



For Immediate Release

109-Year Old Lake Ridge resident and NVSO medalist still has Competitive Spark Registration for 2019 Senior Games in final days

Story and Photos by Rob Paine

Can one ever be too old to enter Northern Virginia Senior Olympics?

The best person to turn to on this question is Doris Woodring of Lake Ridge, Va. While the minimum age to enter the NVSO is 50, the 109-year-old Woodring keeps pushing the envelope each fall.

Last year she was the NVSO's oldest competitor and oldest gold medal winner at 108. She turned 109 in June and is currently honing her game to repeat her gold medal performance in Mexican Train Dominoes, September 19th, in Falls Church.

Online Registration for the 2019 NVSO closes at 11:59 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 31, 2019. To sign up please visit www.nvso.us You can also volunteer at the games by contacting RSVP-Northern Virginia at www.rsvpnova.org or by calling RSVP at 703-403-5360.

Is there a strategy or approach that Woodring attributes her Mexican Train success to? "I don't know, I just like doing it, she says. "I pour myself into it."

Woodring has garnered several medals in NVSO competition including gold in Wii Bowling and in Mexican Train Dominoes, a game she plays every Monday night at Westminster at Lake Ridge, a bucolic 62-acre tree-lined senior living community near Occoquan, Va. She says she also enjoys singing with a group of Westminster residents whenever she can.

Woodring has also been an avid Scrabble player and competed in the NVSO Scrabble competition. She first got involved in the senior Olympics in her late 90's according to her daughters.

Why did Woodring first sign up for the NVSO, the annual event with dozens of games that challenge the mind as well as the body?

"I suppose there were others doing it and I did not want to be bested," she says. "I wanted to be in there competing, too." She says she also enjoys the social side of the senior games. "I like people. I like to visit with them."

Woodring was born in 1910 in Glasco, Kansas, a small town located about 200 miles west of Kansas City. Woodring moved to Washington D.C. in 1935 to marry her sweetheart Joe who had gotten a job as an elevator operator at the United States Capitol.

After residing in the District, Alexandria and in Falls Church, Joe and Doris moved to the Kings Park community in Annandale in 1965. Joe passed away in 1990 and Doris Woodring left Annandale in 1995 for Westminster at Lake Ridge, also home to the NVSO's Yo-Yo competition and also a gold patron of the NVSO.

"My mom has always been actively involved," says one of her three daughters, Dianne Leone, while talking about her mother's health and longevity. "Her active lifestyle revolves around the church, her family, sewing and other arts and crafts." Woodring also has three grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. "She loves fun, adventure and traveling. My mom has a great outlook on life. When we were being raised she and dad always made things fun for all of us," Leone says.

According to Leone her mom is also an active volunteer in the true sense of the word "She thanks God for what she has and always helps others when she can," Leone says.

Woodring continues to participate in the senior games in competitions that take place in venues across the region, thanks to Westminster at Lake Ridge's activity bus that transports residents to several different activities each week.

Dona Hobbs, a longtime NVSO board member who also is a friend of Doris and lives in Westminster says "Doris is an inspiration. She exemplifies the ideal of the senior Olympics which is "Living Healthy Longer," by staying mentally and physically active."

As one might expect, outliving your peers with such a high level of spirit and humor comes with a certain level of notoriety.

When Woodring turned 103, the local Giant grocery store where she shopped for many years celebrated her birthday with a cake, corsage and balloons, during a special visit documented by a local TV news crew. The report showed her rolling her cart down the aisles, exchanging jokes and pleasantries with shoppers. On another birthday she was given a special proclamation by the Kansas State Senate. It is displayed prominently in her home.

Her daughters think that it's possible their mom's involvement with the NVSO in part lead to her being featured on the Today Show's famous Smuckers jar birthday salute.

After she turned 100, one of Woodring's daughters faithfully wrote Willard Scott every year requesting that a happy birthday announcement for her mom be read on the air.

Willard retired and was replaced by Al Roker. One morning, about a month after Woodring had turned 106-years-old, the birthday greeting finally was read.

One of her daughters had submitted a request that year for a 106th birthday announcement and mentioned that Woodring had recently won a gold medal in Wii Bowling, a virtual version of bowling, played in the Northern Virginia Senior Olympics.

When Doris' smiling face adorning a Smuckers jar flashed on the screen, Roker wished her a happy birthday and congratulated her for winning a gold medal for "World War II bowling in her town's senior Olympics games."

Her 109th birthday in June was a little more subdued. Were there 109 candles on her cake? Woodring quips: "Of course they didn't do that, they might have set the place on fire."

What advice does Woodring have for seniors who may be considering competing in the Northern Virginia Senior Olympics? "Don't go in expecting to win. Go in to enjoy the competition," she says. The thing she says she enjoys most about the games is "The involvement of being with other people and competing."

What is Woodring's secret for staying independent and active for so long? "I have always had a zest for life," she says.

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The NVSO began in 1982 with about 80 competitors. In 2018, more than 800 Northern Virginians took part, making it one of the region's largest annual senior events.

In addition to offering traditional Olympic-style events such as running, walking, discus and swimming, the NVSO also has games that exercise the mind, including bridge, Sudoku and one of this year's new competitions, jigsaw puzzle. A new competition being added for those more active is line dancing.

NVSO partner RSVP-Northern Virginia, the region's largest volunteer group for those 55 or better, recruits more than 100 volunteers to support the games each year. Those interested in volunteering should contact RSVP at 703-403-5360 or can register online at www.rsvpnova.org.

The NVSO is a joint project of the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, and Prince William.

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