

What were you doing the early morning of October 12, 2002? I explicitly remember what I was doing. I was peering out our living room window anticipating the arrival of the paper carrier. On that Saturday morning, I anxiously awaited the delivery of the Kearney Hub. For the entire week prior, I remember spending sleepless nights trying to compose my very first *Yard and Garden* column for the Kearney Hub, and, now, this one will be my last column.

My dear sweet wife Rita, whom I have referenced innumerable times in my weekly column, retired from teaching as of yesterday, May 18, and I followed suit. Together we have closed that chapter in our lives, and we now look forward to a new one — a fully retired couple.



I experienced three career moves in my life. The first was a public school science teacher for sixteen years. The second, for twenty-two years, was an insurance agent. My third career for the past fifteen and one-half years has been the Buffalo County Extension horticulturist. I can honestly say that I have enjoyed all three careers, but this last one has been the most rewarding and enjoyable. After all, I was able to focus 100 % of my attention on my passion — gardening! For the past decade and a half, I have visited innumerable yards in the Kearney area, addressed countless gardening concerns and met an infinite number of great people, those who also love gardening. Friendships have developed over these past years that I am confident will last for the balance of my life. How fortunate I have been to enjoy my work. I kid you not; but, for the last 15 ½ years, I can truly boast without any regret, “Time flies when you are having fun.”

So, what is my next move you may ask? Together, Rita and I have not etched that one yet in stone, but I definitely know gardening will continue to be on the

top of our list. Although, I hate to admit it, with each passing year, age has taken its toll. I can no longer leap tall buildings in a single bound, be more powerful than a locomotive or travel faster than a speeding bullet, but I do know I can still garden — perhaps at a much slower pace!

For the past number of years, I thought about having the Hub update my photo, to let you know that not only do landscapes mature with time, but so do gardeners. If the truth be known, I prefer seeing my photo with dark hair. Check out the two photos of yours truly. Who says, time does not take its toll?

Today, I say thank you to all of you dedicated readers who have diligently followed me over these past years. I have tried to share with you research-based gardening information which hopefully enlightened and educated you and at the same time helped to bring you gardening success! Saying goodbye does not come easily for me, but that is exactly what I am doing.

Over the years, if you wished to contact me, the Hub always listed at the end of each column my Extension email address and telephone number. After today, that too will no longer exist; however, you are always welcome to drop me a note if you so desire at my personal email address [tigriess@hotmail.com](mailto:tigriess@hotmail.com)

At this moment, I am once again peering out the living room window awaiting the delivery of the Kearney Hub; so, I, too, may also read my last *Yard and Garden* column.