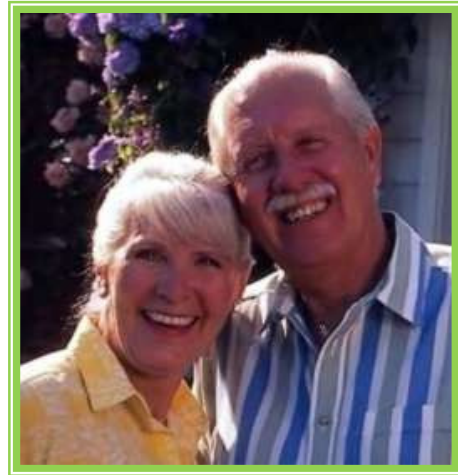


## ***Donor Profile: Betsy Johnson's Secret to Youth and Fulfillment***

By Melissa Josue

When Betsy Johnson was a student at Smithville College over 55 years ago, she began her legacy of giving to her community and recently brought her care and generosity full circle during a time when most donors are pulling back. She found giving to be one of her greatest sources of personal fulfillment—but also vitality.

At Smithville College she enjoyed sorority life and participated in numerous social clubs and drama activities, before earning her fine arts degree in 1956. Her talents and desire to inspire the love of music in other students brought her around the country, including Michigan and Nevada, where she taught music and voice.



In addition to making lifelong friends at her sorority, Betsy said she learned the foundational skills of performing arts and music during her first years at Smithville College. She transferred that knowledge to her own students when she began teaching music and drama after her graduation. She loved teaching elementary school children because of their high energy, she said. “I loved working with children and teaching them how to perform on a stage in front of an audience.” Her profession as a teacher underscored her belief in the value of education and the way it can inspire students to achieve their goals.

At 73, Betsy continues to live her dreams through volunteering in various communities and traveling around the world to countries such as Argentina and Ethiopia with her husband John.

*Betsy and her husband's generous gift will not only help maintain and expand Smithville College's educational excellence but, more importantly...help other students find their song and share it with the world, as Betsy did with hers.*

Giving to the community has always been deeply fulfilling for Betsy, but it has also given her new found energy and wonder for life. She was inspired by the resilience of the people of New Orleans after she and her husband volunteered for Habitat for Humanity in 2006 to help with rebuilding efforts after Hurricane Katrina. Betsy noticed that even people who had nothing still had songs and music to help lift their spirits. "I have been very fortunate in my life to be able to travel and explore, and I know not everyone is in the same situation," says Betsy. "It would be nice to think I can somehow make a difference."

Despite all the traveling, Betsy makes sure she never misses her Smithville College reunions where she joins her sorority sisters once again to sing and to play piano with old college friends. Singing and

volunteering keep her young, she said. In celebrating her college experience and the friendships she made, Betsy made a decision to do what she could to help ensure that the students today

continue to be inspired by and have access to the variety of social activities, academic programs, and renowned faculty that laid the groundwork for Betsy's music and performing arts career. Earlier this year, Betsy and her husband donated part of their estate to Smithville College. Maintaining academic programs remains a continual challenge in lean economic times where states are reducing education funding and there is markedly fewer private charitable giving. Betsy and her husband's generous gift will not only help maintain and expand Smithville College's educational excellence but, more importantly...help other students find their song and share it with the world, as Betsy did with hers.

Hi Melissa,

I like the whole "fountain of youth" idea, but I think you could draw it out more powerfully with a little more showing and less telling. Show us what it means for Betsy to feel young -- you have plenty of examples to work with. Pick one or two that really drive home your theme, for example, encountering children who loved to sing throughout her travels. One of the dangers of profile writing is feeling like you have to include everything. But when you get a really good theme, you've done 80% of the work.

Thanks for being so great about sharing your challenges!

Kivi

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Hi Again

The closing of your profile is really strong. I like the way you tied together Betsy's donation with the state of donating today and how her money will make an impact. Having just worked on this profile myself, I can see how your approach to the closing of the profile is much stronger. Thanks for sharing this.

Cathy