

## **Lynn Ridgway (Johnston), Class of '65**

### **Bio:**

I left the sanctuary of NVSS in 1965 and entered the Vancouver School of Art (Now the Emily Carr...) After 3 years of trying to produce "fine art" I decided I wanted to earn a living! I took a job at Canawest Films on Burrard St., which began a lifelong love of animation. I started to learn animation from the ground up, but made the mistake of getting married. I became Lynn Franks. In the 60's you "followed your man"- and mine took me to Hamilton Ontario, where I couldn't get work as an animator. I applied for a job with McMaster University as a graphic artist with the new medical center and was trained as a medical artist. For 5 years, I drew everything from charts and graphs to detailed surgical techniques. I even got to do some basic animation with the equipment that was available. Because I could draw in a comic style, I was asked to produce many cartoon illustrations to enhance lectures and explain difficult concepts- (such as how a virus replicates itself- cool stuff!). It was a wonderful job. During this time, I had my first child and my husband ran off, seeking more action and less responsibility.

With a child to consider, I started a freelance business from my home, which was successful enough to keep us in groceries. I continued to work for the hospital. My son was two when I remarried and became Lynn Johnston.

Two physicians really pushed me to do more comic art. It was my obstetrician who convinced me to do a cartoon book on pregnancy and friends helped me find a publisher. I did 2 more cartoon books about parenting and all 3 were sent to Universal Press Syndicate in Kansas City, Mo. I was expecting a second child when Universal Press sent me a 20 year contract to produce a syndicated comic strip based on a modern family. In shock, I signed the contract. What did I have to lose?

I began my new career as I, with 2 children, followed the next man to Northern Manitoba. We lived in Lynn Lake for 7 years until the mine announced it's closure and we moved to Northern Ontario. The comic strip "For Better or For Worse" ran for 30 years until I retired the story in 2007. This coincided with my divorce from husband #2. I am still working on FBFW-related material, I have wonderful children and a great circle of good friends. I enjoy travelling and have learned to speak Spanish well enough to work as a translator with the Medical Missions in Peru.

Life at 63 is good and reconnecting with classmates has been wonderful. I look forward to every reunion!

**Things I remember about NVSS:**

\*Walking down Lonsdale to Stedman's for a Coke- (and a flirt with the manager).

\*Watching football and being more interested in the guys than the game.

\*Annoying the art teacher. Actually, our artsy-craftsy rat pack was merciless.

\*Biology with Mr. Tobin was my favourite class. I was the one who released the fruit flies into the main hall.

\* The day Kennedy was assassinated, I was in the girl's washroom, I was the only one with a radio. We were late for class and nobody noticed.

\* Working on the annuals. I learned so much- it was better than art school!

\* Dancing cheek to cheek, tight skirts, learning to drive and... hormones

\* I remember leaving...with sadness and joy. NVSS will always be part of ME!