

local news



You may know Char Griffin as a member of the League of Women Voters of The Villages/ Tri-County FL among other clubs, but what you may not know about is that she has also had a long career in analytics and consulting.



Bill Mitchell | Daily Sun

GETTING TO KNOW CHAR GRIFFIN

Age: 77

Village: Tamarind Grove

Spouse: Mick Griffin

Family: Two sons, Geoff and Eric, and six grandchildren

Moved Here From: Grand Rapids, Michigan

Moved Here: 2011

Villages Activities: Changing Hearts, Friendship Force, Heart Throbs, AED Coordinator, Lakeside Grovers Social Club, League of Women Voters of The Villages/ Tri-County FL



Summer Jarro

THE VILLAGES
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Do you know someone with an interesting backstory to tell? Email summer.jarro@thevillagesmedia.com, or call 352-753-1119, ext. 5404

Char Griffin is interested in many things, and it is hard for her to decide on one thing to do.

That's why the Village of Tamarind Grove resident has gone through several different careers, and even now living in The Villages, she is part of multiple clubs and organizations.

Griffin is a first-generation college graduate who attended Miami University in Ohio from 1964 to 1967, and she majored in mathematics with a minor in education. She also loved sociology, anthropology, psychology and physics.

When it was time to graduate, Griffin was offered a teaching job at a nearby high school but turned it down. A friend of hers happened to work at The International Business Machines Corporation and told her how much

she enjoyed the company. She said Griffin should apply, and she did.

She began working as a systems engineer at IBM in Cincinnati, Ohio where she was the only woman in her branch. She worked on many projects during her time in the company, including installing one of the first automatic blood analyzers in the country.

Griffin enjoyed her time working at IBM, which she was at for about three years, but also felt pressure being in the position and doing something that felt completely different than what college was like.

"I'm so grateful to them for all that I learned," Griffin said.

In the 1970s, her husband joined the U.S. Air Force and was stationed in New Jersey, so Griffin began working as a systems analyst at Temple University in Philadelphia. She was there for a little more than

three years, and in her position she designed and installed a student admission system and a financial aid system.

After her husband was no longer serving, they moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, where she continued working as a systems analyst for several companies, including Foremost Insurance.

Griffin ended up starting a family with her husband and later on, she took on a position to start a computer information systems department at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids. At the college, she was chair of the department and taught students during the day and at night.

Griffin enjoyed getting to teach the students, which included traditional college-age students as well as older adults.

"I love problem solving, I

love analyzing and I love teaching," she said. "For me, I love seeing students learn. I like to learn, so I love to see students learn."

During the summers while working at Aquinas College, she also continued consulting to keep her knowledge current. Overall, she stayed at the college for about 17 years.

One of her last positions was working with Amway, which she began in the 1990s, to develop a data warehouse for their marketing division. Her last position with the company was developing sales training for Amway distributors.

Griffin enjoyed taking on different roles and positions.

"As long as I'm doing something new that I think is meaningful and that it's going to help people, I love it all," Griffin said.

She has also enjoyed getting to work with people.

"I like getting to know people," Griffin said. "I find people endlessly fascinating, so anytime I have to work with people I have to be making a difference. I have to be engaging myself."

When Griffin moved to The Villages in 2011, she didn't stop taking on multiple projects and working with people, despite retiring. She is part of several clubs in the community today, including Hanging Hearts, Friendship Force, Heart Throbs and Lakeside Grovers Social Club. She is also webmaster for League of Women Voters of The Villages/ Tri-County FL.

Griffin believes people should live their lives doing what they enjoy.

"Find your passion — find what you love and then figure out a way to have somebody pay you to pursue it," she said.