City. Nell was the church secretary at the Methodist church and also worked for an insurance company. She had a degree in Sociology, but never worked in the field. However, she was active in the community. Bill, her dad, had his doctorate in Chemical Engineering from the University of Kansas, after Master’s work at Marquette University and the University of Chicago.

Rosemary’s family lived in Kansas City until Rosemary was twelve years old. They moved to Bethal Park, PA where her father work for DuPont. After he retired, he and Nell did a lot of international travel, This was good since he died in his mid- 60’s.

Since Rosemary recently retired, she is figuring out what she will do besides her beloved bike riding (her happy place), sewing and knitting. She plans to brush up on her French and get better at Spanish. A river cruise to the Bordeaux Region of France is in the works in May 2024 with her brother Dave and a cousin and their spouses.

Rich and Rosemary have been active at Cross of Hope since they joined in 2014. They are both in the Voices of Hope Choir, Rich leads a Sunday bible study and Rosemary serves on the Pre-School Board. A fun thing you should know about Rosemary – when she sings, she keeps time with her toes (easiest to see when she is wearing sandals).