

## Board Bio

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### Her Life's Story

Our RHA board members keep getting more and more interesting. Over the last year, we've introduced you a Hollywood stuntman, a mathematician, and a retired Army captain. And this issue of "Meet the Board Member" won't disappoint.

Meet **Marian Last**, a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Holocaust survivor, a community advocate, and the newest member of the RHA board – a self-proclaimed conservative feminist, but "not a bra burner."

Marian grew up in Covina, CA. After graduating from high school, she continued her education, earning a double major in sociology and psychology from Pitzer in Claremont, a master's in educational psychology from Long Beach State, a post grad Certificate in Gerontology from Andrus School of Gerontology at USC, and a License in Marriage and Family Therapy. Whew ... I'm exhausted just writing about these accomplishments!

Her first paying job in the midst of her undergraduate work was as a gerontologist, and she told me, "I didn't know what I was doing" until hired. This was the 1970's when the Older Americans Act was being developed and support programs around the country were being created to help our aging citizens "age in place" to avoid institutionalization. Marian worked in the outreach program for El Monte to help get the elderly enrolled. Even though she may have started without a clue as to her future, her future began the day she accepted the job, retiring thirty-six years later from El Monte's city government and public administration – a health and wellness career focused on helping those most vulnerable, at-risk children and aging adults.

As if working in city government weren't time consuming enough, during our chat she appeared most proud of her volunteer work over the years. She has worked with at-risk youth in rape, suicide and drug prevention centers.

Additionally, in 1995 during the Clinton administration, she was a delegate to the White House Conference on Aging where she met over 2000 national delegates – and Clinton and Gore themselves.

And when she finally retired from El Monte in 2009, she couldn't be stopped; her passions were too great. She became a volunteer with CA Commission on Aging, an appointment by Arnold Schwarzenegger and re-appointment by Jerry Brown. For over six years she helped create public policy for transportation, health, and long-term care. She traveled to urban and rural areas to see the health care landscape and evaluate a community's access to health services. She also co-authored several chapters of a book about long-term care systems and physical infrastructure with a Chico State professor to present the history of long-term care institutionalization and available alternatives.

Marian has spent her life selflessly advocating for those who couldn't, or didn't know how to, advocate for themselves.

I wouldn't say she's completely retired at this point from her "day job," though, as she still does some local consulting, bereavement counseling, and assistance for the aging. When she's not advocating in our community, though, and finds time to relax, you can find her golfing, playing poker, or strategizing her next Mahjong move.

### **History in Rossmoor**

How did she get to Rossmoor, you wonder, from El Monte? After making her way from the inland empire to Long Beach to open a Marriage and Family Therapy practice, she used to spend time in Rossmoor playing racquetball and frequenting Davio's Italian Restaurant.

In 1984 when she decided it was time to move from her Long Beach bungalow, her realtor introduced her to the Rossmoor neighborhood where she found her dream home on the last day of her sale contingency. It was meant to be – she fell in love with the dichondra grass and open windows of her Estates model, the gem that fit right into her budget, and the rest is history.

### **Role on the Board**

Then seven years ago, she decided she wanted to get more involved with the neighborhood itself, so she reached out to do what she does best – volunteer. She began her work with the RHA as one of our Festival volunteers, working with vendors and volunteers to help make the event happen. This year she decided to run for a seat on the board. Even though she "wasn't necessarily interested in a leadership role," we found a perfect fit in her as the RHA 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. And we couldn't be any more excited!

Help us in welcoming Marian to the board!