

2018 Longest Married Couple Project winners announced by Worldwide Marriage Encounter

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. — Worldwide Marriage Encounter (WWME), the original faith based marriage enrichment program in the United States, has announced the national winners of the 2018 Longest Married Couple Project. They are Mota and Avanelle Young of Bowling Green, Ky.

The Youngs have been married 81 years as of April 14, 2017.

Over 200 nominations were received for this year's project. This is the eighth year for the nationwide project.

"It is truly a privilege and honor to recognize the Youngs for their commitment to marriage," said Joe and Sue Talarico and Father Tom Ogg, the United States Ecclesial Team for WWME.

The Youngs were married April 14, 1936. They met earlier that year at a party where spin the bottle was being played. They didn't kiss each other, but a few weeks later they started dating and within three months they got married. Avanelle was still in high school, but she completed school and graduated. At a high school graduation party fellow seniors gave the couple a gag gift — a rolling pin — which they still have.

The Kentucky couple achieved the honor of being the WWME National Longest Married Couple based on nominations submitted to Worldwide Marriage Encounter beginning in October of last year. The nomination project ended on Jan. 10 of this year.

The WWME national leadership team pointed out

that the project is based on nominations received from Oct. 10 the previous year to Jan. 10 of the current year. "We realize there could be couples married longer, but we did not receive their nominations from friends or family during the nominating period, or they chose not to be recognized for their marriage achievements," they said.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter created the project to highlight marriage in America and to show young couples that marriage really can go the distance. "What an inspiration Mr. and Mrs. Young are to all of us. They made a commitment to each other over 81 years ago and they have kept that commitment. They truly are an inspiration and sign of hope to all of us," the Talaricos and Fr. Ogg said.

The national winners have three children, six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. A presentation of gifts and acknowledgments to the Youngs was made on Saturday in Bowling Green.

State winners from across the country will also be presented certificates of achievement and other recognitions by Worldwide Marriage Encounter couples this week, as well as the rest of the month.

State winners include: Alabama — Mike and Ann Boland, Tuscaloosa, Aug. 14, 1971, 46 years; Alaska — Clyde and Mary Lovel, Anchorage, June 17, 1954, 63 years; Arizona — Peter and Virginia Benenati, Scottsdale, July 1950, 67 years; Arkansas — Raymond and Mary Jean Troillet, Little Rock, Oct. 7, 1946,

71 years; California — Francis and Genevieve Ferry, Auburn, July 23, 1943, 74 years; Colorado — Emil "Rusty" and Elizabeth "Betty" Siefken, Fort Collins, April 14, 1944, 73 years; Connecticut — LeRoy and Dorothy Bredenburg, Southbury, Dec. 24, 1937, 80 years; Delaware — Creadick Sr. and Doris Powell,

Kentucky — Mota and Avanelle Young, Bowling Green, April 14, 1936, 81 years; Louisiana — Charles and Rita Serio, Morganza, May 16, 1942, 76 years; Maine — Heck and Doris Bardsley, York, Jan. 7, 1943, 75 years; Maryland — Jennings and Mary Cross, Hughesville, Aug. 30, 1947, 70 years; Massachusetts — George

New Jersey — David and Margaret Jaffe, Scotch Plains, Jan. 2, 1944, 74 years; New Mexico — Frank and Jeanette Devoti, Albuquerque, Jan. 29, 1947, 70 years; New York — Arnold and Margaret Schultz, Troy, Sept. 18, 1943, 74 years; North Carolina — Jack and Betty Gunkle, Greensboro, Dec. 20, 1940, 77 years;

20, 1949, 68 years; Washington — Alfred and Elinor Fergen, Snohomish, Aug. 20, 1946, 71 years; Wisconsin — Tom and Margaret Stephens, New Richmond, Sept. 22, 1944, 73 years; Wyoming — Howard and Joan Kunesh, Sheridan, Jan. 11, 1947, 71 years.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter has been offering weekend experiences for over 50 years and is considered the original faith-based marriage enrichment program. The programs are continually updated to keep abreast of changes in society, and WWME now offers evening and half-day programs that are presented at parishes and other church facilities. The weekend program, traditionally presented as an overnight experience at a hotel or retreat center, can also be presented at facilities where the couples return to their homes in the evenings. WWME has a presence in almost 100 countries, which makes it the largest pro-marriage movement in the world. In North America, the WWME programs are presented in English, Spanish, French and Korean languages.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter offers married couples the opportunity to spend time together away from the busyness of the world to focus on each other. It offers tools for building and maintaining a strong, Christian marriage in today's world. To learn more about Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekends go online to wwme.org or contact the WWME Office at (909) 332-7309.



Wilmington, Sept. 3, 1949, 68 years

Florida — Benny and Angela Addeo, Delray Beach, Sept. 11, 1948, 69 years

Georgia — Robert and Catherine Pollard, Roswell, April 25, 1946, 71 years

Hawaii — Sotero and Caridad Ragasa, Honolulu, Nov. 11, 1949, 68 years

Illinois — Ray and Lucille Tiburzi, Staunton, Aug. 27, 1940, 77 years

Indiana — Ray and Barbara Glaze, Plainfield, Dec. 31, 1947, 70 years

Iowa — Merlwin and Violet Lindner, Nashua, Nov. 24, 1942, 75 years

Kansas — Chester and Ruth Wenger, Whiting, Feb. 4, 1948, 69 years

and Mary Hersey, Brockman, Jan. 6, 1946, 71 years

Michigan — Roy and Anita Harrington, Wyoming, June 28, 1941, 76 years

Minnesota — Marvin and Ellen Scheuble, Montrose, June 6, 1944, 73 years

Missouri — Lenos and Wilma Meneely, Meadville, Dec. 25, 1944, 73 years

Montana — Irvin and Jean Weathermon, Laurel, Sept. 10, 1947, 70 years

Nebraska — Raymond and Margaret Davis, Bassett, March 7, 1944, 73 years

New Hampshire — Phil and Maggie Nicoloff, Durham, March 31, 1951, 66 years

Couple finds love after lifetime amid war and peace

By TOM DAVIDSON
Beaver County Times

NEW BRIGHTON, Pa. (AP) — Before Nov. 7, 1980, Paul and Monique Jones lived two lifetimes' worth of experiences in war and peace.

That was the day they married — the second, happier marriage for both — and in nearly four decades since then, they've enjoyed life together, the last 17 years of which have been spent in Daugherty Township, Pa.

Jones, now 87, is a retired bookkeeper and Mrs. Jones, 86-soon-to-be-87, taught French for many years. Before they met, each lived through World War II as children, and Jones served stateside in the Marine Corps during the Korean War era.

Monique Raguet Jones was born in Verdun, France, a small city in northeastern France that's played a pivotal role in world history for centuries.

During World War I, the Battle of Verdun was one of the longest and bloodiest of the war.

Mrs. Jones was born there in 1930 and her parents owned a cafe along the Meuse River.

"My town was very, very popular," she said.

As a young girl, she remembers seeing the not-yet-queen of England, Elizabeth, who visited once before her coronation.

Her childhood was marked by a serious illness that Mrs. Jones wasn't supposed to survive, but she did, only to have to live through the horrors of World War II, which came too close to her home.

After Adolf Hitler invaded Poland in 1939, it was inevitable that France also would be targeted, she said. Many people in Verdun were German and sympathized with their countrymen — "they actually helped Germany," Mrs. Jones remembered.

In June 1940, Mrs. Jones, her sister and their mother fled Verdun. She had a name tag and a gas mask and they walked 250 miles across the countryside.

"Sometimes, we were lucky, we stopped in barns,

other times we sat on the side of the road," she said.

She saw the casualties of war, both military and civilian, during this trek.

"It was really a horrible sight," she said.

So horrible, in fact, that she didn't talk about what she had lived through for more than 30 years, she said.

During the German occupation of France, they returned to Verdun and lived alongside German, then English, then American soldiers who occupied the city.

"All of our windows were broken and all of our furniture was broken," she said.

Her parents shielded her from the politics of the war, and she said the German soldiers treated her nicely: They would give the family food and warn them about air raids.

"We were extremely lucky," she said.

After the war, Mrs. Jones, fluent in several languages, worked as an interpreter for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization — her checks were signed by Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower. She met and married an American soldier and settled into an unhappy marriage in the United States.

Paul Jones grew up in the eastern part of Pennsylvania, near the Delaware border, in mushroom country. His father worked for the railroad and his mom worked at a defense plant in Wilmington, Del., during World War II.

When Jones turned 18, he registered for the selective service, and then worked at several bookkeeping jobs before he got a draft notice in 1952.

He was chosen for the Marine Corps — something that scared him — and he trained at Parris Island, S.C.

"I was kind of frightened," he said of going to the Marines.

It was his first time away from home and the training was tough.

He ended up being assigned to Cherry Point, N.C., where the Marines had an air station. There, Jones did clerical work, typing

up orders for other Marines during his two-year tour of duty.

Jones married and had a family, settling in Kennett Square, Pa., where he worked as controller for a mushroom company.

Off sick one week in the 1970s, Jones came in for his paycheck and caught Mrs. Jones' eye. She was applying for a job there.

"Monique was in the lobby and she saw me and she said, 'That's the guy I want,'" Jones said. "That's what she said to herself."

At the time, Jones didn't know what she meant. Mrs. Jones did.

"It was love at first sight," she said. "I remember when he walked in the door."

They were friends for four years and both waited to end their first marriages until their children were grown.

Then Mrs. Jones moved to Miami and Jones followed her there.

They spent months being "beach bums" enjoying each other's company. They then married Nov. 7, 1980, and have enjoyed life together since.

In the years that followed, Mrs. Jones taught French at various colleges and her students encouraged her to think about her childhood. She also wanted to preserve her memories for her children and she's penned two self-published books about her life and is working on a third.

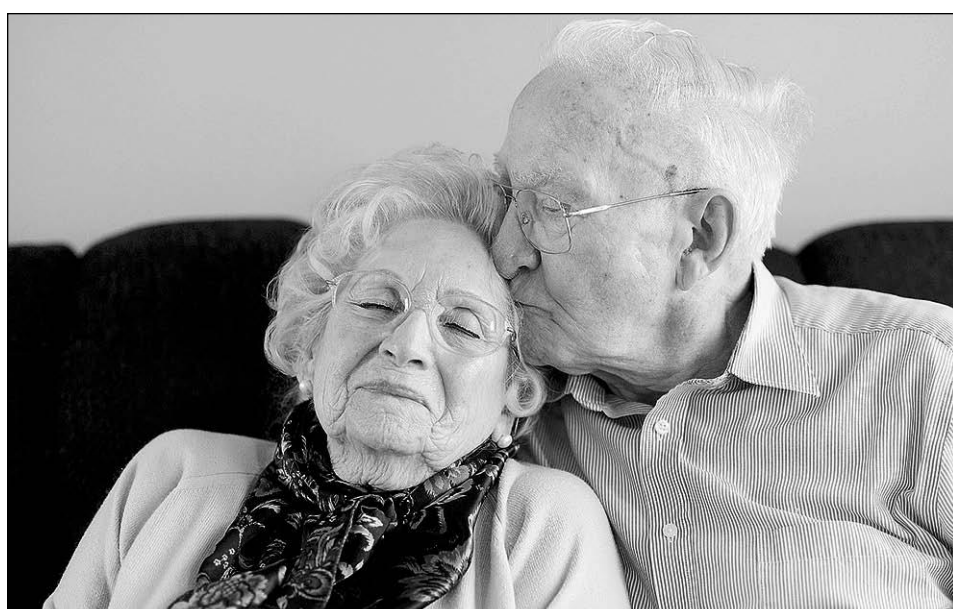
"It relieves her mind; she gets it out of her system (by writing)," Jones said.

But the horrors of her childhood haven't left her.

"Oh my goodness, you cannot imagine (what she lived through), you have to go through that," she said. "I'm petrified (during) a storm or something and you will never put a mask on me. There are certain things ... after all these years, I still carry (them) with me."

Online: <http://bit.ly/2E12JVR>

Information from: Beaver County Times, <http://www.timesonline.com/>



SECOND LOVE — Paul and Monique Jones have been married for 37 years. She fled the Nazis during World War II and he served during the Korean War. Before Nov. 7, 1980, Paul and Monique Jones lived two lifetimes' worth of experiences in war and peace. That was the day they married — the

second, happier marriage for both — and in nearly four decades since then, they've enjoyed life together, the last 17 years of which have been spent in Daugherty Township. (Sally Maxson/Beaver County Times via AP)

WEDDING CELEBRATIONS

Share your information with The Messenger

Engagements

Engagement announcements must be typed. Handwritten engagements will not be accepted. It is suggested they be submitted before the first bridal party, and they MUST be submitted no later than two weeks before the wedding. Additional guidelines are available at The Messenger.

Bridal parties

Bridal parties must be submitted no later than two weeks after the party. Dates of the parties must be included on the typed write-up.

Final wedding plans

Final wedding plans must be typed and submitted no later than two weeks before the wedding.

Weddings

Weddings must be typed and double spaced and submitted no later than six weeks after the wedding. Weddings submitted after this strict deadline may be published at the prevailing advertising rate. There are NO EXCEPTIONS. Additional guidelines are available at The Messenger.

Anniversaries

Anniversaries must be submitted typed no later than two weeks before a celebration invitation or they may be submitted no more than one month after the celebration. Additional guidelines are available at The Messenger.

Email information and photos to Associate Editor Donna Ryder at dryder@ucmessenger.com.

Call her at 885-0744 for more information.

