



Sally Wheat was born in Norton, Virginia, the oldest of three girls. Her dad started out as a tank driver with Esso Standard Oil (which would later be called Exxon/Mobil), while mom stayed home to raise the family. When Sally was 5 years old, the family moved to Chesterfield as dad's career started to grow within the company.

Tragedy struck the family shortly after the move, when Sally's mom passed away, only 11 months after her younger sister Shirley was born. For a year after mom's passing, Sally's paternal grandmother and aunt lived with the family to settle everyone down and figure out next steps.

Sally and her sisters were then moved to Roanoke to live with her grandparents and Aunt Mary Eleanor while dad stayed in Chesterfield. He would make the trip out west every weekend to see his girls. In 1955, the family would be reunited again, as dad was now re-married to 'mama' who lovingly cared for these children as if they were her own. Dad served as her first influencer, proud of his work ethic and responsibility to raise three girls after working all day.

Always wanting to be a teacher, Sally made her way to Longwood University for her undergrad degree in education, and then finished at VCU for her master's in education. She moved back out west to Vinton, VA in 1972 to take her first job as a teacher. She was fortunate enough to be placed in a brand-new school that was just being opened.

In 1975, Sally made her way back to Chesterfield to take a position as a second-grade teacher at Greenfield Elementary. Again, another wonderful opportunity with a new school being opened. Sally taught at Greenfield until 1990, when the principal, CL Slonaker, asked her to join him in opening another new elementary school, Woolridge. Sally taught fourth grade there until she retired in 2005.

She credits CL Slonaker as a great mentor and influencer in her life. During her tenure at Woolridge, Sally is known for implementing the Veteran's Day Program, hosted by the fourth-grade team every year. It is a program that is well known and loved by all in the community and continues to this day.

In 1980, Sally was honored with membership to Delta Kappa Gamma, an international society for key women educators. She was named Teacher of the Year at both Greenfield and Woolridge Elementary schools. During her career, she served on numerous curriculum committees and acted as team leader.

After retiring, Sally and her life-long friend and housemate, Louise, spent time in the waterfront house in Mathews County on the Mobjack Bay. They adopted Meg, a loving Labrador, who joined Sally to her move to Lakewood. Louise was another influencer to Sally for her work ethic and love of family. Louise was a trainer throughout the commonwealth, and a major benefactor to Greensboro College. Sally assisted Louise with her work as chair of the college's 50th alumni anniversary, with a goal of 100% alumni giving participation.

As Louise' health began to deteriorate from a cancer diagnosis, it became apparent she would not be attending the event. Administration and faculty came and presented Louise with the Distinguished Alumni Award in their home. Louise passed away in 2012. Her strength and resilience to her illness gave Sally the courage she needed to fight and overcome her own cancer diagnosis later on.

Sally made her way to Lakewood in 2018, following her middle sister Sue's move-in in 2013. They are both active in their family church, Ramsey Memorial United Methodist Church, and serve as officers for the Ramsey United Methodist Women's unit, with Sally as vice president.

At Lakewood, Sally serves as the Communications chair, with a mission of getting residents involved. She focuses on connecting with others to avoid misunderstandings and disconnect. She also volunteers on the library committee and supports resident services during programs and events. She shares her villa apartment with Pretzel, a sweet lab mix that she recently adopted after Meg passed on.

Sally immediately thinks of her fellow residents when asked about who influencers her today. Each one brings their own experiences and expertise in making Lakewood such a welcoming and vibrant home. She describes Lakewood as accepting, respectful, secure and happy. She has pure love for her community.