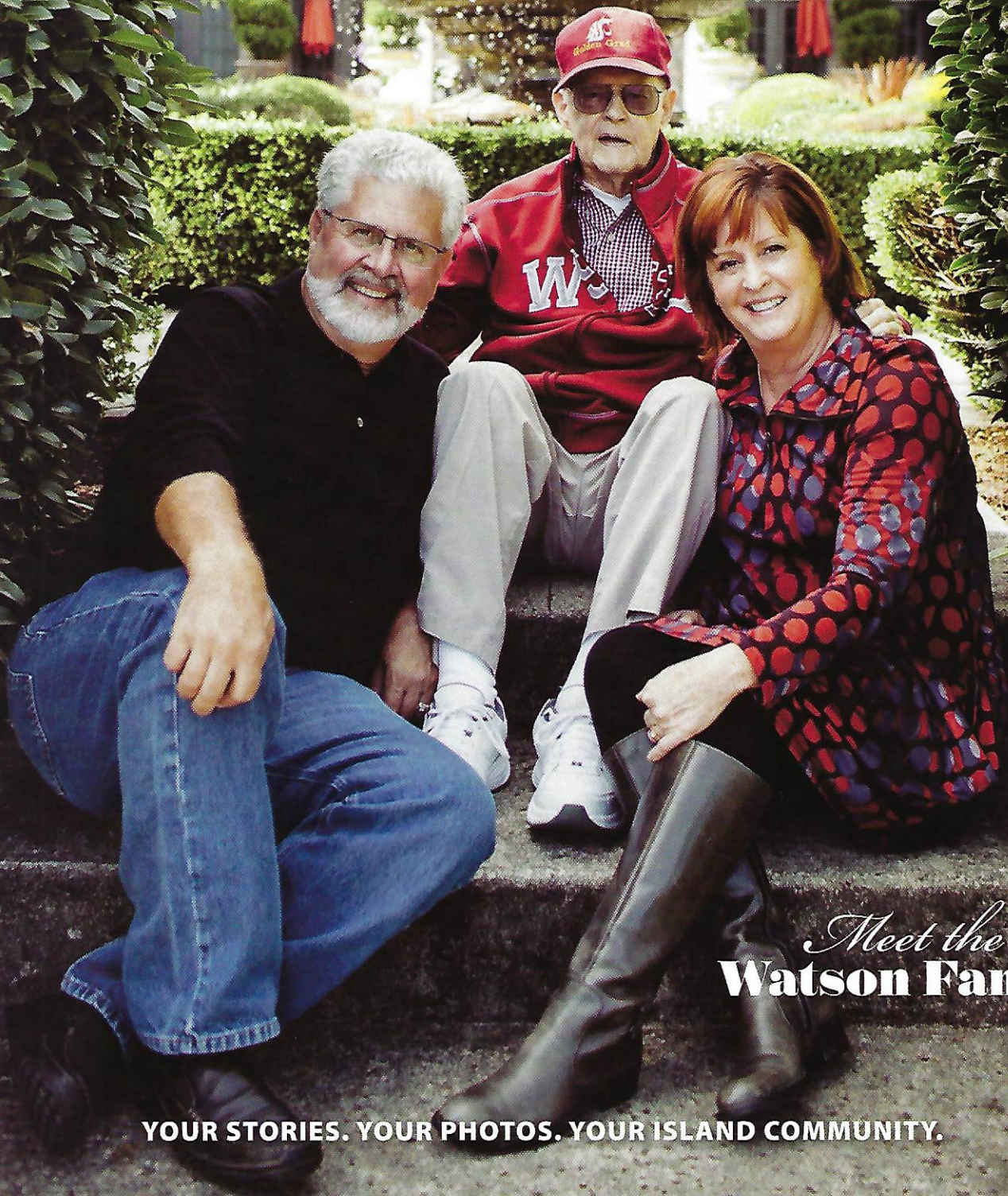


*Celebrating*

# FOX ISLAND

November 2017

A Social Publication for the Residents of Fox Island



*Meet the*  
**Watson Family!**

**YOUR STORIES. YOUR PHOTOS. YOUR ISLAND COMMUNITY.**





Featuring Island Residents,  
**KELLY & MARK WATSON**

Submitted by Family Friend: **Susan Oleary**

Mark and Kelly Watson have lived on Fox Island for the past two years, residing in a historic vertical log cabin they call home. The quaint cabin, which was built in 1950 using logs milled right here on Fox Island, sits on just over half an acre on the water. I recently sat down with Kelly in her home on a rainy day to discuss how her family found their way to this peaceful spot on Bella Bella Drive.

Both Mark and Kelly were born and raised in Eastern Washington. They attended Washington State University, with Kelly following in her dad Carl's footsteps. Carl, 89, graduated from Washington State College in 1950 and proudly wears his Golden Grad baseball cap to this day. Mark and Kelly didn't date until

they returned home to Richland. Their daughter Morgan, 27, also graduated from WSU with a degree in Interior Design, and son Ryan, 24, will graduate from WSU this spring majoring in Graphic Design with a minor in Russian. The Watsons are busy planning a spring wedding for Morgan and her fiancé, Vince. Vince will graduate from the University of Washington in June, creating a "House Divided" for this year's Apple Cup.

Mark worked for a company that took the family to various locations around the world, including two stints in London. He worked for the joint venture that built the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge, which brought the family to Gig Harbor in 2003. As children, Morgan and Ryan played in the parks around Kensington Palace and



this became Kelly's inspiration for her eventual business plan. Kensington Gardens began as an award-winning wedding and event venue on 23 forested acres in Gig Harbor. She oversaw the building of a stately Georgian Manor with English Gardens and exquisite fountains as the backdrop. Two hundred and fifty happy couples began their married lives at Kensington Gardens, and the Watsons were honored to be a part of those special weddings. However, after personally caring for their own aging family members, Mark and Kelly realized that they needed to find care for them. When they were unable to find the level of personalized care they wanted for their family members, they turned to the work that they feel is their true passion: serving others. Kensington Gardens Estate Living Retirement Community was born! A Carriage House was added to the property and eventually, the Manor was converted to create a one of a kind boutique style of retirement living. The family lived at Kensington Gardens for ten years, overseeing the daily operations of the business.

I asked Kelly how her family ended up on Fox Island and she responded with one word, "sanctuary." After devoting so many years of around-the-clock attention to Kensington Gardens, she and Mark were ready to find a charming and serene place of retreat. They found that idyllic lifestyle on Fox Island. Kelly shared that she finds island life peaceful, quiet, and happy. She frequently walks around the island for fitness, with a wonderful group of women who also call Fox Island home. Lily, the Watson's Yorkshire Poodle, curls up in a ball near Kelly's feet, finding her own happy place while we sip on hot tea and talk about life on the Island. In 2016, Lily was the "bride" in a special dog wedding which benefitted CHEW Dog Rescue. She often visits the residents at Kensington Gardens bringing smiles and laughter to everyone she meets.

To relax, Kelly enjoys waking up in the early hours of the morning, snuggling up in blankets near the window, listening to music, and watching the local wildlife through her binoculars. As a family, the Watsons enjoy spending time on the water, boating and kayaking, taking in the spectacular Puget Sound views. The business has recently added a 45' Carver Yacht, and the family enjoys spending time cruising our local waterways on it. They have a passion for cooking and enjoy entertaining. Their home is filled with lots of love and laughter. Holidays are a special time for the family. Kelly enjoys adding unique touches to holidays such as Valentine's Day



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when foods are all served in a heart-shape and are colored pink or red. The Watsons are known for having elaborate dress-up parties for Halloween, with one year's theme an "Elvis Party" where guests dressed up as either Elvis or Priscilla. With Kelly's background in design and her eye for detail, she creates a Christmas to remember with twinkling lights and candles, holiday music, and lovely vintage and family heirloom ornaments (including notes from Santa) hung on a living tree. Every space is elegantly decorated creating a memorable holiday for everyone.

The Watsons are incredibly generous and kind. They enjoy supporting local businesses in Gig Harbor. Kelly has donated services to the Peninsula School District as well as to local politicians over the years she has been in business. They have employed many local students, and even Morgan and Ryan have worked for the family business. Kelly likes to shop locally, supporting stores and restaurants on Fox Island and Gig Harbor. She and Mark enjoy the occasional evening at Zogs, sampling the latest seasonal rotating taps. J.W. is one of their favorite local restaurants.



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Memorable vacations for the family include trips to the Grand Tetons, Yellowstone National Park, and visiting the island of Maui. The best part is always spending time together as a family, relaxing and enjoying nature. Kelly loves to play tennis when she can. Her next-door neighbor, Kathy, says that Kelly has a natural talent for the sport.

Kelly, Morgan and Ryan recently started Watson Design and Construction and are making plans to begin construction on the next phase of development of Kensington Gardens Estate Living Retirement Community which will include the building of a conservatory and exquisite Villas and Cottages for retirement living. Kelly's dad, Carl, lives at Kensington Gardens and she enjoys frequent visits with him when she is not working on plans for the business.

Kensington Gardens was recently honored as a recipient of "The Best of South Sound Magazine 2017" in Assisted Living and Senior Living. Kelly tells me that she and Mark make a great team running their family and business life as partners. Together they have made a name for themselves in the retirement living business, known best for the loving, caring environment they provide their residents at Kensington Gardens.

We hope you have the opportunity to meet the Watsons in person! Thank you, Mark and Kelly.