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Meet Mr. Bill Byron

Ray Artigue : 3-4 minutes

For someone who says he didn't have a plan, Bill Byron's career worked out quite well.

"I had no clue what I wanted to do in my early 20s, so I just kind of fell into my career in public relations and corporate communications," Byron said.

The Phoenix native grew up in the Arcadia neighborhood, attending Tavan Elementary and Arcadia High School. Early on, he discovered that he could excel on the tennis court, and he and his older brother John powered a state championship team at AHS.

Byron attended Mesa Community College, where he was an All-American tennis player and a key contributor to the national championship tennis team. A full-ride scholarship took him east, where he attended Mercyhurst College in Pennsylvania, earning an English degree and a slew of tennis accolades.

Uncertain of what he wanted to do professionally after college, Byron began teaching tennis at the Arizona Biltmore. He eventually left for a sportswriter job at the Scottsdale Progress.

"Local publications fill a tremendously important role in the community, covering local news in the neighborhoods," Byron said.

His writing skills then took him to an advertising agency, where he served as editor of several trade publications. "I researched, wrote and edited the magazines. Looking back, I couldn't have asked for better training," he said.

Fine training it was, as it would launch a stellar 36-year career in healthcare marketing and public relations. It began at St. Joseph's Hospital and then Good Samaritan Medical Center (today Banner Health) in 1985, where Byron served on the executive team for 32 years.

More importantly, "Good Sam" is where he met his wife of 33 years, Su, who worked as a therapist in the rehab institute. Su developed and implemented high-risk sports programs for spinal cord injured patients. "Meeting Su was the best benefit of my career," Byron said,

adding that it's been an incredible honor working in healthcare.

"Getting the word out about extraordinary people doing amazing things to help others – I loved it," said Byron.

He retired in May, concluding his illustrious career after a two-year stint leading the marketing communications team at Valleywise Health. "Valleywise is a great organization that I'd recommend to anyone, and the perfect place for the last chapter of my career," he said.

Speaking of perfect places, the Byron family loves living in Arcadia. "There is a fullness of community that makes Arcadia a great place to live," Byron said.

Each of their children – Retta, Brecken and Graham – attended Arcadia High, where they excelled on state championship teams in tennis and softball. Two Byron kids went on to play tennis at the college level as well.

Asked about how he will fill his days now that he's retired, Byron said, "We've loved traveling the world with our children, but there are still many places on our list. We'll continue to hike, bike, swim, hit the courts and enjoy our cabin while celebrating every minute with our grandson and grandkids to come," he said.

Sounds like the perfect volley of life's joys.

